Milestones

YEAR OF THE WHOOPER

A SALUTE TO "DAWN"

Whooping Cranes by Owen J. Cronne. Original painting now hangs at headquarters of the International Crane Foundation. Photo by Ronald Irish

This spring two momentous developments occurred in the fight to save the critically endangered Whooping Crane. Government biologists at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland succeeded in hatching an egg produced by their captive flock of Whooping Cranes, and at Cranes Lake, Idaho, scientists substituted Whooping Crane eggs for the eggs of Greater Sandhill Cranes in an attempt to introduce Whooping Cranes into Idaho.

Ever since the 19th Century, conservationists in the U. S. and Canada have been concerned about the status of the Whooping Crane. This five-foot tall bird originally nested throughout the granite marshlands of central North America. But as these rich and fertile lands were drained for agriculture in the 1800s, the Whooping Cranes began to disappear. By 1880, it became apparent that the last bird in North America was on the brink of extinction.

For the next few decades, only a small flock of Whooping Cranes wintered near Corpus Christi, Texas, and a few non-migratory Whoopers in Louisiana remained as the remnants of a once noble and wide-spread species. The main nesting grounds in central U. S. and Canada no longer existed and the actual breeding area for the Texas flock was unknown.

But it was not until 1941, when only fourteen Whoopers were left that a massive effort began to save this magnificent species. The National Audubon Society was at the forefront of the movement and distributed thousands of leaflets throughout the central U. S. and Canada describing the bird and soliciting hunters not to shoot it. The Society also began a vigorous search for the nesting grounds of the Texas flock to

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STELLA ARRIVES AT I. C. F.

On March 17th, Stella, a Greater Sandhill Crane, became the first wild crane to voluntarily choose the International Crane Foundation as her new home.

Even though Stella’s arrival was a milestone for the Crane Foundation, her appearance on a warm, sunny day in March was not a surprise. She had actually been expected.

Those who have read Dayton Hyde's delightful book, Sandy, may remember how "Sandy", Hyde’s hand-raised Sandhill Crane, attracted a wild male Sandhill, and the two cranes actually built a nest and raised a family together on his ranch in Oregon.

Hyde’s property is located in prime Sandhill habitat and the wild male probably spotted Sandy one day while flying over and decided to make her his own. Besides Hyde’s account, there are other cases of wild cranes joining captive cranes at the Kushiro Crane Park in Japan, in Germany and at the Carlosaviaries in Minnesota.

We expected, therefore, that the Crane Foundation’s flock of tame Sandhills would eventually attract wild Sandhill to I. C. F., especially when one considers that I. C. F. is located at the peri-

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Behind the Lines on the DMZ

George Archibald

The author is a director of the International Crane Foundation and a well-known authority on the conservation of cranes in eastern Asia.

The irony of it all was extraordinary. A hundred yards before me, roosting beneath the Bridge of No Return, were the last mainland Manchurian Cranes. There were only a handful of these great white birds milling about in the shallow waters by the bridge—decades of persecution had taken their toll—but I couldn’t help thinking that perhaps the cranes had at last found a haven secure from the ravages of man. For on that cold, blustery day in December the cranes and I were sharing one of the loneliest and most forbidding places on the earth—the no-man’s-land between North and South Korea called the DMZ.

Centuries ago the cities of Manchurian and White-tailed Cranes used to echo across the clear winter skies of Korea. But as man’s appetite for land and technology became ever more ravenous, the wetlands of Korea were claimed in the name of progress. The cranes began to disappear with their wetland habitat, and many were also snared and killed when men tried to trap them for zoos or taxidermy. The Korean War just about completed the destruction of the White-tailed cranes when the whole peninsula became a battle-ground in the name of man’s political ideologies.

But in 1958, the war came to a close and the warring factions withdrew to either side of the DMZ. Over was changed to a war of words and slogans, but not before a battle between politically polarized people. Only foreboding farmland, war-crazed ghost towns, and silence remained in the 720 square kilometers separating the two Koreas. By U.N. ruling, no man could set foot in the DMZ without a special UN-DMZ pass.

