



# EASTERN CRANE BULLETIN

**September 2020**

*The Eastern Crane E-bulletin covers news about the Eastern Populations of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes, as well as general information about cranes and the continuing work for the protection of these birds and their habitats.*

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## **Conservation on behalf of Aransas-Wood Buffalo Whoopers**

Chester McConnell spent most of his 40-year professional career evaluating land use and stream projects, wetland protection, conducting wildlife research, monitoring populations and managing wildlife habitats. He holds a Bachelor's-degree in biology and political science from Livingston University and a Master of Science degree in wildlife management and botany from Auburn University. After retiring in 1999, he has focused his time on Whooping Cranes and wetland and stream protection.



*From left to right: Chester McConnell, President, Friends of the Wild Whoopers; Todd Spivey, USACE Park Ranger, Stillhouse Hollow Lake; and Dorothy McConnell, Field Assistant, Friends of the Wild Whoopers.*

From 1974 to 1999 McConnell was the Southeastern Representative for the private, nonprofit Wildlife Management Institute. His responsibilities involved natural resource management in nine southern states. He worked with government agencies, industry, and private landowners, and he coordinated with numerous private conservation groups to promote wise land use and protect wildlife habitats for all wildlife species. He was also on the Institute's team that evaluated state and federal wildlife agencies to enhance their research, management, public relations and law-enforcement programs.

McConnell became interested in Whooping Cranes while in the 5th grade after reading a *Weekly Reader* article announcing that the Whoopers had returned to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. At that time, no one knew where the birds went during the summer months. McConnell eventually became a lifetime member of the [Whooping Crane Conservation Association \(WCCA\)](#) and served in a number of capacities – from a trustee, President, manager of the WCCA website, and for 14 years as editor of the newsletter (along with his wife Dorothy as Associate Editor).

McConnell's past experience led him to the position he currently holds, President of [Friends of the Wild Whoopers \(FOTWW\)](#), a private, nonprofit group with a mission to assist in the protection and

management of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population of Whooping Cranes – the only wild population in the world. And that is what he does non-stop, his eyes on the goal of preserving crucial habitat for the large white cranes that survive despite the odds oftentimes stacked against them.

FOTWW believes that the wild population of Whooping Cranes is fully capable of being self-sustaining. Studies show that this population is steadily increasing with each breeding season without any assistance from humans. Whooping Cranes are strong, resilient birds on their own, but they have to rely on humans to:

**(1) Protect habitat, including**

- the Wood Buffalo National Park breeding/nesting grounds, under threat from encroaching oil and mining developments in Alberta, Saskatchewan and surrounding territories in Canada
- existing migratory stopovers in the U.S., as well as the identification and safeguarding of new areas that have crane roosting/foraging potential
- key coastal wintering habitat, in addition to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, from harmful oil/shipping development while continuing to build relationships with private landowners.



*Chester McConnell, President and Co-founder of Friends of the Wild Whoopers (FOTWW)*

**(2) Stop shooting Whooping Cranes!**

Each fall, the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population of Whooping Cranes journeys 2,500 miles from the cranes' Canadian breeding ground in Wood Buffalo National Park to its wintering ground at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and nearby coastal Texas. Then in the spring the journey is reversed as the cranes return north to their Canadian breeding grounds. Cranes prefer small wetlands, ponds and streams with shallow water and shorelines with sparse vegetation as roosting sites with nearby agricultural fields where they forage on waste corn and invertebrates. Such habitats, once abundant along the cranes' migration route, are now becoming scarce. A corridor of these habitats is essential, because the cranes stop 15 to 30 times during migration to rest and forage.

In 2015, [Friends of the Wild Whoopers \(FOTWW\)](#) initiated a “stopover” habitat project to help the wild Aransas-Wood Buffalo population. Whooping Cranes have been documented on private lands, wildlife areas, lakes and some military bases during migration. As private lands face increasing development, and wetlands are lost to agriculture and degraded by global warming, FOTWW has advocated for stopovers on military bases, Indian Reservations and [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers \(USACE\)](#) developments. Managed properly, these sites would mitigate the loss of habitat, not only for the endangered Whooping Crane, but also for other wildlife and fish species.

**PHASE I: Military Installations**

On March 30, 2015 FOTWW submitted a proposal to evaluate wetland habitats on military installations and met with the [Department of Defense Partners in Flight \(DoD PIF\)](#), a federally funded habitat-based management effort. The program's mission is to help species at risk, to keep common birds common, and to engage in voluntary conservation partnerships for birds and bird habitats. DoD PIF sanctioned the proposal and worked with FOTWW to establish contacts with military installations within the migration corridor. Establishing rest and refueling stations for the Whooping Cranes is possible, in part, through the [Dod PIF program](#).

As of December 2015, eight of the 46 military bases located within the 200-mile-wide Whooping Crane migration corridor including North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas had been visited to determine where marginal habitats areas could be improved by proper management or new habitats developed. Within those eight bases and camps, FOTWW identified 43 wetland sites that could become Whooping Crane migration stops with little or no effort. Upon completion of the Stopover Habitat

Project in September 2016, an estimated 96 “stopover ponds” were available on 32 secure military bases along the 2,500-mile migration route.

To read more about the FOTWW “stopover” habitat project on U.S. military bases click here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/whooping-crane-stopover-habitat-project-on-u-s-military-bases/>

To read the FOTWW proposal to evaluate potential Whooping Crane habitats on military facilities, go here: <https://kyc4sandhillcranes.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/military-whooper-proposal-with-map-3-30-2015.pdf>

## **PHASE II: Native American Reservations**

Continuing in its mission to identify, protect, enhance and develop existing or potential “stopover habitats” for the endangered wild population of Whooping Cranes, Friends of the Wild Whoopers completed a survey in October 2016 of tribal trust lands in the Great Plains Region. Along with the assistance of reservation biologists, FOTWW wildlife biologist Chester McConnell visited seven Indian reservations involving 3.8 million-acres of trust land.

Together the biologists identified over 1,700 potential Whooping Crane stopover ponds/wetlands on reservations in North Dakota and South Dakota that fall within the migration corridor. The biologists estimated that approximately 1,275 of the ponds already provided good stopover habitat if current management conditions were maintained. And, that the remainder of the ponds needed only low-cost improvements to enhance their potential for attracting Whooping Cranes.

Read more about the project here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/indian-reservations-quality-whooper-stopover-habitats/>

To read more and see photos of some habitat at the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, South Dakota; Spirit Lake Reservation, (Fort Totten) North Dakota; and the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation Sioux Tribe, South Dakota, and for a map of the Dakotas/Nebraska area showing Indian Reservations, go here: <https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/indian-reservations-in-dakotas-abundant-whooping-crane-stopover-habitat/>

## **PHASE III: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

While partnering with the Friends of the Wild Whoopers since 2017, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on July 8, 2018, with FOTWW to assist in the recovery of endangered Whooping Cranes.

Per the MOU, USACE and Friends of the Wild Whoopers jointly assess migration stopover habitat at USACE water resource developments. The assessments will be used by USACE to develop work plans that maintain and improve existing habitat and create additional habitat for the critically endangered cranes as part of [USACE Environmental Stewardship Program](#). This partnership is consistent with USACE’s responsibilities under the [Endangered Species Act](#), which allows federal agencies to use their existing authorities to assist in the recovery of listed species.

FOTWW continues its joint partnership with the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) (USACE) on assessing possible stopover habitat in the 7-state migration corridor that includes Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana. FOTWW is confident that the USACE can do much to protect and manage many “stopover habitats” within the migration corridor wetland habitats while other areas can be enhanced with minor, low cost work.

*The following is a partial listing of ASACE water resource developments already assessed for stopover habitat. The FOTWW reports include maps, habitat photos and enhancement suggestions.*

### **Benbrook Lake**

To read more about Benbrook Lake, Fort Worth Texas, and see photos of the habitat there, go here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/benbrook-lake-surprise-stopover-habitat-for-whooping-cranes-texas/>

## Waco Lake

Read more about the work at Waco Lake and to see photos, go here:

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/waco-lake-provides-stopover-areas-migrating-whooping-cranes/>

## Whitney Lake

To see photos of the Whitney Lake area, and to read more about the work being done there, go here:

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/whitney-lake-jewel-for-whooping-cranes/>

## Fort Supply Lake

To find out more and view photos and maps of Fort Supply Lake in Oklahoma go here:

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/corps-engineer-lakes-oklahoma-being-evaluated-whooping-crane-stopover-habitats/>

## Canton Lake

Or, for more information and to view photos of the Canton Lake habitat in Oklahoma, go here:

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/future-whooping-crane-island-habitat-canton-lake-oklahoma/>

## Kaw Lake

And, to learn more and view photos of Kaw Lake in Oklahoma, go here:

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/kaw-lake-ok-whooping-crane-stopover-habitat/>

## Lewis and Clark Lake

To learn more of this lake located in South Dakota and Nebraska, go here:

[https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/friends-of-the-wild-whoopers-and-corps-of-engineers-visit-lewis-and-clark-lake/?fbclid=IwAR0I-gcU1XZD9YJceFwQ\\_D4QZPLyWWIN6h9bXnEZzG5N3jGhCDqfQh78Q](https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/friends-of-the-wild-whoopers-and-corps-of-engineers-visit-lewis-and-clark-lake/?fbclid=IwAR0I-gcU1XZD9YJceFwQ_D4QZPLyWWIN6h9bXnEZzG5N3jGhCDqfQh78Q)

## Lake Sharpe, South Dakota

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/whooping-crane-stopover-habitats-on-lake-sharpe-south-dakota/>

## Habitat on Some Corps of Engineer Lakes in Dakotas And Montana

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/abundant-whooping-crane-stopover-habitat-coe-lakes-in-dakotas-montana/>

## Share your land with a Whooper

Even though wildlife refuges along the route provide the Whoopers attractive stopover habitat, as the population continues to grow, there is an increased need for more of the sites to be on private lands. The areas of focus for these ponds/wetlands are in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. If you own land, please consider sharing a small amount with our endangered Whooping Cranes! Check out the new Friends of the Wild Whoopers “**Stopover Ponds/Wetland**” **brochure** that lists features needed in stopover ponds and provides diagrams to assist you with planning.



