

TASK 1: Summarise in 1 or 2 sentences what the talk is about.

Suggested answer: The talk is about cranes which are endangered species and what conservationists are doing to safeguard them.

TASK 2: What does the speaker comment on cranes and the innovative methods to protect them?

- 1 Cranes' Grand Presence: Cranes are magnificent birds, characterized by their tall stature and impressive wingspan.
- 2 Cultural Significance: The longstanding influence of Cranes in Asian art, their symbolic representation of peace and happiness in India
- 3 National Symbol: In South Africa, the crane holds the prestigious position of being the national bird, emphasizing its cultural and symbolic importance.
- 4 Global Crane Diversity: Worldwide, there are 15 crane species, with three of them facing a threat in Southern Africa
- 5 Population Decline: The wottled crane, blue crane, and crowned crane populations in Southern Africa are alarmingly low, with factors like habitat destruction contributing to their decline.
- 6 Habitat Under Siege: Wetlands, the preferred habitat for Cranes, are under threat in Southern Africa due to water scarcity, posing a significant challenge to the bird's survival.
- 7 Agricultural Threats: Cranes are susceptible to poisoning from agricultural pesticides, particularly in areas where they consume a variety of food, from small mammals to grains.
- 8 Electricity and Collisions: The expanding use of electricity in Southern Africa results in frequent collisions between cranes and power lines, contributing to their population decline.
- 9 Conservation Efforts: conservation initiatives led by organizations like the Endangered Wildlife Trust, are making strides in protecting and boosting crane populations.
- 10 Innovative Conservation Methods: Unique approaches such as the isolation, rear, and release program and the use of satellite tracking for blue cranes demonstrate the innovative strategies employed to ensure the birds' survival and future growth.

How many points did you say?

## TAPESCRIPT

Cranes are huge spectacular birds, tall and elegant on the ground with a large impressive wingspan in the sky. By their very presence, Cranes demand attention. Perhaps that's why they have featured heavily in Asian art, literature and legend for thousands of years, and why they are seen as a symbol of peace and happiness in India. In Africa, they are an emblem of the Zulu royal family, and the crane is South Africa's national bird. There are a total of 15 species of crane worldwide, seven of which are under threat, and three of these are found in Southern Africa. It is these three species that I want to update you on this evening. In terms of total populations, the waddled crane is down to about 280 individuals. The blue crane about 21,000 and the crowned crane about 3500, so none of them has what we might call healthy numbers. So what are the main reasons for the decline in crane numbers in Southern Africa? Habitat destruction comes top of the list. Cranes are generally found in wetlands, and these areas are very much under siege in Southern Africa, where water is a very scarce resource. Another major problem for cranes is poisoning by agricultural pesticides. These birds will eat anything from small mammals and reptiles to fallen grain, so are vulnerable in areas that have been sprayed, for example. The growing use of electricity is evidence of development in Southern Africa, and cranes are the frequent victims of collisions with the power lines that now crisscross the landscape. Small wonder then, the cranes have been in decline. But things are changing. In South Africa, crane conservation has become one of the major thrusts in endangered species conservation. With the endangered wildlife trust, one of Southern Africa's most effective environmental conservation organisations, acting as an umbrella body for a number of hands-on conservation units. For the waddled crane, a unique population boosting programme has been introduced, called isolation, rear and release. Chicks are either bred in captivity, or one of the two eggs normally laid in a wild clutch is removed. After artificial incubation, the chicks are reared by crane mums. These are local women who dress up as cranes and are trained to behave like cranes. When fully

reared, the chicks are released into the wild in pre-selected safe areas.

Modern technology is also being used with the blue crane. Some adult birds are now being fitted with miniature transmitters and through satellite tracking. The Earth Station is in France and South Africa's network of airports is also involved. They are being followed around the country to determine their movements. So, from a situation at the beginning of this decade, when Southern Africa's cranes looked as though they might not even make it into the next century, it now seems that the cranes will be flying into the future with confidence.

Now play the recording again.