When I entered the DMZ on December 2, 1974, it was strange to observe how nature had smoothed over the ugliness of overpopulation and conflict. The cranes were the perfect example. The fields were left in oak and maple. Terraced rice paddies were now terraced marshes teeming with waterfowl. Deep in the valley, I saw a beaver build a house for his rabbits, deer, lynx, and turkeys. Pleasure was in the air. Not a single bird, or even the cranes' home, was molested. Some were being watched over by the forecasts of hope. Shortly after I entered the DMZ I spotted four white birds with red faces—not cranes, but Sacred Ibis. It was a tremendous find! Four birds were long thought extinct on mainland Asia. My first observation was the world's population of Sacred Ibis to a grand total of eleven.

It was not in Korea, however, on an exalted bird, but in the minds of the people that the greatest national action on behalf of the International Crane Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund to determine the needs of White-tailed Cranes and Manchurian Cranes wintering in South Korea and the DMZ. Their habitat is being developed from correspondence between the DMZ Foundation and Dr. Kim Hoon Kyu of South Korea. In 1973 Dr. Kim had expressed interest in a survey of the studies and distribution of cranes wintering in the DMZ. I-C.P. was able to obtain funds for his preliminary survey from the New York Zoological Society, and as a result Dr. Kim located over 1000 White-tailed Cranes near the Han River Estuary and several Manchurian Cranes near the DMZ. Dr. Kim also discovered that the Han River Estuary was soon to be developed for agriculture.

Based on Dr. Kim's initial report, the Crane Foundation asked to develop a project to study the cranes. I was able to obtain funds for the project from the New York Zoological Society, and as a result Dr. Kim located over 1000 White-tailed Cranes near the Han River Estuary and several Manchurian Cranes near the DMZ. Dr. Kim also discovered that the Han River Estuary was soon to be developed for agriculture.

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Japanese Contributions of Money


Contributions of Labor of Material

Consolidated Broadcasting Corporation, Ruth Longe, Bob and Flora Lauter, Dr. Lawrence Walkinshaw, Donney Wever, Polly Scourto, L's Wells, Mike Zawadski.

Gift or Loan of Birds

Willow Creek Zoo, Fowlst Beach Wildlife Research Center, State of Idaho, Wisconsin, and the Province of Alberta.

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ICF Hosts International Crane Workshop

The International Crane Foundation in conjunction with the North America Sandhill Crane Committee will host an international conference of crane experts at I. C. F. headquarters September 8 to 9. Scientists from the U.S., Canada, the U.S.S.R., Germany, Sweden, Japan, and Australia will gather to discuss the latest research into the biology of the crane family.

According to the tentative speaking schedule, there will be 35 papers read and discussed during the four-day workshop. These papers will cover all aspects of crane biology including physiology, anatomy, ethology, life history, conservation, and management.

Besides the discussion of scientific papers, participants in the workshop will have the opportunity to tour full field work on cranes at several research sites in Wisconsin where Greater Sandhill Cranes are being studied. Techniques such as the capturing and banding of cranes will be demonstrated. Participants in the workshop will also be able to observe the crane habitat of central Wisconsin from airplanes during the workshop.

On Saturday, September 9, there will be a Workshop Banquet which will feature Dr. Lawrence Wallschlaeger as the guest speaker. Dr. Wallis is the author of Cranes of the World and The Sandhill Crane and is one of the world's foremost experts on the Gruidae.

Also at the banquet an original dramatic performance by a local dance company will interpret the legends and folklore surrounding cranes from all over the world.

Because of the limited space and large number of scientists attending, public access to the workshop will have to be strictly limited. Reservations for the workshop can be obtained by contacting the International Crane Foundation.

Baldwin Continues Sandhill Study

John Baldwin, a graduate student in Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin, is conducting his studies at I.C.F. on the physiology of Sandhill Cranes. Baldwin started his research in the spring of 1979 when he began recording the development of endothermy (“warm bloodedness”) in Sandhill Cranes.

