

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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# The World's Tallest Flying Bird

by Guy Belleranti

**Y**ou may know the ostrich is the tallest living bird. However, the tallest living bird that flies is one you may not have heard of. It's the sarus crane!

Sarus cranes are the largest species of crane. They get most of their height from long legs and a long neck. Some males stand 6 feet (1.8 meters) tall and have a wingspan of nearly 9 feet (2.7 meters).

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That's the distance between the floor and ceiling in many houses.

Sarus cranes' bodies are mostly gray. They have red heads and pink legs. Most live in marshes and wet plains in Southeast Asia. However, in the 1960s, some were also discovered living in northern Australia.

eggs in the nest. Both parents take turns incubating, or sitting



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when feeding. However, more commonly the cranes are in pairs or small family groups.

Pairs mate for life. They work together building a nest in or near shallow water. The location might be in a natural wetland or in a flooded farm field. The nest is huge at 6 feet (1.8 meters) wide and 3 feet (1 meter) high. The nest may be used for years.

The female lays one or two

airgoes and toxes are dangers to the young.

However, the biggest threat to sarus cranes is loss of wetland habitat. Although considered sacred in much of Asia, the crane continues to lose wetland habitat to agriculture. Some organizations and communities where sarus cranes live are working to conserve these habitats.

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1. True or false: The saurus crane is the tallest bird in the world. Explain your answer.

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- c. a field next to a pond      d. a dry forest
4. A saurus crane nest is about \_\_\_\_\_ as tall as it is wide.  
a. twice  
b. half  
c. equally
5. How long after a sarus crane egg is laid will it hatch?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What was the author's purpose for writing this article?  
a. to inform people about the dangers sarus cranes face  
b. to persuade people to help protect sarus cranes  
c. to tell people about the characteristics and habitats of sarus cranes  
d. to convince people that sarus cranes are the best kind of bird

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The World's Tallest Flying Bird



Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. \_ \_ r i \_ \_ u \_ \_ t u r \_ \_

**hint:** farming

2. d \_ \_ \_ g \_ \_ e s



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5. w \_ \_ \_ l \_ \_ \_ d

**hint:** a marsh is one

6. i \_ \_ c \_ \_ b \_ \_ \_ i \_ \_ g

**hint:** sitting on something

7. \_ \_ e s \_ \_ r o \_ \_

**hint:** ruin

8. p \_ \_ \_ d a \_ \_ o \_ \_ s

**hint:** opposites of prey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# The World's Tallest Flying Bird



In the article, "The World's Tallest Flying Bird," you learned that some saurus cranes live in Australia.

Do some research to find another animal that lives in Australia. On the lines below, write a few paragraphs about the animal you chose. Include what it looks like, what it eats, what type of habitat it lives in, and any other important characteristics. Write any websites you used on the back of this page.



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## ANSWER KEY

# The World's Tallest Flying Bird

by Guy Belleranti



1. True or false: The sarus crane is the tallest bird in the world. Explain your answer.

~~False. The ostrich is the tallest bird. The sarus crane is~~

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6. What was the author's purpose for writing this article?
  - a. to inform people about the dangers sarus cranes face
  - b. to persuade people to help protect sarus cranes
  - c. to tell people about the characteristics and habitats of sarus cranes**
  - d. to convince people that sarus cranes are the best kind of bird

## ANSWER KEY

# The World's Tallest Flying Bird



Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. a g r i c u l t u r e      agriculture

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8. p r e d a t o r s      predators

*hint: opposites of prey*