If you would like to download a printable PDF version of the Stopover Pond/Wetlands Plans, [click here](#) or here:

[http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FOTWW\\_STOPOVER\\_POND\\_WEB.pdf](http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/FOTWW_STOPOVER_POND_WEB.pdf)

To support the crucial habitat work done by FOTWW on behalf of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population of Whooping Cranes please consider becoming a supporter of the Friends of the Wild Whoopers, by going here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/support-fotww/>

Your support will go a long way in helping the wild Aransas-Wood Buffalo Whooper population becoming a self-sustaining population.



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## Aransas-Wood Buffalo WHOOPERS

### Wintering population stable – expanding range along Texas Coast

The Aransas-Wood Buffalo population of Whooping Crane – the only wild population in the world of this endangered species – has topped the 500 mark for the third consecutive year according to biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as shown in the recently completed analysis of aerial Whooping Crane surveys conducted last winter. *To read or download a PDF of the USFWS Whooping Crane Survey Results: Winter 2019–2020, go here:*

<https://www.fws.gov/uploadedFiles/WHCR%20Update%20Winter%202019-2020b.pdf>

Each fall these cranes make a 2,500-mile journey from their breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada to their Texas wintering grounds at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding areas. In 2019 the first cranes of the season arrived in Texas in mid-October. They were observed at Aransas Pass Wildlife Refuge and Goose Island State Park.

While the Whoopers are at Aransas NWR, wildlife biologists with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey the birds by air to analyze population trends. The winter 2019-2020 survey showed dozens of the endangered cranes outside of the primary survey area, indicating an expansion of the species winter range on the Texas coast. “While we did not detect growth in the size of the population this year, we do continue to observe Whooping Cranes outside of our primary survey area, indicating they continue to expand their winter range,” said Wade Harrell, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Whooping Crane recovery coordinator.

Last winter's preliminary data analysis indicated 506 Whooping Cranes, including 39 juveniles, in the primary survey area, about 153,950 acres, centered on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. This is similar to the prior winter's estimate of 504 Whooping Cranes, indicating the population remained stable and did not experience detectable population growth this year. An additional 29 birds were recorded outside the primary survey area during the survey. Biologists plan to conduct the next survey in January 2021 and will add the Holiday Beach secondary survey area to their primary survey area as there were enough Whooping Crane groups observed there to meet the protocol for inclusion.

Biologists will continue marking Whooping Cranes with tracking devices this winter as part of an ongoing U.S. and Canadian government joint research project.

### Operation Whooping Crane – A Bit of History

In 1966, official concern over the vulnerability of the Whooping Crane population led to a joint agreement between the [Canadian Wildlife Service](#) (CWS) and the [United States Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (USFWS) to collaborate on a captive-breeding program to conserve the species. To accomplish this, eggs would have to be removed from nests in the wild at [Wood Buffalo National Park](#) (WBNP) and the man chosen and best suited for this task was wildlife biologist, Ernie Kuyt who worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service.

For eleven years, Bob Isbister worked for the Canadian Wildlife Service and for three years worked the flights during the Whooping Crane egg collection. *Following is Bob's description of the egg collection at WBNP and of working with Ernie Kuyt. Friends of the Wild Whoopers thanks Bob for allowing them to share his memories and photos by USFWS and National Geographic.*

*To read the story by Pam Bates, Vice-President of FOTWW, and for more photos from “Operation Whooping Crane,” go here:*

<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/operation-whooping-crane-a-bit-of-history/>



*The “Operation Whooping Crane” helicopter flying low over the Whooping Crane nesting grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park in search of nests containing eggs. The helicopter is visible in the lower right quadrant. Photo courtesy of USFWS/National Geographic Society.*



*During “Operation Whooping Crane,” Ernie Kuyt approaches a nest (located in upper right) to collect a crane egg as helicopter waits. Photo courtesy of USFWS/National Geographic Society*

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## Eastern Migratory Population of WHOOPERS

### Eastern Migratory Population WHCR Update – September 1, 2020

Below is the most recent update for the Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes. A huge thank-you to the staff of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Departments of Natural Resources of flyway states, the [International Crane Foundation](#), and all the volunteers who help us keep track of the cranes throughout the year. We appreciate your contribution to the recovery of the Whooping Crane Eastern Migratory Population. This report is produced by the International Crane Foundation for the [Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership](#). Near real-time locations of Whooping Cranes in this population can be seen at [map.bringbackthecranes.org](http://map.bringbackthecranes.org)

#### Eastern Migratory Population Estimate

The current estimated population size is 81 (38 F, 38 M, 5 U). 16 of these 81 individuals are wild-hatched and the rest are captive-reared. This now includes three of this year's cohort of wild-hatched chicks who have fledged but does not yet include W18-20 who has not yet fledged. To the best of our knowledge, as of 1 September, at least 73 Whooping Cranes are in Wisconsin, at least 1 is in Michigan (although possibly up to 4), and 1 in Illinois. The remaining birds' locations have not been confirmed in the last month.

**Editor:** *The italicized, gray copy included in the 2020 Wild-hatched Cohort listing is from earlier June and July, updates. It is included because it is a record of the fate of 14 of the colts.*

#### 2020 Wild-hatched Cohort

Chicks listed below in bold are currently alive, as far as we know. So far at least 18 chicks have hatched and 4 are still alive.

- W1-20 (U) and W2-20 (U) hatched to parents 12-11 and 5-11 in Juneau County in April. Both disappeared during July, and the remains of W1-20 were recovered. The cause of death is unknown.
- **W3-20 (F)** hatched to parents 11-15 and 42-09 in Adams County at the end of April, was banded in June, fledged in July, and is still alive.
- *W4-20 (U) hatched around 3 May in Sauk County to a trio of parents, 6-17, 4-17, and 24-17. 4-17 and 24-17 are raising the chick together, 6-17 is still around, but we do not know which adults are W4-20's biological parents.*
- *W5-20 (U) hatched on 8 May to parents 10-15 and 4-13 in Green Lake County and is still alive as far as we know.*
- *W6-20 (U) hatched on 8 May to parents 7-11 and 19-10 in Juneau County. W6-20 was not seen with parents by the end of May.*
- *W7-20 (U) and W8-20 (U) hatched on 8-10 May to parents 9-05 and 13-03 in Juneau County. Neither chick is alive as of the end of May.*
- *W9-20 (U) and W10-20 (U) hatched around 13 May to parents 1-11 and 59-13 in St. Croix County. One or both of these chicks are still alive as far as we know (June).*
- *W11-20 (U) hatched around 15 May to parents 18-03 and 36-09 in Juneau County and disappeared during July.*
- *W12-20 (U) hatched on 15 May to a female-female pair 2-15 and 28-05 in Marathon County. Fertile eggs from 2-04 and 25-09 were swapped into the female-female nest when black flies were hatching at Necedah NWR and likely would have caused a nest abandonment for 2-04 and 25-09. We don't believe W12-20 is still alive as of the end of May, although we will confirm in the beginning of June.*
- **W13-20 (U)** hatched mid-May to parents 38-17 and 63-15 at Horicon NWR in Dodge County, fledged during August, and is still alive as of 1 September.
- **W14-20 (U)** hatched mid-May to parents 12-03 and 12-05 at Necedah NWR in Juneau County, was banded during July, was seen flying during August, and is still alive as of 1 September.



- W15-20 (U) hatched mid-to-late May but was first seen in early June with parents 15-11 and 29-08 at Necedah NWR in Juneau County. W15-20 was not seen during a flight on 25 June and was confirmed gone during July.
- W16-20 (U) hatched mid-June to parents 2-04 and 25-09 at Necedah NWR in Juneau County and disappeared during July.
- W17-20 (U) hatched in late June to parents W1-06 and 1-10 at Necedah NWR in Juneau County and disappeared during July. Father 1-10 was also found dead during July (see below).
- **W18-20 (U)** hatched early July to parents 13-02 and 24-08 from this pair's second nest at Necedah NWR in Juneau County. W18-20 is alive as of 1 September and is due to fledge later this month.

#### 2019 Cohort

- W1-19 (F) is now at Necedah NWR in Juneau Co, WI, and has occasionally been seen with W10-18 (U).
- W14-19 (F) is still in Portage Co, WI, with 1-17 (M).
- W19-19 (U) is still in Juneau Co, WI, with W3-18 (F) and W5-18 (M).
- 79-19 (F) is still in Dodge Co, WI, and is associating with 16-11 (M), 74-18 (M), and 75-18 (M).
- 80-19 (F) has returned to Grundy Co, IL.

#### 2018 Cohort

- W3-18 (F) and W5-18 (M) are still with W19-19 (U) in Juneau Co, WI.
- W1-18 (F) was last seen in Juneau Co in May.
- W10-18 (U) is still at Necedah NWR in Juneau Co, WI, and has occasionally been seen with W1-19 (F).
- W6-18 (M) is still associating with W1-06 (F) at Necedah NWR in Juneau Co, WI.
- 73-18 (F) is still associating with 3-04 (M) at Necedah NWR, in Juneau Co, WI.
- 74-18 (M) and 75-18 (M) are still usually together in Dodge Co, WI, and now have been seen associating with 79-19 (F) and 16-11 (M).
- 77- 18 (M) was reported in Eaton Co, MI during July.

#### Mortality or Long-term missing; Removal from EMP population (no August mortalities)

- 2-15 (F) incurred a wing injury during July. She was captured and brought into captivity for medical attention. She will not be able to be released back into the EMP and will now be a part of the captive population.
- 1-10 (M) was found dead during July, however the carcass was decomposed, and a cause of death was not determined. 1-10 and W1-06's chick went missing around this same time and W1-06 was then seen alone.
- 28-05 (F) was found dead during July. Few remains were found but our best guess is the mortality was due to predation during flightless molt.
- 4-08 (M) has not been seen since 24 July 2019, is now considered long-term-missing, and has been removed from population totals.

*For the monthly Whooping Crane Eastern Migratory Population updates that include population estimates, reproduction, wild-chick updates, cohort updates and mortalities, go here:*

<http://www.bringbackthecranes.org/project-updates/>

*To follow where the reintroduced eastern population is, go here:* <http://map.bringbackthecranes.org/>

*To learn more about the individual cranes in the eastern population, go here:*

<http://www.bringbackthecranes.org/emp-whooping-crane-biographies/>

Data courtesy of [Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership \(WCEP\)](#)

**UL = Ultralight** (Chicks were captive-hatched, then raised by costumed handlers and taught to follow an ultralight for their first migration to Florida); **DAR = Direct Autumn Release** (Chicks are captive-hatched



then released in the fall in the company of adult cranes from whom they will learn the migration route); **PR = Parent Reared** (Chicks are captive-hatched and raised by captive Whooping Cranes, then released near a wild crane pair in hopes the pair will “adopt” the juvenile and lead it on migration); **W = Wild hatched** to a wild Whooping Crane pair that then teach the migration route to the juvenile.

