



EASTERN CRANE BULLETIN

September 2016

The Eastern Crane E-bulletin is distributed to those interested in cranes in general, and specifically, the Eastern Populations of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes, as well as the continuing work for the protection of these birds and their habitats.

100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

When Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) in 1918, it was to implement a treaty signed in 1916 with Great Britain (acting on behalf of Canada, then part of the British Empire) in response to the extinction or near-extinction of a number of bird species that were hunted either for sport or for their feathers used in the plume trade. The passage of the MBTA made it a crime to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, possess, sell, purchase, barter, import, export, or transport any migratory bird, or any part, nest, or egg or any such bird, unless authorized under a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior.

Passed nearly a century ago, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act remains the primary tool for protecting non-endangered species. As threats to birds continue to evolve, so does the law itself.

In the 1970's prosecutors were able for the first time to charge oil and gas, timber, mining, chemical, and electricity companies for violations of the MBTA. Prosecuted industries may not have intentionally targeted wildlife but due to their failure to make infrastructural changes were responsible for the deaths of millions of birds each year. In 2015, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced its consideration of reassessing MBTA's implementation in a move to hold industries accountable for the harm they do to birds. Specifically, the changes will address bird deaths due to open oil pits, power lines, gas flares, cell phone towers, and wind turbines—which kill millions of birds each year.

By celebrating the [Migratory Bird Treaty centennial](#) throughout 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to encourage people to take action for birds, joining in the continued protection of migratory birds for generations to come.

To read more in "The Evolution of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act" timeline by the Audubon Society, go here: <http://www.audubon.org/news/the-evolution-migratory-bird-treaty-act>

A Wild Success: A Systematic Review of Bird Recovery Under the Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was enacted by Congress in 1973. Under the ESA, the federal government has the responsibility to protect:

- **Endangered Species** - species that are likely to become extinct throughout all or a large portion of their range.

- **Threatened Species** - species that are likely to become endangered in the near future.
- **Critical habitat** - vital to the survival of endangered or threatened species.

The Endangered Species Act has lists of protected plant and animal species both nationally and worldwide. When a species is given ESA protection, it is said to be a "listed" species. The ESA is considered by many to be the world's strongest law protecting animals and plants on the brink of extinction.

According to the [Center for Biological Diversity's](#) third in-depth report on the Act's effectiveness, [A Wild Success: A Systematic Review of Bird Recovery Under the Endangered Species Act](#), 99 percent of species protected under the Act have avoided extinction.

The study, released in June 2016, looks at how well the ESA has helped in the recovery of a species, by examining objective, long-term population trends of the 120 bird species listed as threatened or endangered under the Act since 1967. The Whooping Crane and Mississippi Sandhill Crane are two of the species highlighted in this report.

"Drawing on more than 1,800 scientific population surveys, our study used scientifically vetted data points to determine (1) if bird populations increased, decreased or stabilized after being protected by the Act, (2) the magnitude of population changes, (3) whether recovery rates are consistent with rates projected in federal recovery plans, and (4) how endangered birds fared in comparison to more common birds...."

To read the full report go here: [Read the full report.](#)

To read or download a PDF of "Appendix A: Population Trend Summary For All Threatened and Endangered Birds, Group 1 – 97 species with population trends between Endangered Species Act Listing and the Present; Group 2 – 23 Species without Endangered Species Act Population Trends" including photos, population graphs and species summaries, go here: http://www.esasuccess.org/2016/pdfs/AWildSuccess_AppendixA.pdf

Read more about birds and the Endangered Species Act, go here: <http://www.esasuccess.org/2016/>

To learn more about the Center for Biological Diversity and the work it does, go here: <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/about/> and here: <http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/>

Editor's note: While it is not the anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), it is important to recognize that without its oversight, countless species would now likely be extinct – perhaps the most charismatic for many being the Whooping Crane. Unfortunately, hundreds of species are still waiting to be "listed" in order to receive federal protection not only for the species but also for the habitat crucial for its survival. Despite recent escalation of opposition by some groups towards anything environmental, it is a comfort that there are strong advocates, such as the Center for Biological Diversity, working to preserve wildlife and the environment – providing a "voice" for all that cannot speak.

