



IUCN SSC Crane Specialist Group



Conservation Success Stories

Partnerships provide safe, fresh water for communities and cranes in Kenya



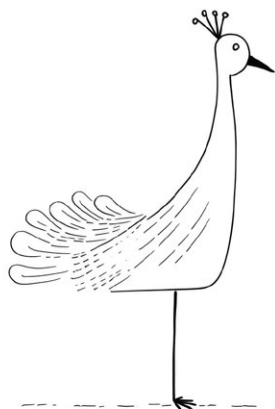
Partnerships provide safe, fresh water for communities and cranes in Kenya

IMPLEMENTED BY

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International Crane Foundation

TARGET

Implement the Single Species Action Plan for Grey Crowned Cranes by 2024. (T-001)



THREAT ADDRESSED

In East Africa, rural women and children often have to travel miles from home into wetlands to collect water that is often unsafe to drink, but this collection activity also disturbs the wildlife in the wetlands, in particular reducing breeding success of the Endangered Grey Crowned Crane.

**Easier access
to fresh water,
less disturbance
in the wetlands**



SUCCESS LEVEL

Highly successful

Success category: Reduction in threat magnitude

Success subcategory:
Disturbance reducing
breeding success

Success story:

The International Crane Foundation installed six fresh-water spring source protection points in Nandi County, Kenya, in 2024, providing more than 5,000 families (nearly 30,000 people) with fresh water, thanks in part to a one-million-dollar commitment from the Leiden Conservation Foundation and the support from the local communities and governments. Families throughout Nandi County rely on water for domestic use and to care for their livestock, yet 54% of people in this county do not have access to safe water.

The link with conservation of Endangered Grey Crowned Cranes is that they feed and breed in the wetlands, which means that when local communities collect water from the wetlands, they disturb the cranes, making them more anxious and less likely to tend their nests or chicks, thereby reducing their breeding success. Of course, access to clean water is a fundamental human right, so if disturbance in the wetlands is to be reduced it is essential that alternative sources are provided. In addition, many rural community members, such as these Nandi County residents, and especially women and children, have to travel miles from home to get to the wetland to collect water, sometimes having to sacrifice time in school to fetch it. And even this water is often unsafe to drink, but it is all they have.

What the International Crane Foundation has done is work with local residents and government representatives to protect the existing eye of each spring (the point where water emerges from underground) from contamination by animal and human waste products, agricultural run-off, and litter, by encasing the eye in a concrete box and raising it above ground level so that the water can be collected easily from the overflow rather than collecting in a dirty puddle on the ground. Fencing is also put up around it to prevent unwanted access by livestock.

The six springs that have been installed are providing clean water to families, schools, churches, hospitals, and shopping centers. With easier access to fresh water, there is less disturbance in the wetlands and an increased area of habitat for the cranes to breed in.

■ RICHARD BERRIDGE



REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Among the reasons for success are well-established community partnerships supported a community-led approach. Similarly, strong links with local and regional government authorities, and strong goodwill towards cranes as local people enjoy their presence.

Vulnerable Northern River Shark,
(*Glyphis garricki*)
Photo: Grant Johnson

Interviews about human wildlife
interactions with local inhabitants
Photo: Kiran Thapa Magar

Vicuña management by Cooperativa
Agroganadera de Santa Catalina and Comunidad
Aborígen Atu Shapi de Morritos.
Santa Catalina, Jujuy Province, Argentina
Photo: Yanina Arzamendia

Story photo credits

Kenya Springs
Photos: Ufulu Studios

Community songbird monitoring and
protection, Indonesia
Photo: Asian Songbird Trade SG archives

Cacti from genera *Copiapoa* and *Eriosyce*
confiscated in Italy and repatriated to Chile in 2021
Photo: Andrea Cattabriga