To report a banded Whooping Crane sighting, go here:  
<https://www.savingcranes.org/report-whooping-crane/>

## Ultralight that lead Whoopers calls Smithsonian’s Udvar-Hazy Center home

The Smithsonian Institution's 300,000 square-foot Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center (located in Chantilly, Virginia, near Dulles International Airport) reopened on July 24, 2020, with safety measures in place after being closed for several months due to COVID-19. Opened in 2003 as an adjunct to the popular National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., the 17-acre aviation and aerospace museum houses in its huge hangars thousands of notable artifacts that could never have fit inside the much smaller museum on the National Mall.

One of those exhibit items is the “Cosmos Phase II,” a French-made two-seat ultralight from 1992, used by the conservationist group Operation Migration to help guide juvenile cranes in the reintroduced Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes in migration from Wisconsin to Florida. Weighing about 360 pounds empty but with its 34-foot aluminum tube and sailcloth wingspan [this model](#) could safely match the Whooper cruising speed of about 38 mph, broadcasting crane calls to the following juvenile cranes during the flights. This model was the ultralight featured in the 1996 family film [Fly Away Home](#) with Jeff Daniels and Anna Paquin.

*“Despite many difficulties, Operation Migration has developed one of the most innovative and important wildlife conservation programs in history. They are well on their way to saving a species from extinction, and their efforts have boosted public interest in wildlife conservation. Joe Duff’s role was critical to the program’s success. He led the organization from its inception and developed the training protocols. By 2007, Duff had flown with birds longer than anyone had. He and his staff also led migrations of Trumpeter swans and Sandhill cranes.”*



– Smithsonian Institution

*The conservationist group Operation Migration used this two-seated ultralight to help guide endangered flocks of Whooping Cranes and other avian species in new migratory routes from Canada to the American South.*

Pilots volunteering for Operation Migration flew the Phase II now belonging to the National Air and Space Museum (NASM). Using this aircraft, they led Canada Geese to South Carolina in 1995, Trumpeter Swans to the Chesapeake the following year, Sandhill Cranes in 1997, 1998, and 2000, and the first Whooping cranes from Wisconsin to Florida in 2001. In 1996, the aircraft also appeared in the Columbia Pictures film [Fly Away Home](#). The trike was equipped with a custom-built bird guard enclosing the propeller; radios, GPS navigation, and a sound system to broadcast adult crane calls while flying with the birds.

To read the history of the ultralight method and what was involved with leading the juvenile Whooping Cranes south to Florida, go here: [https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/cosmos-phase-ii/nasm\\_A20060594000](https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/cosmos-phase-ii/nasm_A20060594000)

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## General News

### Alabama:

Registration for the second year of an experimental Sandhill Crane season in northern Alabama is scheduled for September 8, 2020. A total of 400 permits will be issued. Applicants will need a regular hunting license and a state waterfowl stamp to register. If selected, hunters will have to complete an online test that includes species identification and regulations. Once they have the permit and tags, hunters will need to acquire a federal duck stamp and Harvest Information Program certification. If hunting in a Wildlife Management Area, hunters also will need a WMA license. The hunting season in North Alabama will be from December 4-January 3, 2021 and January 11-January 31, 2021. The limit for the season is three cranes per permit.

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### Alaska:

#### **Sightings requested**

Kachemak Crane Watch (KCW) has asked the public to report sightings of fledgling Sandhill Crane colts practicing their flying skills. It takes 60-70 days from hatching to the time the colts fledge. Report where and when the colt was seen and whether it was able to fly with the adults. Include your specific location and other information you care to share. If the colts you have been observing have disappeared or died, and if you know how they died, please include this information in your report. Successful fledgling as well as mortality reports help Kachemak Crane Watch determine nesting success for the year compared to previous years. Your citizen science reports are vital to KCW monitoring of the nesting season. *Send reports to [reports@cranewatch.org](mailto:reports@cranewatch.org) or call 907-235-6262.*

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### Canada:

#### **Alberta announces Sandhill Crane season**

There will be Sandhill Crane hunting this fall in Alberta — a hunt that’s been opposed by environmental groups and was previously rejected by the provincial government in 2009, 2013 and 2014. The province said in a news release that the season will open 1 September 2020 in more than 50 wildlife management units in southern and east-central Alberta. In December 2019 the Canadian Wildlife Service proposed that the province open a fall Sandhill season, as “a new hunting opportunity” in Alberta pointing to the fact that Sandhill Crane hunting seasons have existed in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba for more than 50 years, with the Sandhill population remaining healthy.

The Canadian Wildlife Service also states that the hunt provides a mechanism to reduce crop depredation by the cranes. Opponents have noted that when the issue of crop depredation arose during an earlier debate, there had been only five complaints filed.

Sandhills depend on wetlands (currently disappearing at an alarming rate) and are known for low recruitment rates (the age juveniles fledge). Based on these points, Nissa Pettersen of the Alberta Wilderness Association expressed concern that the species might not bounce back from a year of hunting. As with other new hunting seasons, there is concern that a hunt might threaten the endangered Whooping Crane that use some of the same migration routes and could be mistaken for a Sandhill. In order to hunt Sandhill Cranes hunters are required to have a provincial game bird license and a federal migratory bird license.



*One of two Whooping Cranes observed in the area of Frank Lake east of High River. Photo by Mike Sturk*

## **Alberta foothills visited by Whoopers**

In early June 2020 two endangered Whooping Cranes of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population were spotted at Frank Lake east of High River in Alberta. According to local birder Greg Wagner, the sighting was unusual. Until recently there had been few records of the cranes in southern (or central) Alberta during the summer. When the cranes leave their wintering grounds along the Texas coast in Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in the spring to head back to their breeding grounds in far northern Alberta, they usually take a route through Saskatchewan. Occasionally Whooping Cranes have been known to spend the summer in southern Saskatchewan.

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## **Florida:**

### **Florida Sandhill Cranes found nesting along busy road**

Two subspecies of Sandhill Crane occur in Florida. [The Florida Sandhill Crane \(\*Grus c. pratensis\*\)](#), numbering 4,000 to 5,000, is a non-migratory year-round breeding resident. They are joined every winter by 25,000 migratory Greater Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*), the larger of the two subspecies. The Greater Sandhill Crane winters in Florida but nests in the Great Lakes region. Sandhill Cranes nest during late winter and spring on mats of vegetation about two feet in diameter and in shallow water.

Carolyn Antman, the Conservation Director for Duval County and Duval Audubon Society, says that the Florida Sandhill Crane is protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act and is listed as “threatened” by Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species Rule.

Degradation or direct loss of habitat due to wetland drainage or conversion of prairie for development or agricultural use are the primary threats facing Florida Sandhill Cranes. Recently two pairs of Sandhills chose to nest in a wetlands area bordered by New World Avenue – a four-lane highway – in western Jacksonville, Florida. Both the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Duval Audubon Society received numerous reports of the adults and their colts crossing the road to forage. Colts don’t have their flight feathers until about three months of age, so must walk and are unable to avoid fast-moving traffic resulting in a higher mortality rate of those killed by cars.

The Duval Audubon Society has recommended placing signage along the road where the cranes most commonly cross to inform the drivers to slow down and pay attention. They are also asking community members to please consider contacting their Jacksonville City Council representative to share any concerns about the cranes.

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## Illinois:



### **Kaskaskian visitors**

For the past five years, a pair of Whooping Cranes from the reintroduced Eastern Migratory Population has wintered on [Kaskaskia Island](#), some 15 miles west of Chester, Illinois. While Kaskaskia Island is not large, it is amazing how such large, white birds can disappear and be hidden from view below a rise, in a fallow cornfield or drainage ditch. The two Whoopers were spotted by photographer Henry Detwiler along Cemetery Lane in late February 2020.

*A pair of Whooping Cranes, female 38-17 (left) and male 63-15 (right), walk along an area on Kaskaskia Island. Photo by Henry Detwiler*

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## Iowa:

### **Transmitters will track Sandhill Cranes as Iowa population grows**

Greater Sandhill Cranes were extirpated from Iowa in the late 19th century due to habitat loss when the shallow prairie pothole wetlands were drained for farming, and unregulated hunting led to overharvest of the species. As their historic wetland habitats has returned and population recovered, the Sandhills began to return to Iowa and were first documented successfully nesting here in 1992. Today, Sandhill nests have been documented in 27 counties.

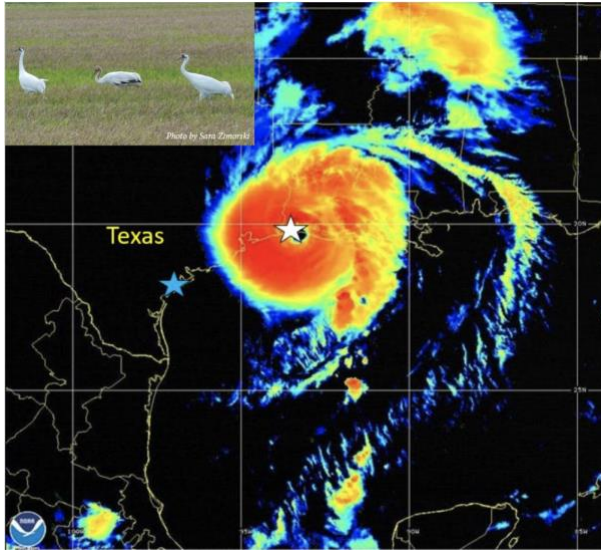
There are nine populations of Sandhill Cranes in North America, six migrate and three are non-migratory. The mid-continent population is the largest and are the Sandhills observed during spring migration in Nebraska when over half a million cranes can be observed there at that time.

Research specialist Matt Garrick from the Iowa DNR's Clear Lake office is part of a pilot study partnership between the IOWA DNR and Iowa State University with the goal of attaching GPS transmitters to ten cranes to determine exactly where they come from. Biologists think the cranes nesting in Iowa are most likely cranes from the eastern population that end up migrating and wintering in the southeastern United States. Garrick said they hope to determine whether there are midcontinent cranes in Iowa through information collected from the transmitters. Garrick placed the first transmitter on a crane on May 24, 2020 in Story County.