Shooting a Whooping Crane is a crime

Trey Frederick admitted in court to have knowingly shot and killed two Whooping Cranes that had been in the Beaumont Texas area for eight months. He pled guilty to violating the Endangered Species Act, specifically the possession of an endangered animal, which is Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in prison and/or a \$50,000 fine, says assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Batte. The case sentencing is to take place this fall.

The [International Crane Foundation](#) has asked that Frederick be sentenced to no less than a month in jail, to levy at least a \$15,000 fine and 300 hours of community service, and to revoke the teen's hunting license for at least five years.

In the past, sentences in cases of Whooping Cranes shooting deaths have varied at best. In 2009 the poacher responsible for the shooting death of Whooping Crane #217, mother of W1-06, the first wild Whooping Crane chick hatched and fledged in the eastern U.S. in more than a century – was fined \$1. Then, on the opposite end of the spectrum, in 2012, a man who shot a Whooping Crane of the wild population in South Dakota was fined \$85,000, sentenced to 30 days in jail, given two years of probation, had his hunting privileges revoked for two years and was also given community service.

An aggressive sentence is needed in all cases, to send the message that shooting a Whooping Crane is a crime that has significant personal consequences.

To read more in the [Newsweek Tech & Science](http://www.newsweek.com/1-5-whooping-cranes-die-gunfire-some-are-trying-stop-it-487425) article "One in Five Whooping Cranes Dies From Gunfire. Some Are Trying to Stop It" by [Douglas Main](#), go here: <http://www.newsweek.com/1-5-whooping-cranes-die-gunfire-some-are-trying-stop-it-487425>

Aransas-Wood Buffalo WHOOPERS

Wild Whoopers need "stopover" ponds and wetlands

According to Chester McConnell, president of the [Friends of the Wild Whoopers \(FOTWW\)](#) group, there is a pressing need for individuals and private landowners interested in helping the cranes, to properly manage existing ponds/wetlands or develop new ponds/wetlands that attract Whooping Cranes. Over the course of the cranes' 2,500-mile spring and fall migrations between their Canadian nesting grounds and their winter habitat along the Texas coast they will stop to rest and eat 10 to 15 times.

Unfortunately, changes in land use have brought about destruction of thousands of critical stopover areas historically used by the cranes. And, 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

To learn more about what needs to be done or to get involved go here:

<http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/whooping-crane-stopover-pondswetlands-plans/>

"Stopover Habitat Project" assessment on military bases completed

Friends of the Wild Whoopers reports that it just completed its Stopover Habitat Project evaluation of military bases within the migration corridor for the wild population of Whooping Cranes. Nebraska was the last state visited. The total project effort resulted in an estimated 96 "stopover ponds" being properly managed on secure military bases along the 2,500-mile migratory route.

These newly identified stopovers can be added to other valuable, habitat "stepping stones" for the cranes during their journey. While this is an excellent start, there is still much to be done to secure what is

needed for the growing population, especially when facing known threats of habitat degradation, collisions with power lines, and oil and gas development.

So, kudos to FOTWW for their continued work to protect and help manage crucial stopover habitat, and thanks to those who work cooperatively to make it a reality!

If you would like to support the work of FOTWW go here for more information:

<http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/support-fotww/become-friend-wild-whoopers/>

Have land? Put a Whooping Crane on it

Conservation easements are another way towards providing crucial wildlife habitat. The United States is home to more than 330 wild Whooping Cranes, some of which have been documented using [Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#) easements across the central United States.

Conservation efforts on private lands by farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners have played a critical role in the survival of the Whooping Crane. Through the USDA NRCS program [Working Lands for Wildlife](#), (WLFW) more than 6.7 million acres of prime wildlife habitat have been created. This voluntary restoration and protection of wetlands is important in enlarging the habitat footprint available not only to Whooping Cranes but to many other species that share the same ecosystem. Wetland easements across the country provide a migratory corridor for the wild Whooping Crane population from North Dakota to Texas. These wetlands – big or small – serve as rest stops for cranes during spring and fall migration.

