

CRANES

Order GRUIFORMES

For the purposes of this work it will be sufficient to state, that the cranes differ from the storks, to which they have a strong superficial resemblance, by the fact that the hind toe is always raised above the level of the other three. From the herons and bitterns they differ in the absence of the peculiar "powder-down" patches, alluded to earlier, and in the non-serration of the inner margin of the claw of the middle toe.

Cranes are long-legged birds of considerable size, with the bill equal to, or rather longer than, the head, the sides of which are ornamented, in many species, with patches of specialized feathers.

The inner secondaries are also ornamental, longer than the primaries, broadened, dependent and pointed.

The eggs are spotted in almost all species, not plain.

The order comprises about twenty existing species, with many fossil forms; it is found in Europe, Africa, Asia, extending to North Australia, and in North, but not South, America.

One species, *Antigone sharpii* (Blanford), the Southern Sarus crane, occurs within our limits and is not uncommon in the northern parts of the Peninsula, but does not extend farther south than Kuala Kangsar in Perak.

It is a more or less uniform pearl-grey bird, about 40 in. in length, with a wing of 24 in. Head and neck are bare, the top of the head, greyish green, the remainder dull brick-red. It is found on dry rice stubbles and on wide open plains, singly or in pairs.

The Malay name used in Kedah is *burong keria* (Hamilton).