

Criteria for categorising Common Crane breeding evidence in the UK

EBCC breeding categories	Specific interpretation for Common Crane	Notes/rationale
Possible breeding		
1. Species observed in breeding season in possible nesting habitats.	Because cranes can occur or over-summer in areas which may have suitable breeding habitat without exhibiting any breeding behaviour, the criteria for Possible breeding is more cautious than for many species. Evidence for non-breeding is given below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pair present (or breeding calls heard) in suitable nesting habitat for 14 days or more between mid-April and the end of June, where the evidence suggests that they may have bred/attempted to breed, but this could not be substantiated owing to the lack of information or monitoring. ● Nest built by a pair but no evidence they eggs have been laid.
2. Singing male(s) present (or breeding calls heard) in breeding season.	Not applicable.	
Probable breeding		
3. Pair observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This category can be used for a pair of adults acting in a manner that strongly suspects the presence of eggs or young, when no such proof could be obtained.
4. Permanent territory presumed through registration of territorial behaviour (song <i>etc.</i> on at least two different days a week or more apart at the same place).	Under normal circumstances this category will not in itself be sufficient to constitute Probable breeding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-staying birds, even if displaying, should be classed as non-breeders unless there is some evidence of attempted breeding (see 1. above).
5. Courtship and display.	Under normal circumstances this category will not in itself be sufficient to constitute Probable breeding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-staying birds, even if displaying, should be classed as non-breeders unless there is some evidence of attempted breeding (see 1. above).
6. Visiting probable nest site.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adult birds seen entering or leaving a nest site in circumstances indicating a nest with eggs/young (active breeding) constitute Probable breeding.
7. Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults, suggesting the probable presence of eggs or young nearby, should be classed as Probable breeding.
8. Brood patch on adult examined in the hand.		
9. Nest building or excavating nest-hole.	Not applicable.	
Confirmed breeding		
10. Distraction-display or injury-feigning.		
11. Used nest or eggshells found (occupied or laid within period of survey).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In some cases there may be evidence of Confirmed breeding based on signs of eggs having been laid (such as eggshells near a nest) or of young having been present in a nest.
12. Recently fledged young (nidicolous species) or downy young (nidifugous species).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A family of cranes should only be logged as Confirmed breeding for the site if the observer can be sure they fledged close by as once the young can fly, a family could travel some distance.

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13. Adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating occupied nest (including high nests or nest-holes, the contents of which can not be seen) or adult seen incubating.	Adult birds seen entering or leaving a nest site in circumstances indicating a nest with eggs/young (active breeding) constitute Probable breeding – see above.	
14. Adult carrying faecal sac or food or young.		
15. Nest containing eggs.		● A nest with incubating bird or eggs seen.
16. Nest with young seen or heard.		● A nest containing young birds.

Notes.

- Submissions to the Panel: records of pairs according to the above criteria should be submitted as Possible/Probable/Confirmed breeding pairs. Any other records should be classified as either non-breeding pairs or as records with inadequate evidence, as defined below – these records should also be submitted and will be held on the RBBP database as they may indicate future potential breeding sites.
- Non-breeding: two birds present at one or more sites for 14 days or more between mid-April and the end of June, seen or heard displaying, but where the evidence suggests they did not breed, should be treated as a non-breeding pair. If no display is seen, then they should merely be classed as long-staying birds.
- Inadequate records: if cranes are recorded at a site for less than 14 days without any evidence of breeding or summering, the records should be treated as inadequate to suspect breeding or summering.
- These guidelines follow the recommendations of the UK Crane Working Group so that comparable statistics can be maintained by that group and RBBP.
- Reference: Appendix 1 (Crane breeding status) in *The Changing Status of the Common Crane in the UK*, Stanbury *et al.* (2011), *Brit. Birds* 104:432-447.