

Q and A

IBA Crane Counts & Atlassing



Sarus Cranes From 1997-2008 BANQ counted as many Sarus Cranes as possible at the one time (a census). Based on these results we can now monitor Sarus Cranes with an annual count at a few sites in the Atherton Tablelands IBA. You can download an info sheet on the IBA from our website ~ www.birdsaustralianq.org/projects.htm

Brolgas are common, and a full census was never possible. Instead we surveyed wetlands within the range of Sarus Cranes - with some spectacular results! But the Crane Count date is not always the best time to count Brolgas outside the Tablelands. It's best for YOU to decide times and places, according to local conditions. These surveys can be done with *Birds Australia Atlassing*. We hope Crane Counters will join the Atlas and keep contributing to crane knowledge and conservation with counts in all NQ crane habitats.

How will the annual IBA survey be done?

Exactly the same as all previous Counts, at 6 sites. But from 2010, it will be the FIRST SATURDAY IN SEPTEMBER to avoid the migration period, when crane numbers can fluctuate greatly within a few days.

Our site is not in the new count: what next?

You're welcome to join the annual IBA count on the Tablelands, or do Birds Australia Atlas surveys anywhere, anytime.

Can we do a count outside the IBA, on Crane Count day?

Please do, just join the Birds Australia Atlas - it's free. You report totals to the Atlas online or on written forms that come with your Atlas Kit. You can go Crane Atlassing anywhere in NQ, any time. Atlasser benefits include full access to the Birddata website, with maps & information for all Australian birds.

To join or find out more visit www.birdsaustralia.com.au/our-projects/atlas-birddata.html

Do we still need Crane Count forms?

You won't need team sign-on sheets, medical forms etc. Visiting a site will be private & you'll make your own arrangements. When you join the Atlas, the kit includes an Atlasser card which can help ID you to landowners.

● **DATASHEETS** The Atlas only gives you a form for entering TOTALS into the Atlas. To help count large numbers in the field, especially at roosts, you're welcome to download a Crane Count datasheet from the BANQ website - www.birdsaustralianq.org/projects.htm. Only final totals, not the full datasheet, are sent to the Atlas.

● **"SWEEP"** An alternative method, useful for large daytime flocks or roosts where landed birds can be counted and identified from the viewpoint. Sweep binoculars or a telescope over the site at regular intervals, for each sweep record the numbers of Sarus, Brolga and "Crane" (no ID). For the Atlas: report the highest totals for Brolgas & Sarus and subtract those from the highest overall total, for the number of "Cranes" (no ID).

● **3 SPECIES ?!** "Brolga" and "Sarus Crane" are of course already species in the Atlas setup. Soon - at our request to help full-scale Atlassing of cranes in NQ - the category "Crane" will be added, for all those unidentified birds that fly in too late to ID. Without this category for unidentified cranes, the true importance of large wetland roosts could not be documented in the Atlas, because only ID'd birds could be reported. The "Crane" category can also be used to report actual numbers with feeding flocks, where birds are not identified due to heat haze.

Report significant crane sightings to the NQ BirdLine

Interesting sightings—large numbers, migration, or unusual locations, can be reported online to the North Queensland BirdLine - visit www.ereamaea.com . Ozcranes is also interested in Crane news items, <http://ozcranes.net>

Crane Atlas sites and contact details, see over →

ATLAS SITES

Crane Atlassing can be done anywhere! And new sites are always welcome. But here's a list of suggested sites with good numbers of Brolgas or Sarus in past roost or paddock counts.

PLEASE note, access permissions are important - if the birds can't be seen from public land, arrange with owners/ leaseholders beforehand.

In the Atherton Tablelands IBA:

- ⇒ Bromfield Swamp (from road)
- ⇒ Hasties Swamp (from hide)
- ⇒ Many Tinaroo roosts are visible from boats
- ⇒ Some Tinaroo roosts can be seen from roads around Kairi & Tinaroo Park

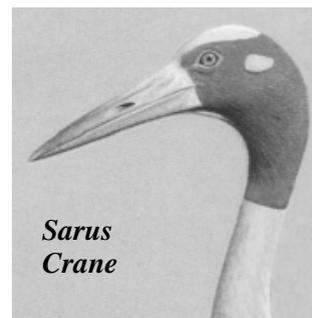
Other areas:

- ⇒ Kaban-Tumoulin
- ⇒ Innot Hot Springs-Mt Garnet (*very large swamps are found W of the outer limit of Crane Counts 1997-2008, few have been properly surveyed*)
- ⇒ Mareeba Wetlands/ Jabiru Safari Lodge (*contact 1800 788 755 or www.jabirusafarilodge.com.au*)
- ⇒ Ingham area: Allingham Swamp & The Orient
- ⇒ Townsville Town Common (*contact TRBOC, www.trboc.org.au*)
- ⇒ Giru-Cromarty
- ⇒ Lakeland Downs
- ⇒ Gulf Roads (*watch the BANQ website for news of roadside positions to count Sarus & Brolgas around Normanton, Karumba & Burketown*)

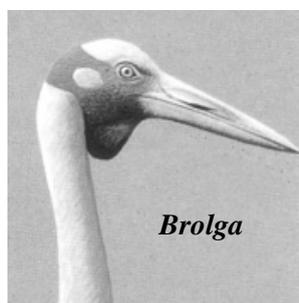
IDENTIFYING CRANES

Sarus Cranes..

- ⇒ red down the neck
- ⇒ pink legs
- ⇒ slim hollow throat



Brolgas..



- ⇒ In the air, look for the throat bulge in silhouette
- ⇒ black legs

- ⇒ red only in a band at eye level, spanning the back of the head
- ⇒ a dark dewlap or bulge on the throat

Crane images courtesy J Davies