To read the article “Through Conservation, America’s Agricultural Producers Can Put a Bird on Working Lands” by Amy Overstreet, Natural Resources Conservation, click [here](#).

45 wild Whoopers fledge at Wood Buffalo NP

In an ongoing Whooping Crane nest survey project, jointly run by Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), a total of 78 Whooping Crane nests were documented during the 2016 breeding season. 71 nests were located within [Wood Buffalo National Park](#) (WBNP) and 7 nests were located in crane habitat located outside the Park making this nesting season the second highest on record. Conditions and habitat on the nesting grounds continue to be excellent.

Results from the 2014 survey show the record high count of 82 nests. Severe drought and subsequent low water levels was possibly the reason that only 68 nests were located during the 2015 survey.

CWS and Parks Canada recently completed the 2016 Fledgling Surveys reporting 45 fledglings (including a pair of "twins")! If all continues to go well, the juveniles, accompanied by the adults, will make their first migration from Wood Buffalo NP to wintering grounds in or near [Aransas National Wildlife Refuge](#).

For a chart of nest surveys for the period 1966 to 2016; aerial photos of the crane nesting habitat and more information about how the surveys are run, go here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/78-whooping-crane-nest-located-wood-buffalo-national-park-canada/>

For the latest updates on the wild flock and/or to become a member of Friends of the Wild Whoopers, go here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/>

Whooper Identification

With the start of the fall hunting seasons it is crucial to correctly identify similar looking species of large white or gray birds. Some of these birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and not hunted. Harming, harassing or killing an endangered Whooping Crane is a federal offense under the Endangered Species Act and carries stiff penalties.

Help protect our Whoopers by knowing how to identify them

For a checklist of Whooper field marks, photos of Whooping Crane look-a-likes, photo ID quizzes and how to report sightings of Whooping Cranes, go here: <http://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/whooper-indentification/>

Take the "I Give a Whoop" pledge to protect Whooping Cranes

Join thousands across the country who have already taken the pledge to help protect Whooping Cranes. You can help by: 1. Being able to correctly identify a Whooping Crane; 2. Report anyone harassing or harming Whoopers to wildlife authorities; 3. Spread the word to family and friends about the plight of these amazing birds.

To take the pledge, or just learn more, go here: <http://www.savingcranes.org/i-give-a-whoop/>

For the [International Crane Foundation](#) "Large Waterbirds of North America: An Identification Guide" that shows how Whooping Cranes measure up to similar looking species, go here:

https://www.savingcranes.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/1/large_waterbirds_of_north_america_id_guide_2000.jpg

Eastern Migratory Population of WHOOPERS

Into the Wild

"Over the last 35 years a series of reintroduction projects have been developed to establish new wild Whooping Crane populations. The projects have had varying success, but as each project builds on previous attempts we are learning what techniques work most effectively. Today, as a result of years of dedication, a second Whooping Crane population numbering around 100 birds migrates through the eastern United States. In 2015 three chicks successfully fledged in this population – a symbol of hope for the future of Whooping Crane conservation."

– The International Crane Foundation

Read more about the eastern population of Whooping Crane reintroduction programs including the Direct Autumn Release program here: <https://www.savingcranes.org/into-the-wild/>

WCEP Whooping Crane Update/August 1, 2016

The [Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership \(WCEP\)](#) for the Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes has posted the following update of that population: 100 cranes – 48 females, 50 males, and 2 unidentified. This total does not include wild-hatched chicks from 2016. As of the beginning of August, at least 90 Whooping Cranes were confirmed in Wisconsin, one in Michigan, and four in Illinois. The remaining 5 birds have not been confirmed in Wisconsin yet this spring.

For a location map and to learn what's up with the 2015 wild juveniles, 2015 Parent-reared cohort, 2015 Direct Autumn Release cohort, 2015 ultra-light cohort, reproduction successes, injuries and suspected mortalities, click here:

<http://www.bringbackthecranes.org/technicaldatabase/projectupdates/2016/July2016.html>

Operation Migration Update

The 2016 season will be a transitional year for [Operation Migration](#) (OM) but it remains firmly committed to the eastern flock. This is the final year of the forced re-nesting study at Necedah NWR where the only eggs collected will be those from a few select pairs or from abandoned nests. As a result, only a small number of chicks will be available for release in the Eastern flock.

