

THE ICF BUGLE

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INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

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From Down Under . . . To Baraboo



Brolgas bugling.



Eastern Sarus Cranes answer.

by George Archibald
ICF Director

"There's a sneaker."
"Where, Roy?" I frantically scanned the five-foot-tall vegetation that carpeted the Out Back wetland, hoping to see a crane head.

"It's a Big Red One," Roy pointed. With binoculars up and sweat stinging my eyes, I finally saw the Eastern Sarus lurking with lowered head.

"He's sneaking away from his nest."
But we couldn't stop long to watch the elusive bird. The leeches would get us. We had to keep on the move through the ankle to knee deep water.

Roy's sharp aboriginal eyes had caught the crane stepping from its platform nest and sure enough, we were soon peering down on two enormous white eggs. Another crane nest had been located, and it held the promise for reintroduction of the Eastern Sarus into Southeast Asia.

"The Wet" arrived in late December at the 1.1 million-acre Morr Morr Cattle Station in the western lowlands of Cape York, Queensland, Australia. Water birds had a chance to breed in the newly formed wetlands that bathed a recently parched countryside.

The rain usually started in late afternoon and continued in cloud bursts through the night, dumping as many as four inches of water before dawn. Then the sky cleared and two species of cranes trumpeted their claims to wetland real estate.

The Brolgas, known by many as the Native Companions, have their last stronghold in Australia's north and they still number in the tens of thousands. The Eastern Sarus were first reported in Australia in 1964

and they have subsequently increased into the thousands. The Sarus are larger than the Brolgas and compete with them for nesting habitat. In my study area, the Sarus outnumbered the Brolga two to one and the Brolga survival may eventually be threatened by the immigrants from Asia.

Ironically, the proliferation of Eastern Sarus in Australia has been paralleled by the extirpation of these towering gray birds, red headed and pink legged, across much of their traditional range. In recent years they have disappeared from Thailand and the Philippines, and possibly Vietnam and Cambodia as well. High human populations along with social disruptions and war have been responsible for their demise.

So that the Eastern Sarus could be established in captivity at ICF, the Australian government graciously allowed me to bring six cranes from Queensland to Baraboo in 1972. Unfortunately, only one of these was a female. Before her death in 1981, Gloria mothered seven offspring including three females. To prevent the breeding of related individuals new blood was needed from Australia, particularly since the Royal Forestry Department of Thailand wants to reintroduce the Eastern Sarus into the Bangpra wetlands east of Bangkok. Australia agreed to allow ICF to bring 24 Eastern Sarus and 12 Brolga eggs to Baraboo this winter, and through the vital support of ICF Board Member John Henry Dick, I spent from mid-January until mid-February in the field searching for crane nests.

The roads were flooded. Mr. Neville Travis Jones, the chief of police in a frontier town called Normanton, flew me in his single engine aircraft out to the airstrip of Morr Morr. Recently this station was purchased by the aboriginal people and under the excellent leadership of

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A Million Cranes in Gujarat

While the Eastern Sarus Crane is acutely endangered in southeastern Asia, its larger cousin the Indian Sarus is abundant across the northern plains of India. Wildlife has been protected for centuries by the Hindu faith, and species that have been able to adapt to humanity and to feed in agricultural fields have proliferated. Cranes are particularly revered by the local people in the State of Gujarat that borders Pakistan in the northwest of India. Gujarat is sanctuary to some of earth's greatest concentrations of birds.

In late January a statewide crane survey was conducted by the Forest Department of Gujarat under the able leadership of Mr. B.P. Lakhani, the Chief Conservator of Forests. The State was divided into more than 18 sections and the "whole Forest Department was mobilized to undertake this enormous task." Indian Sarus Cranes are resident in Gujarat and 19,659 were spotted.

Any region can be proud of such a crane population, but the Sarus were vastly outnumbered by two other species. Common Cranes and Demoiselle Cranes migrate to Gujarat from nesting areas in the Soviet Union and perhaps Mongolia. The Forest Department logged 83,337 Commons and a staggering 1,478,073 Demoiselles!

Just northeast of Gujarat, another important Sarus Crane count took place, in the famous Keoladeo National

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The Call of the Crane for China

