Very attractive birds of open plains and marshes. The crown of fine, golden feathers sits on a black, velvety forehead, and below the clean white face disc hangs a red wattle. Although sometimes seen in large flocks, especially within the Ngorongoro Crater, these birds are more often encountered in pairs walking sedately and feeding by pecking at seeds. If very lucky, you may see them break into a joyous, hopping display dance, which is one of the finest sights of the Serengeti and NCA. Pairs build a floating nest in a shallow pool. The chicks are yellow and rather cute, though immature birds are quite scruffy. The call is a loud honking “hu-wonk” that is often given in flight, when they also show large white patches on the forewing.

This is the national bird of Uganda, and is ‘Grey’ and ‘Crowned’ rather than ‘Grey-crowned’. The distinction is made because there is also a Black Crowned Crane found in West Africa.