The releases taking place this season will be by the Parent Reared method, to be carried out by [Patuxent Wildlife Research Center](#) and the [International Crane Foundation](#). OM will assist with the release of the 2016 Parent Reared crane chicks and track their fall migration. In the spring staff will monitor nesting birds to help determine the cause of chick mortality, by documenting the movements and behavior of pairs with chicks with ground observations and by using radio telemetry to gather data. OM staff will also be capturing adult cranes to replace non-functional transmitters.

"Everyone at OM is extremely grateful for your past support. Your participation has helped create a migratory flock of Whooping cranes in a flyway where they had not been seen for more than a century. Thank you!"

We look forward to your continued partnership as we embark on a new chapter of this unique and amazing journey."

To learn more about Operation Migration and keep up with its projects go here:

<http://operationmigration.org/#sthash.9gAL4yhw.dpuf>

Florida:

Golf carts and nail guns pose new threats to Sandhills

In late May 2016, Lake County, Florida witnesses watched as a couple driving a golf cart chased a family group of Sandhills, overtook them and ran over the juvenile that was unable to get out of the way. It died of a broken neck on the golf course. Reportedly, the suspect didn't like the cranes "pooping all over the golf course." Charges have been filed with the State Attorney's Office and the suspect could face prosecution.

Then in Manatee County, June 2016, a juvenile bird was found with a 4-inch long, eight-penny nail through its neck. The nail missed the bird's trachea and spinal cord but due to complications from the injury it died not long after the surgery to remove the nail. According to the Matthew Wildlife Rescue group in east Bradenton responsible for retrieving the injured crane, there was roofing work in progress in the immediate vicinity. With the particular nail gun, a safety must be pulled back before firing a nail which points to purposeful intent to harm the crane. A reward is being offered that leads to the arrest and conviction of the responsible person.

The non-migratory population of Florida Sandhill Cranes 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](#), it is a federal offense to harm them.

As is the case when wildlife is forced to live in close proximity with people whether through habitat loss from land development or by natural events, encounters are inevitable. With the steady growth of the Florida non-migratory population the cranes have become a common sight in neighborhoods, along roads and on golf courses. People are learning that cranes dig for grubs oblivious to whether it might be a lawn; will attack their own reflections – triggered by territorial defense behavior – when seen in shiny cars and glass plate windows; will feed along roadsides and cross roads unaware that speeding cars are a threat to their well-being, and "poop" wherever need be, as all birds do. So, what is normal behavior for cranes, become "nuisance" behavior as viewed by people.

Regardless of the good intentions of those who want to feed the cranes, as of 2002 it became illegal to do so as it can cause aggressive behavior by the cranes towards people.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission put together helpful information in [Living with Sandhill Cranes](http://myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/wildlife/sandhill-cranes/). Learn more, click here: <http://myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/wildlife/sandhill-cranes/>

And for general information on the Florida Sandhills, click here: <http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/birds/cranes/sandhill-crane/>

Louisiana:

Editor's note: *Our thoughts are with all who call Louisiana home as they deal with the recent flood devastation in the state.*

First wild Whooper is doing well

LW1-16 and LW2-16 were the first wild-hatched Whooper chicks in Louisiana since 1939. Their parents, a four-year-old female (L6-12) and a three-year-old male (L8-13), were raised at USGS' Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland before being released at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation area. Of the two colts, only LW1-16 survived to fledge.