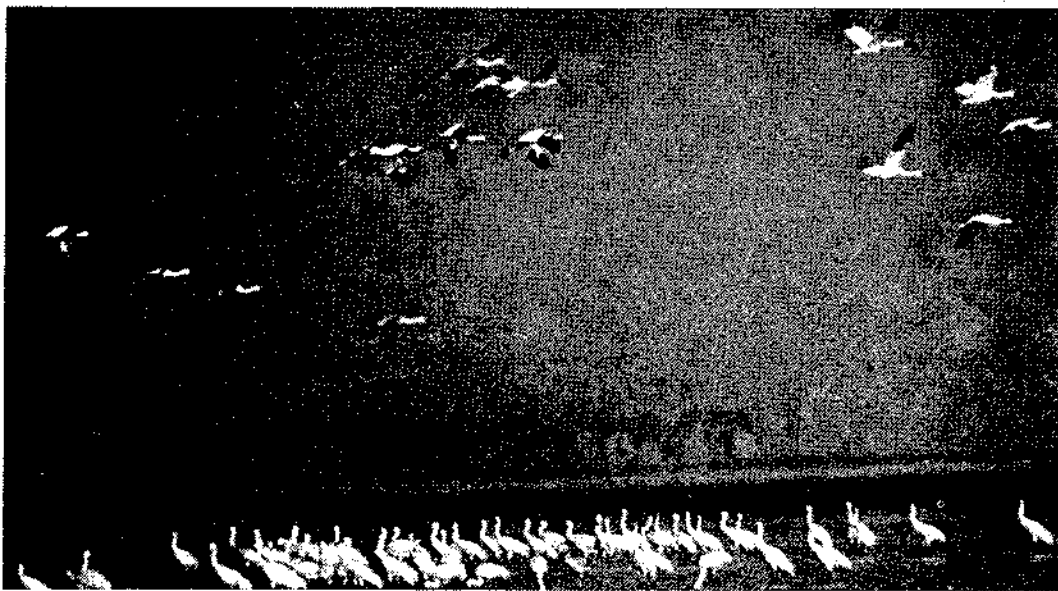
The *ICF Bugle* has a younger sister in China. She is known as *The Call of the Crane*, and a crane expert from Harbin's Institute of Natural Resources, Professor Ma Yi-ching, is the editor. Crane researchers, conservationists, and enthusiasts all over China now have a forum for information exchange to study and help the 8 species of cranes found in China. The newsletter will be published twice a year with a grant provided through ICF by the World Nature Association. And there is much exciting news to report:

— On February 15-20, twenty crane experts met in Nanjing to discuss research and establish a Joint Crane Protection Committee, headed by the Director of the Forestry Bureau of Heilongjiang Province.

— The Chinese government has designated a Red-crowned Crane Winter Reserve near Yancheng in Jiangsu Province, and a Black-necked Crane Winter Reserve at the Sea of Grass in Guizhou Province.

— Teams of EARTHWATCH volunteer researchers from the USA will monitor the migration of birds at Zha Long Nature Reserve in northwest China in May, September, and October.

A Bird Week in each of China's provinces salutes the importance of birds and their conservation. Professor Ma Yi-ching has sent hundreds of slide shows accompanied by tape recordings to Bird Week coordinators throughout China.



Siberian Cranes at Poyang Lake, China. Photo by Teng Wing-ning.

Winter Crane Counts

With the exception of the Wattled Cranes of Africa, the endangered species of cranes are migratory and easily counted on their wintering grounds where they congregate in flocks.

Winter counts provide valuable information on the population size, and since the chicks-of-the-year have distinct brown plumage, the productivity of the species can be accurately determined. ICF encourages continued, consistent, and expanded crane counts in areas wherever crane flocks traditionally winter. We wish to thank our colleagues Kunikazu Momose, Doug McNeal, Feng Ke-min, Li De-hao, Teng Wing-ning, and Rod Drewein for providing us recent data.

For almost half a century, the Whooping Cranes have been counted at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge along the Gulf of Mexico, Texas. They increased from 14 birds in 1941 to 75 cranes this winter. Since 1975, Whooping Crane eggs have been placed in Sandhill Crane nests in Idaho, in an effort to establish a second Whooper flock. In 1983-84, twenty-nine of these Whoopers wintered at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico. This brought the total world population of Whooping Cranes this winter to 141, including 37 in captivity — 34 at Patuxent, Maryland, 2 at the San Antonio Zoo in Texas, and 1 at ICF.

Since about 1950, Crane counting has been a tradition in Japan, where the relict flocks of Red-crowned (increasing from 33 to 345), White-naped (increasing from 20 to 1,095), and Hooded Cranes (from 365 to 7,098) have recovered following the turbulent era of the Pacific War.

Siberian Crane counts began in India in 1970 when 76 birds spent from November through March at Keoladeo National Park near Bharatpur. Unfortunately that flock has declined to only 37 survivors, a drop that is attributed to losses on migration to hunters in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

China is a major wintering area for five endangered species of cranes and only during the past few years have the flocks been located and their critical habitats protected. In 1980, 100 Siberian Cranes were spotted on the mudflats of Poyang Lake near the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. More extensive surveys at Poyang Lake during the next two winters chalked up 200 Siberians. But the counts this past winter far exceeded anyone's hopes or expectations: 840 Siberians and more than 1,000 White-naped Cranes! And 360 to 400 Red-crowned Cranes wintered along the seashore near Yancheng.