Iowans are asked to report sightings and locations of nesting cranes to [matt.garrick@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:matt.garrick@dnr.iowa.gov). Sandhill Cranes can live up to 35 years in the wild. In the breeding season they usually lay two eggs with only one of the chicks surviving – and with that said, fewer than 30 percent of those chicks will survive to fledge. Sandhill Cranes are protected by law in Iowa.



## Louisiana:



### Hurricane Laura makes landfall at White Lake area

Aug 27, 2020 @ 8:55pm (ICF Facebook post)  
*This morning the eye of Hurricane Laura passed directly over the White Lake area in Louisiana, where our partners, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Whooping Cranes, are reintroducing a non-migratory Whooping Crane population. This map from 8 a.m. today shows the storm path, with the white star representing the reintroduction area. We are in touch with staff in Louisiana, and they are relocated and safe. It will be days before our colleagues are able to return to this area to report on the status of the cranes, but we will keep you informed as we know more.*

August 29 (LDWF whooper Facebook post)

*“We’ve been monitoring the data since Hurricane Laura, and so far, things look good! Not every crane carries a remote transmitter, so it may be a while before we can confirm everybody’s status, but the birds apparently hunkered down and rode it out. We will continue to share updates as we get more information but are encouraged by what we’ve seen so far!” For the latest updates on the cranes go to: [Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries – Whooping Cranes](#)*

The [Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries \(LDWF\)](#) is working with a number of partners to restore the Whooping Crane in Louisiana. This remarkable bird, while historically found in Louisiana, disappeared from the state’s landscape in 1950 due to mechanized agriculture and unregulated hunting. The reintroduction program began in 2011. Currently, there are 76 Whooping Cranes in the population. The goal of the Louisiana project is to establish a self-sustaining, non-migratory Whooping Crane population, estimated to require approximately 120 individuals and 30 productive pairs.

### Justice finally served in 2016 shooting deaths of L3-15 and L5-15

Two years of legwork and another year spent investigating by Wildlife and Fisheries Enforcement Division and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service agents reached its conclusion on July 30, 2020 when U.S. Attorney David Joseph announced that Kaenon Constantin, 28, of Rayne was sentenced “for killing and transporting a federally protected and endangered Whooping Crane.”

Judge Hanna administered a rigorous sentence to Constantin of five years of unsupervised probation, 360 hours of community service with LDWF related to wildlife conservation, and a suspension of hunting privileges until community service is completed. He ordered Constantin to pay a \$10,000 Lacey Act violation fine (Constantin pled guilty to a misdemeanor violation of the Lacey Act, which makes it illegal to transport wildlife, fish or plants taken in violation of any other state, federal or foreign law) and \$75,000 in civil restitution to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

The sentencing stems from a May 20, 2016, incident when prosecutors proved Constantin and a juvenile used .22 caliber rifles to shoot two Whooping Cranes, L3-15 and L5-15, in Acadia Parish. According to the testimony, “one crane fell dead ... Constantin and his accomplice retrieved its carcass. The other crane flew too far north into another field and couldn’t be retrieved, but investigators later recovered its carcass. Constantin and the juvenile found a transponder on the crane’s leg used by LDWF in tracking the crane, then cut the transponder off of the crane and transported the crane, knife, severed legs and transponders to a nearby road where they discarded the evidence (in a crawfish pond).” Constantin denied the incident before the LDWF cited him April 2, 2018.

Judge Hanna said under normal circumstances he would have given jail time, but due to the pandemic and its huge impact on the prison population, he did not want to do it for this case.

The International Crane Foundation applauds Judge Hanna, Danny Siefker Jr., the Assistant U.S. Attorney who prosecuted this case, and the federal investigators who pursued this case for two years for their recognition of the value of this species to the people of Louisiana and conservation community at large. The sentence given Kaenon Constantin is the toughest ever in Louisiana for a crime involving one of the endangered birds, the [International Crane Foundation](#) said in a news release.

“This case sets a good precedent moving forward in Louisiana,” International Crane Foundation North America Program Director Liz Smith said. “Whooping Cranes are a valuable part of Louisiana’s cultural and natural heritage, and people who choose to shoot them will face the consequences.”

### Several recent posts from [Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries - Whooping Cranes](#)

#### [July 10, 2020](#)

*LW2-20 has fledged!!! Although we haven't yet seen him/her fly, one of the landowners did see the entire family fly several weeks ago on 23 June! On that date, LW2-20 was 12 weeks/84 days old which is exactly in the age range of when previous wild LA chicks have fledged! LW2-20 is now officially counted in the population which currently numbers 76.*

*We don't want to take away from that happy and exciting news, but we do want to keep you all updated, so we also have to let you know that unfortunately LW5-20 disappeared which is sad and disappointing! There's always ups and downs and steps forward and back, we were just hoping for a little more up and forward, but, are still thrilled with the success of L11-11 and L8-13, the excellent parents of LW2-20!*

#### [August 20, 2020](#)

*Our two female Whooping Cranes who were previously a part of the Florida non-migratory population are doing well! Twenty-two-year-old LF1-98 has been with three-year-old male L10-18 since February and five-year-old LFW12-15 was recently observed trying to disrupt a new pair bond between female L17-17 and male L5-18. She was unsuccessful that day, but if she is persistent, she may be able to steal the male away!*



*“We typically describe Whooping Cranes as having a bare patch of red skin on the top of their heads and a black mustache or markings on the sides of their face, extending back from the base of their beak. But really that black mustache area is another area of bare skin, covered by modified black feathers. However, when a whooping crane is particularly aggressive and displaying threats, as in this photo, they can extend and make that area of skin bright red, just as they do with the patch on top of their heads!”*

– Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

## Support the Whooping Crane Project

LDWF is working cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the International Crane Foundation and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to restore the Whooping Crane in Louisiana. Project funding is derived from LDWF species restoration dedicated funds, federal grants and private/corporate donations. LDWF's budget for the initial year of the project was \$400,000. The project costs escalate in year two and beyond as the project expands. LDWF estimates that it will be necessary to raise \$3 to 4 million private dollars to help fund a portion of this 15-year project.

*Help support Whooping Crane restoration in Louisiana by doing one of the following:*

- Donate to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation and designating your gift as "in support of The Whooping Crane Project;"
- Purchase an Endangered Species License plate featuring a Whooping Crane;
- Purchase a print of the R.C. Davis painting "Taking Flight."

*To access the above, go here:*

<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/index.cfm?action=pagebuilder&pageID=support-whooping-crane-conservation>

## Help LDWF by reporting all Whooping Crane sightings and violations

*If you are lucky enough to see a Whooping Crane, please do not approach it, even in a vehicle, to avoid habituating the birds to human activity. If you share the sighting on social media, bird listservs, or other public sites, please do not share location information more specific than county or parish level.*

<https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/page/report-a-whooping-crane-sighting-or-violation>

*If you see a Whooping Crane elsewhere in the eastern United States (besides Louisiana), please report it [here](https://www.savingcranes.org/report-whooping-crane/);*

*If you see a Whooping Crane in the western United States, please report it [here](https://whoopingcrane.com/report-a-sighting/);*

*Note: Whooping Cranes in the Louisiana population have been known to travel into surrounding states.*

**Anyone witnessing suspicious activity involving Whooping Cranes is advised to call the LDWF's Enforcement Division at 1-800-442-2511 or use the tip411 program, which may offer a cash reward for information leading to arrests or convictions. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone app from the Apple iTunes store free of charge. Citizen Observer, the tip411 provider, uses technology that removes all identifying information before LDWF receives the text so that LDWF cannot identify the sender.**

*For LDWF updates on the Louisiana non-migratory population of Whooping Cranes, go here:*

<https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes/>

.....  
**Tennessee:**

## Sandhill season information

The 2019-20 Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*) hunting season was the third season where hunting was permitted throughout Tennessee since a season on Sandhills began in 2013. Applications were received from 3,185 hunters and 484 individuals received three tags each for use in the southeast crane zone (SCZ) while another 753 hunters received two tags each for use statewide (STW). Hunters were required to submit a post-season harvest survey by February 10, 2020. TWRA received post-season diaries from 918 individuals; therefore, 319 individuals are ineligible to apply for Sandhill Crane tags for the 2020-21 season. The 2019- 20 season ended with 746 Sandhills killed in 17 different counties; 40 cranes were wounded but not retrieved ("crippling loss"). Higher numbers of cranes were killed in Rhea County, with most being on private land than public land.



Due to the COVID-19 social distancing protocol, for the 2020-2021 season, TWRA will hold a computerized drawing for all Sandhill Crane tags and not conduct the traditional in-person drawing for the Southeast Sandhill Crane Zone tags. The application period will be September 2-23, 2020 on [GoOutdoorsTN.com](http://GoOutdoorsTN.com).

Sandhill Crane hunters must pass an internet-based Sandhill Crane identification test each year before hunting – all tags issued are invalid until the “Sandhill Crane Test” validation code is written on the tag. The purpose of this test is to improve hunter’s awareness and ability to distinguish between Sandhill Cranes and other protected species (the federally endangered Whooping Crane, Tundra and Trumpeter Swans, Great Blue Heron, American White Pelicans) which be encountered while hunting. The test is available at [twra.state.tn.us/SandhillCraneTest](http://twra.state.tn.us/SandhillCraneTest).

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## Washington: (Vancouver)

### **Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge hosts nesting Sandhills**

In June 2020 a rare event took place at the [Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge](#). A pair of Sandhill Cranes built a nest there and successfully hatched at least one of two eggs. This is unusual because while Sandhills are known to use the wildlife refuge as a stopover during southern migration to California, they usually return to the British Columbia coast for nesting, according to project manager Eric Anderson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This is only the third known “nesting attempt” by cranes anywhere in the lower Columbia River region, Anderson said in an interview with the [The Columbian](#).



*Adult Sandhill Crane hunkers down on nest in an attempt to go undetected.*

Refuge staff did not disclose the nest’s location and continued to monitor it when other trails reopened after pandemic restrictions were relaxed. Why all the secrecy and security? Anderson said Sandhill Cranes are on the state endangered species list, with a total population in Washington of about 50,000 — and perhaps as few as 5,000 of the Canadian subspecies such as the pair that’s nesting in Ridgefield NWR.

There has been speculation of a possible correlation between the reduced human traffic on the refuge due to COVID-19 closures and the nesting Sandhill Crane pair – quiet, with little or no human disruption would make it more attractive to wildlife. Data is being collected on the pandemic’s effect on birds by the University of Washington Quantitative Ecology Lab, but it will take another year to reach any real conclusions.