To see a photo of female Whooping Crane L6-12 and chicks LW1-16 and LW2-16, April 13, 2016, click here: <https://www.usgs.gov/media/images/whooping-crane-mother-and-her-two-chicks-louisiana-2016>

For updates, photos and videos of LW1-16 and the other Louisiana Whoopers, go to: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Louisiana-Department-of-Wildlife-and-Fisheries-Whooping-Cranes/733006696805446>

Editor's note: *This is an excellent article that gives the history of Whooping Cranes in North America, and brings the reader full circle to the current reintroduction of cranes at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in Louisiana. The background story about Whooping Cranes "Thirty-Three" and "Five," the two cranes killed earlier this year in Beaumont, Texas, is included.*

Ruffled Feathers [Texas Monthly/September 2016](#) By [Sonia Smith](#)

"...a total of 75 young birds have been released into the marsh, 36 of which survive to date. Some have been killed by predators—bobcats, coyotes, birds of prey. Others have died from pneumonia or parasitic flatworms. Still others have collided with power lines. And the disappearance of 9 birds is a mystery, as their carcasses were never found. But the single biggest cause of death is shootings. Ten birds have died after being shot, which represents 27 percent of the flock's mortality..."

To read the story, Ruffled Feathers click here: <http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/whooping-cranes-texas/>

Louisiana's Whooping Cranes

The following is background history of LW1-16's parents and is part of an informative article about the Louisiana flock of Whooping Cranes - from the capture of the last wild LA Whooper in 1950 to the work begun in 2011 by LDWF, of releasing cohorts of cranes at White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area.

"...When an entire species numbers only six hundred, the stories of each individual become much more compelling. The mother of the first family was produced by a pair of cranes at the Calgary Zoo in Canada. Not yet hatched, she was flown, in ovum, to a federal breeding facility in Maryland, where she was incubated in a machine, hatched, and then reared by humans. The father was produced by two captive cranes at the [International Crane Foundation](#), a breeding facility in Baraboo, Wisconsin. That egg was likewise shipped to the Maryland breeding center, [Patuxent Wildlife Research Center](#). Each year, about fifteen of these young birds take a one-way flight (in boxes) from Maryland down to Jennings Airport, where Zimorski and her team gradually introduce them to the Louisiana wilds...."

To read the Country Roads, August 2016 article, "Louisiana's Whooping Cranes," by Chris Staudinger click here: <http://www.countryroadsmagazine.com/outside/knowning-nature/the-plight-and-progress-of-louisiana-whooping-cranes>

Michigan:

Suiting up as a Whooping Crane

Veterinarians aren't surprised by much, as, over time, they encounter all manner of strange things in their line of work. So when field staff from the [International Crane Foundation \(ICF\)](#) contacted the Detroit Zoological Society (DZS) bird department with a request for assistance, Dr. Sarah Woodhouse, a DZS veterinarian headed off to meet them. The ICF staff were tracking four yearling Whooping Cranes raised at the foundation in 2015 and now on their maiden migration back north. The cranes had made their way to the Midwest from Florida but were thought to have been blown off course on their way back to Wisconsin by a storm that came across Lake Michigan. Once ICF tracked the cranes to a cornfield in Michigan, they needed a veterinarian's health certificate stating that the cranes were healthy enough to travel back to Wisconsin. For her examination of the juveniles, Dr. Woodhouse was required to don the full crane costume worn by all who work with the EMP of Whooping Cranes. It is not every day one has the opportunity to come face to face with four Whooping Cranes!

Read Dr. Woodhouse's account here: <https://detroitzooblog.org/2016/07/25/veterinary-care-suiting-up-as-a-whooping-crane/>

Nebraska:

In search of understanding – the Platte Basin journey

"Truly understanding the heart and soul of a place requires living in it. Not just admiring the view, but becoming a part of it." – Michael Forsberg

On July 1, 2016 Michael Forsberg, an award-winning conservation photographer and co-founder of the [Platte Basin Timelapse project](#) and videographer Pete Stegen, the field producer for the project began a 1,000-mile traverse of the basin. On their journey they hiked, biked and canoed from the Platte River mountain headwaters in Wyoming and Colorado to more than halfway across Nebraska with the goal of reaching where the Platte joins the Missouri River by the end of August.

The mission of the trip was to collect images and other information to help people better understand the complex watershed and where the water they use comes from. Forsberg's and Stegen's photos, videos and journals reportedly will be used in a NET documentary and as additions to the multimedia resources already part of the [Platte Basin Timelapse project](#) Forsberg co-founded in 2011.