Although mammals and birds are both able to regulate their body temperatures as adults, young of both groups are often born with a poor ability to perform this feat. In essence, the young animals are like reptiles and amphibians in that they regulate temperatures in the body’s environment against the ambient or surrounding temperatures.

As young birds and mammals mature, the ability to control body temperature to within a few degrees becomes possible. This allows these animals to avoid wide ranges in the surrounding temperature and to maintain high metabolic levels necessary for their complex physiology.

Baldwin is trying to determine when Sandhill Cranes reach the point of endothermy by measuring the body temperatures of various groups of cranes. This will allow him to determine if the cranes from Alaska would be under selective pressure to develop endothermy quickly, while the cranes from Florida and the Sandhills of Canada might take longer to accomplish this task.

Test results from Baldwin’s study indicate that Lesser Sandhill Cranes do indeed develop endothermy more quickly than Florida Sandhill Cranes, but final judgement is being reserved until more data are tabulated.

Baldwin is also very carefully measuring the rate of growth in his Sandhill Cranes. Such data is extremely valuable for developing techniques to raise the crane species. Determination of the rate of growth is one of the major goals of the Crane Foundation.

Cranes in Review

Gros Or Gros?

The genus Grus includes 10 species known as the “typical” cranes, three recent cranes in the world, the Whooping Crane, Grus americana, the Japanese Crane, Grus japonensis, and the Siberian Crane, Grus leucogeranus.

Apparently the generic name “Grus” is not monotypic, the species with 10 or so types are typical of cranes.

Eric Lindgren, a correspondent of I.C.F. from Papua, New Guinea, reports that natives there call the Brojol (Grus rubicundus) “Gros” which is the local word for the relatives. Unfortunately the scientific nomenclature for the typical cranes, Grus, was not the origin for the Papuan name Gros. Apparently both European scientists and the natives of Papua coincidentally created similar words to describe these most vivid of birds, the Gros or Grus cranes.
Milestones
LULU LAYS EGGS

Year of the Whooper
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ensure that this area would receive complete protection.

The effort paid off. As a result of the President's public announcement, the Whooping Crane became the very symbol of wildlife conservation in the U.S. Hunting of the Whooping Crane was effectively stopped and the nesting grounds were discovered by a federal team working in Wood Buffalo Park in northern Alberta. The numbers of Whooping Cranes in the wild slowly approached the level of 59 birds in the winter of 1971.

In the early 1980s, the U.S. and Canadian Governments began a cooperative program to establish a flock of Whooping Cranes in captivity. In 1976 and in five subsequent years, Canadian and U.S. researchers collected eggs from Whooping nests at Wood Buffalo Park and flew them to the Canadian Research Center in Maryhill. These eggs became a captive flock of 19 Whooping Cranes. Eventually these birds are going to be released as egg factories, producing rare Whooping Cranes to bolster the tiny wild population.

One of the most difficult aspects of the Whooping Crane project was to devise a system to create another separate population of migratory Whooping Cranes. A novel plan was suggested: use the wild Sandhill Crane, a smaller and much more common relative of the Whooper, as a foster parent by placing Whooping Crane eggs in the nests of the Sandhilcs, thus tricking them into raising Whooping Cranes instead of their own young. This woud result in Whooping Cranes that were as wild as their foster parents, Sandhill Cranes and the knowledge gained of North America, eventually many separate populations of Whooping Cranes could be established.

On May 30th of this year, scientists took 14 Whooping Crane eggs from the wild birds in the wild and delivered them to the Canada Lake National Wildlife Refuge where they had been placed in the nests of wild Sandhill Cranes. These Sandhill and their new charges are now under very close observation. It will be fascinating to see how this experiment works.

Almost at the same time that the historic Whooper-Sandhill switch was occurring in Idaho, the first captive-bred Whooping Crane hatched from eggs produced at the San Antonio (Texas) Zoological Park's incubator. "Daw's" birth is a matter of considerable pride, for it is the first of a new generation of Whooping Cranes. Daw is the offspring of the first pair of Whooping Cranes to be raised in the process of artificial insemination.

