

# Sarus crane

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**In news**— A 35-year-old man from Mandkha, Uttar Pradesh, was booked under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, for “illegally” keeping and nursing an injured Sarus crane (*Grus Antigone*) he found in his village.

## About the bird-

- It is a **large nonmigratory crane** found in parts of the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and Australia. The **tallest of the flying birds**, standing at a height of up to 1.8 m (5 ft 11 in), they are a conspicuous species of open wetlands in South Asia, seasonally flooded Dipterocarpus forests in Southeast Asia, and *Eucalyptus*-dominated woodlands and grasslands in Australia.
- The sarus crane is **easily distinguished from other cranes in the region by its overall grey colour and the contrasting red head and upper neck**. They forage on **marshes and shallow wetlands for roots, tubers**, insects, crustaceans, and small vertebrate prey.
- Like other cranes, **they form long-lasting pair bonds and maintain territories within which they perform territorial and courtship** displays that include loud trumpeting, leaps, and dance-like movements.
- **In India, they are considered symbols of marital fidelity** & it is the state bird of Uttar Pradesh, believed to mate for life and pine the loss of their mates, even to the point of starving to death.
- The main breeding season is during the rainy season, when the pair builds an enormous nest “island,” a circular platform of reeds and grasses nearly two meters in diameter and high enough to stay above the shallow water surrounding it. Increased agricultural intensity is often thought to have led to declines in sarus crane numbers, but they also benefit from wetland crops and

the construction of canals and reservoirs. **The stronghold of the species is in India, where it is traditionally revered and lives in agricultural lands** in close proximity to humans. Elsewhere, the species has been extirpated in many parts of its former range.

### **What is the Wildlife Protection Act?**

- The Wildlife Protection Act came into force on September 9, 1972, to “provide for the protection” of wild animals, birds and plants to ensure the “ecological and environmental security of the country.”
- It aims to conserve protected species in two main ways: firstly, by prohibiting their hunting and secondly by protecting their habitat through the creation and regulation of sanctuaries, national parks, reserves, etc.
- **Further, the Act prohibits capturing or hunting any species of animals listed under Schedules I-IV, barring a few exceptions** such as hunting a diseased or dangerous animal or bird constituting a threat to human life or property or for scientific research or management.
- Broadly, **offences under the Act can be divided into three categories; hunting** under Sections 9, 17A, and 2(16); **unauthorised possession, transport, and trade under** Sections 40, 42, 43, 48, 48A, 49 and Chapter VA; and offences related to protected areas or habitat destruction under Sections 27, 29-36 and 38.
- “Hunting” under Section 2 (16) of the Act includes not just the act of killing or poisoning a wild or captive animal, but even an attempt to do so.
- Additionally, it lists “capturing, coursing, snaring, trapping, driving or baiting any wild or captive animal” and attempts for the same.
- A “captive animal” is defined under the WPA as any animal, specified in Schedule I-IV, which is captured or kept, or bred in captivity.

- Even injuring or destroying any part of the animal or its eggs or nests is an offence punishable under Section 9 of the Act.

**Further**

**reading:**

**<https://journalsofindia.com/the-wild-life-protection-amendment-bill-2022/>**