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## Wisconsin:

### **Pandemic delays grand opening of renovated ICF headquarters**

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) announced that it will delay the grand reopening of its headquarters in Baraboo until May 1, 2021 in light of a potential surge of COVID-19 infections this fall. While the general public won’t be able to see the conservation organization’s new exhibits and cranes in



person, they were able to get a virtual sneak peek at the \$10 million renovations on July 23, 2020 during a live stream of a virtual celebration – “Let’s Whoop it Up!”

*To view a recording of the celebration and learn more about ICF and its work with cranes worldwide, visit: [savingcranes.org/lets-whoop-it-up](http://savingcranes.org/lets-whoop-it-up).*

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## **Habitat Matters!**

Florida:

### **Disappearing habitat impacts cranes**

The historic range of the Florida Sandhill Crane diminished in the southeastern United States during the 20th century, with breeding populations disappearing from coastal Texas, Alabama, and southern Louisiana. Today the Florida Sandhill Crane is protected by the U.S. Migratory Bird Treaty Act and as a State-designated Threatened species by Florida’s Endangered and Threatened Species Rule.

The River Lakes Conservation Area is 36,000 acres of open land adjacent to the St. Johns River and Lake Winder, owned and managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District. A team from the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), the research arm of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, is doing health checks, color banding and putting radio transmitters on the cranes before releasing them back onto the landscape there.

“We’re working with a small portion of the overall Sandhill Crane population,” says Ron Bielefeld, an associate research scientist and co-lead on the study. “Sandhill Cranes are becoming squeezed into little bits of natural remaining habitats or forced to adapt to suburban habitats.” Data from the study will give biologists insight into how cranes react to changes in their habitat.

The FWRI tracking study began in 2017, with enough funding available to track 34 birds with radio transmitters and up to 100 birds with leg bands – to date 55 cranes have been banded. The study area reaches as far west as Pasco County, to the cities of east to Melbourne and Sebastian, north to Marion County and south to Lake Placid. In fall 2018 FWRI and the district reached an agreement that expanded the study area to include seven district properties with large and diverse avian populations: Lake Apopka North Shore and Emerald Marsh, Blue Cypress, Lake Norris, River Lakes, Sunnyside and Three Forks Marsh conservation areas.

Until this there hasn’t been much work done in suburban areas or on conservation lands, so the project offers biologists an opportunity to learn about Sandhills in both heavily populated areas and large, mostly undisturbed habitats in Florida. “The district has a lot of land that is good crane habitat,” says Dellinger, who has studied sandhills for almost a decade. “All previous Florida sandhill crane research has been done in improved pastures. There hasn’t been much work done in suburban areas and conservation lands. This project offers us a chance to learn about the cranes in heavily populated areas and large, mostly undisturbed habitats in Florida. This is an exciting opportunity.”

The study is scheduled to end in June 2021. Because the transmitters are solar-powered they should extend the life of the project by continuing to provide data beyond their 24-month battery life, according to Tim Dellinger, an FWRI research scientist and lead investigator on the study.

### **Lee County buys more than 200 acres for land conservation**

In early August 2020 under Lee County’s environmental acquisition and management program, Conservation 20/20 Land Acquisition Program, commissioners approved the purchase of 216 acres in the county both of which are contiguous to existing preserves. The total purchase price for both sites is \$1.35 million. The Conservation Land Acquisition and Stewardship Advisory Committee approved forwarding both of these purchases by unanimous vote in July. In the early 1990s Lee County had the lowest

percentage of conservation lands of all counties on Florida's Gulf Coast – only 10%. Partly in response to that, Conservation 20/20 it was formed in 1996 and since then has preserved 30,225 acres.

The 201-acre parcel in eastern Lee County is contiguous to [Imperial Marsh Preserve](#)-Galloway Tract. The land is about a mile south of State Road 82 and about three miles west of the eastern county line and consists of a diverse mix of upland and wetland native plant communities, including flatwoods dominated by South Florida slash pine, live oak hammock, mesic hardwood hammock dominated by laurel oaks, cypress forest and some fresh water marshes. The freshwater marshes are home to nesting Wood Storks, Sandhill Cranes, Glossy Ibis, White Ibis, Snowy Egrets, Little Blue Heron, Tricolored Heron and Great Blue Herons.

The second approximately 15 acre parcel is on Pine Island and is contiguous to the [Pine Island Flatwoods Preserve](#), as well as [Calusa Land Trust's conservation land](#) and includes native pine flatwoods and mangrove forest.

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## Indiana:

### Finding northern Indiana's lost marsh

The Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area is a remnant of the Grand Kankakee Marsh – a marsh created by melting glaciers that also formed the Great Lakes. The Grand Kankakee Marsh was the largest inland wetland in the contiguous U.S. until it was drained for agriculture. It followed the natural, meandering, non-leveed course of the Kankakee River, encompassing over 1,500 square miles between current day South Bend, Indiana, all the way to Momence, Illinois. Due to the huge diversity of wildlife and waterfowl found in the marsh habitat the area was soon exploited by hunters and anglers who helped it become known as “Chicago's food pantry.” American Bison and Passenger Pigeons populations there were decimated by unregulated hunting that pushed both down the road to extinction.

Soon after the Civil War ended, a 50-plus year ditching effort cut 250 meandering river miles down to 90 straightened miles, while nearly draining the entire marsh by 1923. Habitat disappeared. Today, only five percent of the former Grand Kankakee Marsh exists as wetland – tiny islands in a sea of corn and soybean fields. Biologists think 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the migratory bird population was lost when the marsh was drained.

Less than 75 years after the draining was initiated, the state of Indiana began purchasing and restoring remnants of the Grand Kankakee Marsh – the area where today six Fish and Wildlife Areas and Potato Creek State Park now exist. [The Nature Conservancy](#) and other conservation groups have contributed significantly to restoration efforts.

In 2016, Illinois endorsed the creation of the [Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area](#). [Friends of the Kankakee](#), an Illinois-based organization dedicated to restoring the Grand Kankakee Marsh by acquiring land, donated the initial 66 acres. The mission for Kankakee National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area is to protect, restore, and manage ecological processes within the Kankakee River Basin that benefit threatened and endangered species, migratory birds, native fish, and diverse flora and fauna populations, while providing the public, to the extent possible, high quality wildlife-dependent environmental interpretation, education, and recreation experiences that build an understanding and appreciation for these resources, and the role humankind plays in their stewardship.

**Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area** is 4,199 acres of riparian woodlands, wetlands, marsh and farmland that attracts deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, hawks, owls, osprey, bald eagles and a wide variety of neo-tropical species. *For more information, go here:* [http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/files/fw\\_Kankakee\\_map.pdf](http://www.state.in.us/dnr/fishwild/files/fw_Kankakee_map.pdf)

[Everglades of the North: The Story of the Grand Kankakee Marsh](#) is a 2012 documentary about the vanished million-acre wetland in Northern Indiana. It was written and co-produced by Jeff Manes and presented by Lakeshore PBS. *To watch the trailer, go here:* <https://youtu.be/sKZQ772Yx6M>

## Goose Pond FWA and Jasper-Pulaski FWA part of new Indiana Birding Trail

Announced at the end of 2019, the Indiana Birding Trail is a dream realized for many, according to Brad Bumgardner, Indiana Audubon executive director. You can browse the trail by region, view an interactive map of currently 60 birding sites and download a free digital copy of the guide at [indianabirdingtrail.com](http://indianabirdingtrail.com).

[Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area](#), about 40 miles west of Bloomington, is a favorite southwest Indiana destination. Established in 2005, Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area in Greene County includes 9,018 acres of prairie, wetland, grassland and woodland habitat divided into units that provide habitat for numerous wildlife species.

Since 2005, it has attracted more than 12,000 wildlife watchers each year. Photographers, hunters, and birders are among those who most use the FWA. The property has become an important breeding and migratory stopover site for a variety of birds, including herons, cranes, rails, shorebirds, waterfowl, raptors and songbirds. Each spring and fall, significant numbers of Sandhill Cranes and American White Pelicans stage at Goose Pond on their way to and from their breeding grounds in the north. Additionally, the Goose Pond area has become a stopover site for Whooping Cranes in the reintroduced Eastern Migratory Population.

Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area is located at 13540 West County Road 400 South in Linton, Indiana. Due to the size of the property, the best way to bird Goose Pond is by driving the county roads slowly while looking and listening, then stopping at individual units to scan or walk the levees. A useful property map can be found at [in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3094.htm](http://in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3094.htm)

Due to restoration work that began in the 1930s, coupled with feeding areas found in the surrounding area's agricultural heritage, Jasper-Pulaski's position within the Mississippi Flyway has created the largest gathering of Greater Sandhill Cranes east of the Mississippi River. Fall daily peak counts typically exceed 15,000 birds, with some highs reaching 30,000 birds, but numbers can be weather dependent.

Encompassing over 8,000 acres of wetlands, upland forest, and leased crop rows the property is suitable for both migrating and breeding birds but is best known as this "staging area" for the cranes – where they can rest, forage and roost during spring and fall migrations.

Visitors wishing to see the Sandhills at [Jaspar-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area](#) can visit the crane viewing platform tower, located ¼ mile west of the property office. The parking lot has a paved interpretive trail leading to the viewing platform. Optics are mounted on the platform, but it is also recommended that visitors bring binoculars and/or scopes.



*Whooping Cranes 18-03 (left) and 36-09 (right), near Linton, Indiana, 6 February 2019. Photo by Jack Dean.*

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## Nebraska:

### The Nature Conservancy conserves crane habitat

The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska is dedicated to protecting crane habitat and restoring grasslands along the Platte River. "We've used high-diversity prairie restoration techniques to convert over 1,500 acres of crop land along the Platte River to prairie and wetland habitat," said Chris Helzer, science

director for the Nebraska Nature Conservancy. “Our primary goal was to de-fragment the landscape by restoring cropland, usually areas too wet or sandy to be very productive anyhow, around and between small areas of remaining, unplowed prairie.”

The result is a larger area of interconnected habitat in which insects, reptiles, mammals, and birds – including cranes – can freely move through and live in. Collectively, this area or restored habitat of upland prairie grasslands and wetlands stretching between Grand Island and Kearney is known as the [Platte River Prairies](#), and is managed for biological diversity. That this same stretch of river is the most utilized section of the Platte in springtime by northward migrating Sandhill and Whooping Cranes only underscores its importance.