1975 therefore, is a year of great hope for finally resolving the Whooping Crane's drift to extinction. If Daw and his offspring prove to be successful, Sandhills will allow all those who have worked so diligently to aid this magnificent species.

As we go to press, we are saddened to learn that "Daw's" Whooping Crane died from pneumonia. The immediate cause of this first hatchling of a second generation Whooping Crane at Patuxent is unexplained, however, (Editor).

Stella and Rusty are the only two who have succeeded in raising Whooping Crane eggs in the wild. These eggs are very difficult to take care of because they have to be fed by hand. The baby Whooping Crane has to be fed every five minutes, and there are only two people who can do this.

Sandhills. The two are often seen strolling together through the alaska fields surrounding the Foundation, and their rolling coat in the wind is a familiar sight. Stelly, like the wild male in Seward, has turned down considerably since she first joined the Crazy Foundation's flock. When she arrived, it was difficult to approach within 50 yards of her. Now she will wait 15 feet from people, though she is always on her guard at such close quarters.

Everyone at I. C. F. is hoping that Stella and Rusty will nest next year. Bets are now on whether Stella or Rusty will choose the nesting grounds in the Peninsula, for Rusty has indicated he will nest in the Peninsula next season, but Stella is more likely to nest in the same place.

Cranes In Review
JAPANESE KEEP STUD BOOK FOR CRANES

Dr. Shigemasa Arakawa, director of Tokyo's Tsurumi Zoological Park, is the keeper of a registry of all the Japanese Cranes currently in captivity. The register records birth date if known, and any breeding attempt, successful or not, for each of the birds.

The Japanese Cranes were given such attention because it is the second rarest crane in the world. The Japanese bird was the first crane to nest in captivity, and the one who led the way for the other species to be hatched and raised in captivity.

The number of Japanese Cranes in captivity is not large and many of these birds were hatched and reared as offspring of other captive birds. By 1975, the Japanese Cranes were hatched and reared and seven birds died. Mating occurred at Carl Hagerman's Zoo in Copley, and the Akiyoshi Snake Park in Japan. Both 1973 raised two cranes.

Behind the Lines

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visions, reports, we were successful in having the society declared National Monument Number 259.

After my success with establishing the Han River Crane Sanctuary, I traveled north to the DMZ to continue my work on the Manchurian Cranes. Shortly before I left for the DMZ, however, I learned that there was a tunnel under the DMZ. The South attacked the North in an attempt to create a new tunnel. I had no opinion on this matter, as I had no idea where the DMZ was located. I was just happy that the political turmoil created by the incident would not prevent my travel to the DMZ to look for cranes.

Fortunately, I was able to secure a UN permit to enter the DMZ and I was not required to locate the five-toolt Chiracranus Cranes. As I mentioned earlier, the cranes actually exist north of the DMZ. I met the director of the DMZ, who was very interested in my findings. He decided that it would be quite easy to set up an observation station for the Manchurian Cranes. The first morning that I observed the cranes, I saw three pairs of cranes on a field just south of the DMZ. The DMZ, the Manchurian Cranes arrived and began to feed. No other cranes showed up that day, but the next day there were eight Manchurian Cranes feeding on the DMZ. The third day there were thirty-five nearly the same number. The Han River Crane Feeding Station was established in business.

After the tunnel incident, the UN headquarters in New York, urged two things: that the North and South should stop fighting, and that they should be encouraged to come to an agreement.

The thought occurred to me that the Manchurian Cranes, the very symbol of peace and freedom, might be the perfect thing for a cooperative project for the united Korea. Amazingly enough, the North and South Koreans expressed an interest in a joint feeding program for the Manchurian Cranes. The North even sent a trained pilot to Korea to train photographers to capture the great birds on film.

The Han River Crane Sanctuary and the DMZ Crane Feeding Station are now realities thanks to the work and interest of conservatists in the country. Fighting between the two sides may be ongoing but various species can help to make the Korean peninsula a better environment for both man and nature.