People and wildlife are dependent on the health of the Platte basin watershed. Each spring more than a half million Sandhill Cranes and millions of other migratory birds temporarily make the Platte River basin home for several weeks, fattening themselves for their journey to breeding grounds to the north. The mass migration of Sandhill Cranes has been called one of the most spectacular migrations of wildlife in the world.

"What I knew intellectually, but didn't always know in my heart was how interconnected all these things are," Forsberg said about the Platte watershed and its people. "Everything is connected. Water is the silvery thread that connects us and all life."

Braided Journey: Where does your water come from? Follow the journey here:
<http://plattebasintimelapse.com/>

For videos with Forsberg and Stegen from their journey and for Micheal Forsberg's beautiful photographs, click here: [facebook.com/mforsbergphoto/](https://www.facebook.com/mforsbergphoto/)

To read interviews with Forsberg and Stegen click here:
http://www.omaha.com/news/nebraska/journey-aims-to-tell-story-behind-platte-river/article_0ede21bc-769b-59a9-ae3f-23693864d537.html

and here:
http://www. Kearneyhub.com/news/agriculture/photographer-documents-platte-basin-journey-to-share-with-the-world/article_bc30504c-665a-11e6-aaab-53fb1209b46b.html

See also Eastern Crane Bulletin, June 2015 issue, page 4: "Platte Basin Timelapse Project/ Into the Current: A community works to conserve wildlife habitat along the central Platte River in Nebraska."

Wisconsin:

Trempealeau NWR celebrates 80 years

[Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge](#) celebrated its 80th birthday on August 21, 2016. Located along the eastern edge of the Mississippi River, this refuge was established in 1936 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide resting and breeding habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. The refuge, part of the Mississippi flyway, provides more than 6,446 acres of wetland, river and sand prairie habitats and offers breathtaking bluffs and vistas of the deep gorge of the Mississippi River.

In the early 1930s, [John Clark Salyer, II](#), was the first to act on the idea of designating Trempealeau as a national wildlife refuge. In 1934, Salyer, now known as "Father of the National Wildlife Refuge System," was recruited to oversee the management of all the refuges in the country and develop an Aldo Leopold-inspired conservation program based on the habitat needs of migratory birds. Under Salyer's leadership the refuge system increased from 1.5 million acres in the mid-1930's to nearly 29 million acres upon his retirement in 1961.

Read more about the history of the organization and growth (1921 - 1955) of the National Wildlife Refuge system here: https://www.fws.gov/refuges/history/over/over_hist-b_fs.html

Learn more about the National Wildlife Refuge System here: <https://www.fws.gov/refuges/>

Habitat Matters!

USDA grant to support playa wetland restoration

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in July that \$44.6 million has been awarded through the federal department's [Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership](#) to benefit projects on private and tribal agricultural lands in 12 states (includes projects in Arkansas, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Tennessee, Washington and Wisconsin). \$3.2 million is earmarked for Nebraska wetlands. Partnering Nebraska organizations will contribute an additional \$574,000.

According to the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS), despite extensive wetland drainage throughout the [Rainwater Basin](#) and Central Table Playa Wetland Complex, many historic wetlands intermittently pond water during the cropping season. It is hoped that the restoration of the 900 acres of [playa wetlands](#) and associated upland buffer will create a win-win situation by providing economic alternatives for landowners and farm operators, create better habitat for migratory birds and resident wildlife, and benefit rural communities. These wetland restorations are expected to address seven of Nebraska NRCS's State Resource concern priorities – the foremost being issues of soil erosion and water quality of the [Ogallala Aquifer](#).

Read more about the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture here: rwbjv.org/tag/rainwater-basin-joint-venture/

Read more from the [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) about wetland conservation here: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/water/wetlands/>

For a map of the Ogallala Aquifer click here:

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MEDIA/nrcseprd413927.jpg

Read more about the disappearing aquifer here: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-ogallala-aquifer/>

Science News:

Genus for Sandhill Cranes changes

Whooping Cranes and Sandhill Cranes are no longer classified in the same genus. Based on DNA studies, Sandhill Cranes were moved from the genus *Grus* to *Antigone* in the [Fifty-seventh Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds](#). Whooping and Common Cranes remain in the genus *Grus*.