In addition to the Platte River Prairies, the [Niobrara Valley Preserve](#) in north-central Nebraska is the Conservancy’s other flagship property. It consists of 56,000 acres stretching across 25 miles of Niobrara River frontage east of Valentine. The area contains Sandhills and other prairie types, as well as riparian woodlands containing ponderosa pines, bur oaks, birch, and a variety of other tree species. Two bison herds numbering about 500 animals each, roam pastures that are 10,000 and 12,000 acres in size. Impressive to witness!

For more information on the work being done by The Nature Conservancy, visit: [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org)

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## Wisconsin:

**Editor:** *Decisions may have already been made about the 31 acres of Hartmeyer land in question. The following testimonial was given during a Parks Commission meeting in June 2020. Regardless, these comments by the CEO of the International Crane Foundation, Richard Beilfuss, are included here as they speak to the importance of buffer zones – no matter the size, and what buffers mean to wildlife in the face of ever-encroaching development.*

### **Buffer zones, no matter the size, are important**

Advocates are pushing to save an urban wetland in Madison Wisconsin, the Hartmeyer Natural Area – a pond and surrounding uplands and woods are part of a 31-acre tract owned by the Hartmeyer family and leased for years by Oscar Mayer and its successors and has had both soil and groundwater contaminated by at least two fuel oil spills and long-term improper storage of coal, according to state Department of Natural Resources records.

In the years since Oscar Mayer shut off its wells, water has reclaimed low-lying areas where invasive cattails and reed canary grass are thriving not far from a stand of old growth oaks (several that are 200-years old). Part crumbling parking lot, part reedy marsh, a vacant lot just east of the former Oscar Mayer plant has become a point of contention that threatens to derail a \$300 million plan to redevelop the industrial site.

Paul Noeldner, chair of Friends of Hartmeyer Natural Area, leads nature walks for kids on the site as part of Madison FUN (Friends of Urban Nature). He’s made a long list of wildlife observed there – 60 bird species (including nesting Sandhills), and identified native cattail in the marsh, and large stands of milkweed — crucial to monarch butterflies — including Sullivant’s (Prairie Milkweed), a Wisconsin threatened species. “You don’t pave an urban natural area when you have one,” says Noeldner. “Once it’s gone, it’s gone.”

“Rich Beilfuss, a hydrologist and fellow with the UW-Madison Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, testified before the Parks Commission in favor of preserving 30 acres of greenspace. “It’s a working wetland,” says Beilfuss, who is also president and CEO of the International Crane Foundation. Although there are invasives, he says it is “an impressive urban wetland in a surprisingly tight space,” with value for both wildlife and stormwater absorption.



Beilfuss characterizes Hartmeyer as a freshwater marsh. While topographic maps dating to the late 1800s show the entire area as wetland, the parcel was likely drained for farming sometime in the early 20th century. Aerial photos from the 1930s through the 1980s show the area dry. At some point, several baseball fields were constructed there, outlines of which are still visible from aerial photography. Wetland began to re-emerge in the late 1990s. One theory is that after Oscar Mayer stopped pumping from its own high capacity wells about that time, the wetland returned. Another theory is that increased rainfall due to climate change prompted the resurgence. “Wetlands have a way of reclaiming themselves,” Beilfuss says.

Beilfuss believes preserving 30 acres instead of 14 as greenspace is important for wildlife, not because the additional 16 acres of land are high quality — much of it is currently a parking lot — but because the space is needed as a buffer between the wetland and the proposed housing and commercial development.

“The more buffer you have, the more opportunities there are for wildlife,” says Beilfuss. “If you develop right to the edge, the more sensitive species will leave, abandon the area.” It’s not clear, though, how much extra space wildlife needs as a buffer: “It’s hard to say an exact area that would make a difference.”

“Alone, it’s not vital to cranes, but it is part of a mosaic of sites that collectively are important,” Beilfuss notes. He doesn’t think it matters whether it’s a pristine example of a wetland: “It provides real value now.”

To read the article “Pristine is Overrated” by Linda Falkenstein, go here:  
<https://isthmus.com/news/news/pristine-is-overrated/>

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## ENVIRONMENTAL impact issues:

**Editor:** *The following is most distressing as nothing has changed since 2018 – if anything, as shown in the [Center for Biological Diversity’s 2020 analysis](#) the situation has gotten much worse. In 2018 when the 2018 analysis was published, ECB focused on Wheeler Wildlife Refuge in Alabama because at the time of the report half a million pounds of pesticides were being used on the refuge. The same refuge where at least a quarter of the reintroduced Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes winter. (See Eastern Crane bulletin, December 2018, pp. 17-18) What is wrong with this picture?*

### **National Wildlife Refuges hit with 34% increase in acreage sprayed with agricultural pesticides over two-year period**

#### **Refuges See Dramatic Surge in Highly Toxic Paraquat, Drift-prone Dicamba**

More than 350,000 pounds of dangerous agricultural pesticides were sprayed on more than 363,000 acres of crops on America’s national wildlife refuges in 2018, a 34% increase over the acreage sprayed in 2016, according to a new Center for Biological Diversity [analysis](#) released 26 August 2020.

The Center’s analysis examines pesticide-use levels in the 568 national wildlife refuges that provide vital habitat to more than 280 protected species, including endangered Red-cockaded Woodpeckers, Indiana bats and Whooping Cranes.

The data for 2018 — the most recent year for which information was available — reflected an alarming increase in pesticides known to harm wildlife, including highly controversial and drift-prone dicamba; 2,4-D, infamously part of Agent Orange; and paraquat, which is so dangerous it is [banned](#) across much of the world.

“It’s beyond senseless that we’re spraying even larger areas of America’s cherished national wildlife refuges with dangerous pesticides known to harm wildlife,” said Hannah Connor, a senior attorney at the Center. “We’re in the midst of a wildlife extinction crisis, and these places were set aside specifically as

safe sanctuaries for some of our most endangered animals. The last thing they need is to have these poisons dumped on them.”

The five national wildlife refuge complexes where the greatest amounts of agricultural pesticides were applied in 2018 were:

- Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge Complex in California and Oregon: at least 84,497 pounds;
- Central Arkansas Refuges Complex: 55,300 pounds;
- Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Mississippi: 47,057 pounds;
- West Tennessee Refuge Complex: 27,937 pounds;
- Tennessee National Wildlife Refuge Complex: 22,047 pounds.

*Our country's 568 wildlife refuges constitute the world's largest collection of lands set aside specifically for the preservation of fish and wildlife. The refuges, which include forests, wetlands, and waterways, are vital to the survival of thousands of imperiled species and are a critical component of the natural heritage of all Americans.*



*Whooping Cranes. Photo courtesy of Klaus Nigge, USFWS*

*For the benefit of present and future generations, it is incumbent on the Service to conserve, enhance, and protect our national wildlife*

*refuges and the animals that rely on them. But records show that the Service is making a mockery of this mission by allowing industrial-scale commercial farming of crops like corn, soybeans, and sorghum on refuge lands, triggering an escalating use of highly toxic pesticides. These practices conflict with the mission of the refuge system — to preserve life — and threaten the long-term health of ecosystems and imperiled species.*

*It's time for the Service to stop prioritizing commercial agricultural interests over wildlife and birds in our national wildlife refuges. We urge you to discontinue the use of toxic pesticides for commercial agriculture immediately.*

*To read the entire Center for Biological Diversity 26 August 2020 press release, go here:*

<https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/analysis-national-wildlife-refuges-hit-34-increase-acreage-sprayed-agricultural-pesticides-over-two-year-period-2020-08-26/>

*To read and/or download the Center for Biological Diversity's August 2020 Analysis, "No Refuge: More Acres of America's National Wildlife Refuges Are Being Doused in Harmful Pesticides," go here:*

[https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/pesticides\\_reduction/pdfs/No-Refuge-Report-2020.pdf](https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/campaigns/pesticides_reduction/pdfs/No-Refuge-Report-2020.pdf)

*...Historically the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the refuges, has allowed private farming on refuges in order to help prepare seed beds for native habitat, such as grasslands, and to provide food for migratory birds and other wildlife. Today, however, industrial farming and the heavy pesticide use that comes along with it are commonplace on refuge lands. Nationwide, every region of the refuge system except Alaska allows farming practices that often include the use of pesticides on commercial crops like corn, soy, wheat, rice and sorghum... Although these monocultures may provide the farmer with a profitable way to grow crops on an industrial scale, monoculture farming triggers infestations that lead to increased pesticide use.*

## Conclusion

*“The mission of the Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.”<sup>113</sup>*

*Instead of supporting this mission, the Service’s continued approval of hazardous pesticides such as dicamba, 2,4- D, glyphosate and paraquat for non-priority, unessential row-crop production in the refuge system creates a legacy of chemical pollution and irreversible harm to plants and animals on these public lands. If the Service fails to discontinue these destructive practices it will accelerate the harm to America’s imperiled species and the habitats we share with them, to the detriment of present and future generations of humans and wildlife alike.*

**Editor:** *And, just when you thought it couldn’t get any worse for our National Wildlife Refuge system – in mid-August 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved the single-largest expansion ever of hunting and fishing in national wildlife refuges. The [rule](#) allows expanded hunting and fishing on 2.3 million acres across 147 wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries. It includes allowing bears, mountain lions and other top predators to be killed in more places.*

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## Nebraska:

### **Transmission line permit invalidated, USFWS ordered to redo Endangered Species Act analyses**

On November 14, 2019, Audubon Nebraska joined an amicus brief against the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding Endangered Species Act compliance for the construction of the R-Project across the Whooping Cranes’ migratory path.

The USFWS issued its decision notice on June 17, 2019, which permitted the Nebraska Public Power District to begin construction of a 345,000-volt, 225-mile-long transmission system through the Nebraska Sandhills. This project included an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the American Burying Beetle, but not for the Whooping Crane. Issuance of the ITP was the culmination of a multi-year negotiation between Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) and USFWS, including significant discussions between the parties as to whether the ITP should cover potential take of endangered Whooping Cranes that could occur as a result of the R-Project. The ultimate ITP only authorized take of the American burying beetle.

Audubon joined with the [Center for Biological Diversity](#), the [International Crane Foundation](#) and the [American Bird Conservancy](#) to file an amicus brief supporting a civil lawsuit by Western Nebraska Resources Council, a nonprofit corporation; Hanging H East, L.L.C.; Whitetail Farms East, L.L.C.; and the Oregon-California Trails Association.

