India's first synchronised nationwide Sarus Crane survey (BNHS)

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News

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) held India's first synchronised nationwide Sarus Crane survey on 10–11 Oct 2026 (10 Oct was World Migratory Bird Day). Under BNHS's Central Asian Flyway programme, led by Director Kishor Rithe and Deputy Director Dr P. Sathiyaselvam, State Forest Departments, farmers, colleges and citizen scientists took part. It aims to set a baseline count, map breeding sites and identify power lines that kill the birds.

Key facts

Run by	Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) – citizen-science method
Dates	10–11 Oct 2026
Earlier estimate	International Crane Foundation (2026): about 23,255 in India; Uttar Pradesh 19,918
Sarus	World's tallest flying bird (about 1.5 m); Antigone antigone
Status	IUCN Vulnerable; Wildlife Act Schedule I; CITES Appendix II

Background

- Sarus crane: the only crane species that breeds as a resident in India; pairs stay together for life, making it a symbol of marital fidelity; it is Uttar Pradesh's State bird.

- Range: Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana. Threats: wetland loss, pesticides, power-line collisions, egg theft.
- BNHS: a non-government research body founded in Mumbai in 1883; Dr Salim Ali, the 'Birdman of India', was associated with it.
- Note: this is not an official government 'census' but a citizen-science 'survey' run by BNHS; results are not yet out.

Tamil Nadu link: the Sarus crane does not normally occur in Tamil Nadu. BNHS runs a 'Bird Migration Study Centre' at Point Calimere (Kodiakkarai), Nagapattinam district. Vedanthangal is India's oldest bird sanctuary.

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