More details are available at: <https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/sancra/systematics>

Protect your corn from cranes: Anthraquinone seed treatment spares crop

Authors: Anne Lacy, Crane Research Coordinator and Jeb Barzen, Director of Field Ecology, International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, Wisconsin; Eileen Cullen, associate professor of entomology, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin–Madison; and Sarah Schramm, former associate research specialist, UW–Madison.

"In an unusual twist, a conservation success story has created a potential pest for Wisconsin corn growers. The resurgence of the eastern population of greater sandhill cranes (*Grus* [Editor: Now *Antigone*] *canadensis tabida*) has been impressive, with an increase statewide from about 3,000 cranes to about 14,000 in three decades. As the population rebounds, however, farmers increasingly find themselves at odds with these birds as they forage in, and often damage, seedling corn.

With nearly 3 million of the state's approximately 4 million acres of corn as potential crane habitat, the possible economic impact of corn depredation by cranes is serious. This fact sheet describes the behavior of the Sandhill Crane so that growers can better understand which means of protecting their crop are effective, and why....

...The crane population in the Midwest continues to grow, though at a slower rate in recent years. As the birds expand their range and explore new habitat, more farmers will encounter cranes in their fields. By treating corn seeds with the anthraquinone biopesticide bird repellent, farmers can tolerate the presence of sandhill cranes in their fields without fearing crop loss. With corn off the cranes' menu, farmers may even benefit from cranes eating soil insect pests."

For the complete article (PDF available), "Protect your corn from cranes," click here: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261862414_Protect_your_corn_from_cranes

Copyright © 2013 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System doing business as the division of Cooperative Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. All rights reserved.

[See also Eastern Crane Bulletin, December 2015, page 9, Science News: Proposal for special registration of crane-repellent pesticide.](#)

Refining Reintroduction of Whooping Cranes with Habitat Use and Suitability Analysis

Authors: Nathan D. Van Schmidt, Jeb A. Barzen, Mike J. Engels, Anne E. Lacy

Abstract

A successful species reintroduction depends, in part, on the correct identification of suitable habitats. In cases where a species has been extirpated from a region for decades, however, this task is fraught with uncertainty. Uncertainty can be minimized and adjusted for by monitoring and adaptive management. The central goal of this study was to identify reintroduction sites that facilitate dispersion of whooping cranes

(*Grus americana*), a federally listed endangered species, into optimal habitat as quickly as possible. First, we described the habitat selection of breeding home ranges for reintroduced whooping cranes in and around Necedah National Wildlife Refuge of central Wisconsin. We defined home ranges as 95% fixed spatial kernel density estimates from location data gathered from nesting whooping cranes from April through July 2005–2010. Whooping crane home ranges contained more emergent herbaceous wetlands than expected by chance and less developed or barren land, forest, and scrubland. Breeding whooping crane home ranges usually were composed of distinct nesting territories and off-territory elements; when moving off-territory, cranes decreased wetland selection and increased selection for open uplands. Second, we used habitat composition values and strength of selection (as determined by Jacob's index) to create a habitat suitability map to identify potential habitats that breeding whooping cranes could use in unoccupied eastern Wisconsin. With this method, we identified 2 large suitable wetland complexes within our study area associated with the Fox and Rock Rivers. Based on this analysis, the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership began releasing whooping cranes into White River Marsh State Wildlife Area and Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in 2011. © 2014 The Wildlife Society.