On Wednesday, 17 June 2020, the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado vacated an incidental take permit issued to the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) authorizing take of the endangered American burying beetle that could occur in connection with NPPD’s construction and operation of the 225-mile R-Project transmission line (R Project). The court vacated the ITP on the grounds that its issuance by the USFWS violated the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

For the project to continue, additional analyses will need to be conducted to consider the cumulative impact of this project.

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## Science News:

### A Review of Fall Sandhill Crane Migration Through Indiana

Allisyn-Marie T. Y. Gillet,<sup>1</sup> Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife, Bloomington Field Office, 5596 E. State Route 46, Bloomington, IN 47401, USA

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#### Abstract:

The Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife conducts surveys from October to December to collect long-term data on greater sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*). Results from these censuses contribute to a fall index of the Eastern Population, which informs wildlife management decisions and research priorities. Recent findings from the annual U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fall Sandhill Crane Migration Survey demonstrate a decline in the number of cranes observed at fall staging areas throughout Indiana since 1979. However, nationwide data exhibit a trend of population increase. I provide evidence to show that the apparent decline in the number of greater sandhill cranes migrating through Indiana does not indicate an actual decline in the Eastern Population but is a consequence of poor detection due to cranes migrating later each year. As a result, I suggest that survey periods be changed to later dates in the coming years to accommodate for this shift in migration chronology.

#### PROCEEDINGS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP 13:42-46

To read the entire article, and for a downloadable PDF, go here:

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nacwgproc/348/>

### Building a Better Whooping Crane

Morris Animal Foundation-funded researcher [Dr. Kevin Kohl at the University of Pittsburgh](#) is partnering with the [International Crane Foundation](#) to determine why some endangered Whooping Cranes raised in captivity have specific health issues while others do not. Dr. Kohl believes part of this puzzle lies in differences in the chicks' [microbiomes](#), which in turn could be linked to different rearing practices used in their reintroduction program.

“We are seeing health issues in artificially raised whooping cranes (cranes reared by costume-clad human caretakers) that we don’t usually see in chicks raised by their natural parents,” said Dr. Kohl. “These include respiratory and skeletal problems that may be associated to what kinds of bacteria the chicks are exposed to that help shape their microbiome.”

The microbiome is a term for the community of bacteria, fungi and other microscopic entities that live in and on our bodies. This complex society of organisms has many health benefits, including helping animals digest food and training the immune system early in life to combat diseases and infections. But studies also show that a disturbed, or abnormal microbiome, can contribute to health problems.

... “Quantity of birds matters in the race to save the Whooping Crane,” said Dr. Hartup. “But, so does the quality of the birds we release into the wild. Microbiome research may hold the key to helping the Whooping Crane flocks become self-sustaining so they can thrive in the wild without the extraordinary measures needed to help them survive today.”

To read the entire article, go here:

<https://www.morrisanimalfoundation.org/article/building-better-whooping-crane>



# Coccidian Parasites and Conservation Implications for the Endangered Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*)

Miranda R Bertram <sup>1</sup>, Gabriel L Hamer <sup>2</sup>, Karen F Snowden <sup>3</sup>, Barry K Hartup <sup>4</sup>, Sarah A Hamer <sup>1</sup>

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PMCID: [PMC4464527](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26061631/)

DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0127679](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0127679)

2015

## Abstract:

While the population of endangered whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) has grown from 15 individuals in 1941 to an estimated 304 birds today, the population growth is not sufficient to support a down-listing of the species to threatened status. The degree to which disease may be limiting the population growth of whooping cranes is unknown. One disease of potential concern is caused by two crane-associated *Eimeria* species: *Eimeria gruis* and *E. reichenowi*. Unlike most species of *Eimeria*, which are localized to the intestinal tract, these crane-associated species may multiply systemically and cause a potentially fatal disease. Using a non-invasive sampling approach, we assessed the prevalence and phenology of *Eimeria* oocysts in whooping crane fecal samples collected across two winter seasons (November 2012–April 2014) at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge along the Texas Gulf coast. We also compared the ability of microscopy and PCR to detect *Eimeria* in fecal samples. Across both years, 26.5% ( $n = 328$ ) of fecal samples were positive for *Eimeria* based on microscopy. Although the sensitivity of PCR for detecting *Eimeria* infections seemed to be less than that of microscopy in the first year of the study (8.9% vs. 29.3%, respectively), an improved DNA extraction protocol resulted in increased sensitivity of PCR relative to microscopy in the second year of the study (27.6% and 20.8%, respectively). The proportion of positive samples did not vary significantly between years or among sampling sites. The proportion of *Eimeria* positive fecal samples varied with date of collection, but there was no consistent pattern of parasite shedding between the two years. We demonstrate that non-invasive fecal collections combined with PCR and DNA sequencing techniques provides a useful tool for monitoring *Eimeria* infection in cranes. Understanding the epidemiology of coccidiosis is important for management efforts to increase population growth of the endangered whooping crane.

To read the entire article, go here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26061631/>



Fig.2 Whooping Crane Scat Collection. Game camera photo of two adult whooping cranes and one juvenile (far left) at a freshwater pond on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (A). Scat produced by a whooping crane feeding primarily on blue crab and other invertebrates. Scat was collected after the cranes naturally left the pond.

## Pathology and Pathogenesis of Disseminated Visceral Coccidiosis in Cranes

Meliton N Novilla<sup>1</sup>, James W Carpenter

PMID: 15223553

DOI: [10.1080/0307945042000203371](https://doi.org/10.1080/0307945042000203371)

### Abstract:

Disseminated visceral coccidiosis (DVC) caused by *Eimeria* spp. was recognized as a disease entity in captive sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) and whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) in the late 1970s. While most avian species of *Eimeria* inhabit the intestinal tract of its host, the crane eimerians, *Eimeria reichenowi* and *Eimeria gruis*, invade and multiply systemically and complete their development in both digestive and respiratory tracts. In DVC, cranes, especially chicks, may succumb to acute infections resulting in hepatitis, bronchopneumonia, myocarditis, splenitis, and enteritis. Cranes may also develop chronic, subclinical infections characterized by granulomatous nodules in various organs and tissues. This paper reviews the pathology and pathogenicity of natural and experimental DVC in sandhill and whooping cranes. Naturally infected birds appeared clinically normal, but progressive weakness, emaciation, greenish diarrhea, and recumbency before death were observed in birds administered doses  $> \text{or} = 10 \times 10^3$  sporulated oocysts per os. At necropsy, naturally infected birds had nodules in the mucosa of the oral cavity and the esophagus, and in thoracic and abdominal viscera. Experimentally infected birds necropsied less than 7 days after infection (a.i.) had no gross lesions. Birds examined later had hepatosplenomegaly, liver mottling, lung congestion and consolidation with frothy fluid in airways, and turgid intestinal tracts with hyperemic mucosa. From 28 days a.i., grossly visible granulomatous nodules were seen in the esophagus, heart, liver, cloaca, and eyelids. By light microscopy, the basic host response was a granulomatous inflammation with non-suppurative vasculitis affecting many organs and tissues. With time, multifocal aggregates of mononuclear cells, many laden with asexual coccidial stages, increased in size and number. Widespread merogony resulted in morbidity and death, particularly in birds administered  $20 \times 10^3$  sporulated oocysts. Ultrastructural examination revealed developing asexual coccidian stages in the cytoplasm of large lymphocytes or monocytes within a parasitophorous vacuole, often indenting the nucleus. Oocysts and gametocytes were found in the intestines by 12 days a.i., and in the esophagus, trachea, bronchi, and lung by 14 days a.i., indicating that crane eimerians can complete their life cycle at these sites. Thus, DVC in cranes could be a useful animal model for the study of eimerian extra-intestinal stages and the evaluation of potential systemic anticoccidial drugs.

To read the entire article, go here: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15223553>

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## The Art of Cranes:

### The Lives, Lore, and Literature of Cranes: A Catechism for Crane Lovers

By Paul A. Johnsgard with photographs by Thomas D. Mangelsen

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=zeabook>

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/zeabook/93/>

#### Description

This book provides basic information on cranes that should be of interest and importance to crane-loving birders ("craniacs") as well as to ornithologists and wildlife managers. Primary consideration is given to the sandhill and whooping cranes, but all 13 of the Old-World cranes are also discussed. Special consideration is given to the relative abundance and conservation status of all of the world's species, of which nearly half are declining, and a few are in real danger of long-term survival. More than 80 refuges and preserves in the United States and Canada, where the best chances of seeing cranes in the wild exist, are described, as are several zoos and bird parks with notable crane collections. Descriptions of 16 North American annual crane festivals and information on more than 50 bird-finding guides from regions, states, and provinces where cranes are most likely to be seen are included. Lastly, there is a sampling of



American, European, and Oriental crane folklore, legends, and myths. The text contains more than 50,000 words and nearly 350 literature references. There are more than 40 drawings and 3 maps by the author and 19 color photographs by Thomas D. Mangelsen.

## Remembering COVID-19 victims

**Editor:** *The orizuru (折鶴 ori- "folded," tsuru "crane"), or paper crane, is a design that is considered to be the most classic of all Japanese origami. In Japanese culture, it is believed that its wings carry souls up to paradise and it is said that if someone folds a thousand origami cranes, they are granted one wish.*

What began with one artist in Los Angeles as an effort to memorialize each of the people who have died in the U.S. from COVID-19, has grown to untold numbers of volunteers – all folding tiny, delicate origami cranes to be added to the ever-growing memorial exhibit. Karla Funderburk started making the cranes months ago, stringing the paper cranes and hanging them in her art gallery ([Matter Studio](#)). As the number of nationwide daily deaths soared to thousands, she quickly realized that she would not be able to keep up and asked for volunteers to help fold cranes. Now boxes and bags of origami cranes appear on her doorstep daily to be included in the gallery display. There is also a list of hundreds of victim names on the gallery website – <https://matterstudiogallery.com/names>. To date, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 192,000 people in the U.S. have died of COVID-19.