Article (PDF Available) in [Journal of Wildlife Management](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265968481_Refining_Reintroduction_of_Whooping_Cranes_within_Habitat_Use_and_Suitability_Analysis) 78(8):1404-1414 · November 2014
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265968481_Refining_Reintroduction_of_Whooping_Cranes_within_Habitat_Use_and_Suitability_Analysis

Whooping Cranes in Southwest Louisiana: History and Human Attitudes

Citation

Gomez, Gay M. "Whooping Cranes in Southwest Louisiana: History and Human Attitudes.", In: *Stahlecker D. W., ed. 1992. Proceedings of the Sixth North American Crane Workshop, Oct. 3-5, 1991, Regina, Sask. (Grand Island, NE.: North American Crane Working Group, 1992), 19-23.*

Abstract

When whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) inhabited southwest Louisiana's coastal marshes, residents viewed them as a food source and a crop pest, and shooting was commonplace. Local attitudes have changed as a result of education, stricter law enforcement, and decreased dependence on wildlife for subsistence, but hunting remains widespread. A 1977 proposal to reintroduce whooping cranes to southwest Louisiana generated strong opposition from the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission (now Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries), based on concerns about critical habitat and its likely impact on waterfowl hunting and other traditional marsh uses. These concerns remain, though a recent change in departmental structure may lead to a more favorable attitude toward whooping crane reintroduction.

For the complete article (PDF available), click here:

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1262&context=nacwgproc>

Climate change and Sandhill populations

The [Climate Science Center \(CSC\)](#) at Texas Tech University conducts interdisciplinary research to address the interactive effects of climate variability across the full array of landscapes within the South Central U.S. CSC provides the science, tools, and information to link current conditions with regional climate projections, and examine the real-world decision making and planning that can be used to best anticipate, monitor, and adapt to this projected climate change. *Videos for Science* feature Texas Tech University graduate students explaining their research in regards to climate change.

In her video, graduate student Kathryn Brautigam explains her research on the winter ecology of the Sandhill Crane population at [Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge](#) in Muleshoe, Texas. As part of her dissertation she is mapping what habitats the cranes are looking for to determine if these resources will still be available for them from 50 to 100 years from now.

Watch the video here: <http://www.planetexperts.com/winter-ecology-sandhill-crane-population/>

UPDATE: Eastern migratory population of Sandhill Crane hunting season

Tennessee Sandhill Crane 2016-2017 season extended

The Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission (TWFC) established a limited Sandhill Crane hunting season for a designated zone in southeast Tennessee. At its April meeting, the TWFC voted to extend the season to 55 days and move it later in the season. The 2016-17 season will be December 3 - January 12, 2017 and January 16-29, 2017 and includes a three-day closure (Friday-Sunday, January 13-15) for the Tennessee Sandhill Crane Festival held at the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge.

Upcoming Events:

Whooping Crane Festival

September 8-10, 2016

Princeton, Wisconsin

For more information on the festival and how to register click here:

<http://operationmigration.org/CraneFest.asp>

List of featured speakers: <http://www.operationmigration.org/CraneFestSpeakers.asp>

International Crane Foundation Member Appreciation Day

Saturday, October 8, 2016

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

International Crane Foundation

Baraboo, Wisconsin

[Click here to join our flock today](#), call [608-356-9462](tel:608-356-9462) ext. 103, or email our staff. Memberships may also be purchased or renewed at the ICF Visitor Center the day of the event. For more information go here: <https://www.savingcranes.org/member-appreciation-day/>

CraneFest (Sandhill Crane and Art Festival)

October 8-9, 2016

Noon - 7:00 p.m.

Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area

22300 15 Mile Road, Bellevue, Michigan

(overlooking Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary and Big Marsh Lake)

For more information go here: <http://www.cranefest.org/about/>

Kankakee River Sandhill Crane Paddle

Sponsored by the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association

Sunday October 16, 2016

English Lake, IN

For information email: nwipa@nwipa.org

To receive this quarterly E-bulletin contact:

Mary W. Yandell, *Editor*
Kentucky Coalition for Sandhill Cranes
kyc4sandhillcranes.com
kycoalition4sandhillcranes@gmail.com
mtwyandell@gmail.com

Or

Cynthia Routledge
Southeastern Avian Research
Specializing in Winter Hummingbird banding
The Tennessee Ornithological Society
www.tnbirds.org
routledges@bellsouth.net

For archived issues of the *Eastern Crane Bulletin* click here:
<http://kyc4sandhillcranes.com/eastern-crane-bulletin/>

We never lend or sell our E-bulletin recipient list.