*To learn more of the COVID-19 memorial exhibit, go here:  
["Honoring Matter": A Memorial for The Victims of COVID-19.](#)*



*Karla Funderburk with thousands of origami cranes made by her and countless volunteers to memorialize those who have died in the United States from COVID-19 – 187,000 and counting.*

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## **KUDOS**

### **International Crane Foundation “Cranetivities”**

**Editor:** *Like everybody across the world, the [International Crane Foundation’s \(ICF\)](#) staff had to adjust to the new reality brought about by the pandemic. No longer could the staff visit classrooms, attend community events, and introduce their mascot Hope to enthusiastic groups of young and old fans. However, in an attempt to continue ICF’s message of crane conservation the Foundation came up with diverse, creative, fun while still educational, weekly activities for families and kids to do at home. And, although the targeted audience is K-12, everyone can learn more about cranes no matter your age. Great stuff!*

*In addition to the weekly activities, ICF offers the “From the Field” Webinar series. To take part in the live webinar one needs to register, but all presentations are available on YouTube after the fact. The series presents a diverse range of subject matter from Sandhills, Whoopers, cranes in Africa and China to avian medicine and art. Each presentation is by an expert in the area of the particular webinar topic. So much to learn about cranes – and what better source of information than the International Crane Foundation? Check it out – your time will be well spent!*

*Thanks to the staff and educators at the International Crane Foundation for work well done.*

Quarantine with Cranes – Week 9 Activity

<https://www.savingcranes.org/quarantine-with-cranes-week-9-activity-2/>

Welcome to our latest crane-related, educational blog post! The International Crane Foundation is committed to sharing our message of crane conservation with families at home throughout the pandemic. Up until now, our educational blogs have been posted in a series called Quarantine with Cranes. As countries around the world begin the process of reopening, we have given our educational blog series a new title Cranetivities.

CRANETIVITIES: Craniac Virtual Scavenger Hunt

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-craniac-virtual-scavenger-hunt/>

CRANETIVITIES: Fun With Puppetry!

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-fun-with-puppetry/>

CRANETIVITIES: Wonderous Wattled Cranes

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-wonderous-wattled-cranes/>

CRANETIVITIES: The Brilliant Brolgas

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-the-brilliant-brolgas/>

CRANETIVITIES: Be A Conservation Hero

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-conservation-hero/>

CRANETIVITIES: Cacophonous Crane Calls!

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-cacophonous-crane-calls/>

CRANETIVITIES: Nature Bingo!

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-nature-bingo/>

CRANETIVITIES: Blue Cranes

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-blue-cranes/>

CRANETIVITIES: Crane Careers Environmental Educator

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cranetivities-crane-careers-environmental-educator/>



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## Upcoming Events:

**Editor:** *As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, there are cancellations or postponement of many scheduled events. Some festivals have chosen to modify formats and have a “virtual” platform in response to the odd times we are in. While not the same as taking part in person, on a positive note, more people will be able to participate in the festival(s) even from afar – so check them out!*

### **[Virtual] 2020 Tanana Valley Sandhill Crane Festival**

Tanana Valley Alaska

Dates: August 21 - August 23, 2020

Location: Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, Tanana Valley,  
1300 College Road, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Activities will be posted on Friends of Creamers Field social media and its website

*All events are free of charge, and donations are welcomed. For more virtual festival information follow social media, call 907-452-5162, or go here: <https://friendsofcreamersfield.org>*

*For all junior birders interested in learning about the Sandhill Cranes at Creamer's Field, click the following link to access the kids activity packet: [Sandhill Crane Kids Activity Packet](#)*

### **[Virtual] Yampa Valley Crane Festival**

Dates: Thursday, September 3 – Sunday, September 6, 2020

Location: Steamboat Springs and Hayden, Colorado

For the ninth consecutive year, the Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition is hosting the Yampa Valley Crane Festival. In 2020, the festival will have one live event and 29 free videos for people to watch on a variety of topics. The videos will go live at <https://coloradocranes.org/2020-festival/> on Sept. 3 and be accessible through the end of the year.

Greater Sandhill Cranes are an iconic species of the Yampa Valley and Northwest Colorado.

In 2012, the Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition, Inc. sponsored the inaugural Yampa Valley Crane Festival. Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition is dedicated to the conservation and protection of Greater Sandhill Cranes in Colorado. The festival seeks to educate the public about cranes and to emphasize conservation of the special habitat that supports the cranes and the many other species of birds and wildlife in Northwest Colorado.

The speakers scheduled for the 2020 festival – Dr. Richard Beilfuss, President and CEO of the International Crane Foundation, Steve Burrows, award-winning Canadian mystery writer, journalist, and past recipient of a “Nature Writer of the Year” award from BBC Wildlife, and Arvind Panjabi, avian conservation scientist for Bird Conservancy of the Rockies – will present at our 2021 festival scheduled for September 2-5, 2021.

One of the most popular parade entries each year is the Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition crane dancers who perform along Lincoln Avenue.

Yampa Valley Crane Dancers - 4 July 2020

(to David Bowie’s “Let’s Dance”)

<https://youtu.be/p7mwZzHHP7I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7mwZzHHP7I>

### **[CANCELLED] Princeton Whooping Crane Festival**

Dates: September 11-13, 2020

Location: Princeton, Wisconsin

The festival celebrates and supports the ongoing efforts to save the endangered Whooping Crane from extinction.

**[Virtual] 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Greater Yellowstone Crane Festival**

Dates: September 14 – September 19, 2020

Location: Driggs, Idaho/Teton Valley

The Festival supports the efforts of the Greater Yellowstone Sandhill Crane Initiative which works to protect crucial habitat and resources for the largest staging population of Sandhill Cranes in the Greater Yellowstone and the myriad of iconic species that call the region home.

**The 2020 will be a virtual Crane Festival online** and feature special programming each day Sept 14th to 19th. There will be the opportunity to bid on Crane Art sculptures seen around Teton Valley as well as additional crane artwork. There are wooden crane forms available again this year to decorate and return to be auctioned off to support Sandhill Crane conservation. If interested in reserving a crane art form, please [email us](mailto:kate@tetonlandtrust.org) at kate@tetonlandtrust.org

For more information on the virtual festival, go to: [www.tetonlandtrust.org](http://www.tetonlandtrust.org)



*International Crane Foundation crane entrance gates designed by artist Victor Bakhtin, and produced by metal artist Robert Bergman of Postville Blacksmith Shop*

**[RESCHEDULED] Grand opening of new International Crane Foundation’s Headquarters**

The grand re-opening ICF Headquarters in Baraboo has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 virus and has been rescheduled to May 1, 2021.

Updates will be posted on the ICF website: <https://www.savingcranes.org>

**[CANCELLED] International Crane Foundation’s “Evening with the Cranes”**

Saturday, September 19

While this event also had to be canceled due to the pandemic, ICF offered a new **VIRTUAL** celebration, “Let’s Whoop It Up!”, on Saturday, July 23. [Click here to view the event recording!](#)

**[Observation deck open for crane viewing] Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area**

When: Late September through December – Cranes “stage” at the 8,142-acre wildlife area during fall migration.

Where: Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area, 5822 N. Fish and Wildlife Lane, Medaryville (just off US 421, about 15 miles north of Monon) Indiana. There is an observation deck to view cranes in surrounding fields. Best viewing times: Sunrise, as the flocks leave roosting marshes, and about one hour before sunset, as the flocks return to Goose Pasture. Typically, the Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife area will see between 10,000 and 12,000 Sandhill Cranes each year although that number can fluctuate.

**[CANCELLED] CraneFest**

October 10-11, 2020

Bellevue, Michigan

Presented by Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek

**NOTICE: Out of an abundance of caution and in response to ongoing developments with COVID-19, the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek has canceled CraneFest for 2020.**

The CraneFest event is now owned by the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek. If you would like more information about the event or if you have questions, please contact the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek through their [Facebook page](#). CraneFest was formed to raise awareness and appreciation of our natural heritage and to support the ongoing educational and conservation efforts of Michigan Audubon as they apply to the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary. Michigan Audubon, in partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek, has organized this Sandhill Crane and art festival since 1994. The festival has been held at the [Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area](#) in Bellevue, Mich., overlooking Big Marsh Lake.

**[CANCELLED] San Joaquin County Sandhill Crane tours**

Dates: Fall 2020

Location: [Woodbridge Ecological Reserve \(a.k.a. Isenberg Crane Reserve\)](#)

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, just west of Lodi in San Joaquin County, CA

**NOTICE:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sandhill Crane tours are not being planned for the 2020/2021 season. If circumstances change in the future, information will be posted here. In the absence of tours, CDFW is working on producing digital content to connect the public to the cranes this year. Please check back this Fall! *For more information, go here:* <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/regions/3/crane-tour>

**[CANCELLED] Annual Sandhill Crane Festival (Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival)**

Dates: November 6-8, 2020

[Hutchins Street Square · Lodi, CA](#)

*To read more about the cancellation from the Lodi Sandhill Crane Association (LSCA) go here:* <https://cranefestival.com/covid19.php>

While the festival this year had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, please mark your calendars for the 2021 Sandhill Crane Festival, November 5-7, 2021 in Lodi, California!

*For more information about the festival in general, go here:* [cranefestival.com](http://cranefestival.com)

**[Virtual] Celebration of Cranes / Quivira NWR**

November 1-7, 2020

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Stafford County, Kansas

What would have been the 3rd annual Celebration of Cranes will now, due to the pandemic, take place as a virtual event. Audubon of Kansas sponsors the event and will have members at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge during the festival week to track visiting Sandhill and Whooping Cranes. Sightings will be reported on the Audubon of Kansas website/social media. Pre-recorded presentations are planned for the week on Facebook Live and/or Zoom with an opportunity for viewers to send in questions after each presentation.

*For updates about the festival, go here:* <https://www.audubonofkansas.org/>

**[Virtual] Crane Fiesta 2020 (33<sup>rd</sup> Festival of the Cranes)**

November 19-21, 2020

Bosque del Apache, New Mexico

While the regular festival has had to be cancelled due to Covid-19, the Friends of Bosque del Apache are working hard preparing **Crane Fiesta 2020** – three days of online Zoom workshops, webinars and even a live Fly-Out. Each day will have five to six events scheduled, from bird videos and webinars to raptor ID and duck ID events. Sessions will run 45 minutes to an hour and a half, depending on the program.

*To get the latest updates on the virtual festival, support the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge or learn more of the work that goes on there, go here:* <https://www.friendsofbosquedelapache.org>

**[CANCELLED] Save Our Sandhill Cranes crane viewing tours**

Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (AKA Isenberg Crane Reserve)  
Sacramento, California

Notice: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sandhill Crane tours are not being planned for the 2020/2021 season. If circumstances change in the future, information will be posted here. In the absence of tours, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is working on producing digital content to connect the public to the cranes this year. Please check back this Fall!

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-visit/Woodbridge-ER>

Sacramento Audubon Society (free Crane viewing tours)

Contact Us: <http://soscranes.org/contact-us/>

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