Black-necked Cranes breed across the Tibetan Plateau and winter in river valleys near the edge of the escarpment. So far, two major wintering areas have been located: the Popshika Valley of Bhutan, and the Sea of Grass in China. Last winter 300 Black-necked Cranes and more than 1,000 Common Cranes wintered in the Sea of Grass.

1. Whooping Cranes
Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, Texas 75
Bosque del Apache Refuge, New Mexico 29
2. Black-necked Cranes
Sea of Grass, China 300
3. Red-crowned Cranes
Jiangxi Province, China 360-400
Hokkaido, Japan 345
4. Siberian Cranes
Poyang Lake, China 840
Keoladeo National Park, India 37
5. White-naped Cranes
Aresaki, Japan 1,095
Poyang Lake, China 1,000+
6. Hooded Cranes
Izumi, Japan 7,036
Yashiro, Japan 62

Archibald Receives MacArthur Award

In early February ICF Director George Archibald was in the Australian outback studying Broilga and Eastern Sarus Cranes. A group of tin-roofed buildings formed his headquarters in the middle of a million-acre cattle station 75 miles distant from the frontier town of Normanston. The "Wet" had made all roads impassible. For anyone else but George, it would have seemed an impossible place to answer a telephone call and learn that you'd won \$192,000.

Archibald was one of 22 recently selected as a Prize Fellow by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation of Chicago. The fellowships, known colloquially as "Genius Awards" and "Big Macs," are one of four major programs administered by the MacArthur Foundation. No applications are accepted for these unusual grants. Instead a Selection Committee assembles its own list of recipients. The Foundation provides the fellows a no-strings-attached grant, based on the individual's age and paid over five years. The program's goal is to free exceptionally creative and productive individuals from financial constraints on their work.

Archibald was selected "in recognition of accomplishments in Ornithology which demonstrate originality, dedication to creative pursuits, and capacity for self-direction." George intends to use the money to establish an endowment for support of international conservation programs. In addition to George's fellowship, the MacArthur Foundation will be paying \$15,000 a year for the next five years directly to ICF.



New Fund for Bird Conservation

Wolf Brehm of West Germany's Vogelpark Walsrode has been a major supporter of ICF since 1976. Wolf sent Siberian Cranes on breeding loan to ICF and each month since 1979 our land contract payments for ICF's new site are met through a regular grant from the Vogel-park.

In 1982 Charles Luthin, a former ICF volunteer, was employed by Mr. Brehm to head a conservation office. Charlie was just completing his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin where his dissertation concerned the ecology of ibises, those curve-billed wetland companions of cranes. Wolf and Charlie then established a World Working Group on Storks, Ibises, and Spoonbills in conjunction with the International Council for Bird Preservation.

Recently Vogelpark Walsrode announced the incorporation of a non-profit organization, the W.W. Brehm Fonds für Internationalen Vogelschutz, devoted to financing basic research and conservation activities to help endangered birds. WWB-Fund is directed by Wolf, Henry Makowski, and Wolfgang Burhenne. Charlie Luthin is the administrator and a group of well-known conservationists from many countries constitute the Advisory Board. An attractive bilingual newsletter *Flying Free* tells WWB-Fund members about recent activities and future needs.

Currently the WWB-Fund is supporting a study of the Echo Parakeet in Mauritius, a species numbering fewer than 8 individuals. Aerial counts have been conducted of stork, ibis, and spoonbill colonies in Latin America, and Mr. Luthin makes long zig-zagged trips through chains of countries to spread enthusiasm for conservation, to help local researchers develop approaches to crises, and where possible to back financially their initiatives.

We encourage ICF members to join the WWB-Fund by sending \$15.00 to WWB-Fund, Vogelpark Walsrode, 3030 Walsrode, West Germany. Let's support our European colleagues in their productive efforts to make earth a safe place for birds flying free.



Iranians Resume Crane Research

In 1975 the Iranian government initiated an ambitious program with ICF to start a new and more secure flock of Siberian Cranes in western Asia. Common Cranes that winter on the plateaus of the Zagros Mountains in southwest Iran and breed in the Soviet Union were to be used as foster parents to Siberian Cranes hatched from captive-produced eggs substituted into the nest of Common Cranes.

The first step was to determine the Russian nesting grounds of Common Cranes that winter within the sanctuary of Arjan National Park, Iran. During the winters from 1975 to 1978, 192 cranes were captured at Arjan, then released with bright plastic streamers attached to their wings. Three cranes were spotted in the spring and summer months southwest of the Ural Mountains in the boreal swamps of the U.S.S.R. Subsequently, a captive breeding center for Siberian Cranes was established in the nearby Oka State Nature Reserve with the intent of eventually transferring Siberian Crane eggs "out of the back door" and into Iranian tagged Common Crane nests.

The political changes in Iran in intervening years complicated crane research. The budget of Iran's Department of the Environment was reduced and vehicles were not readily available for researcher Heidar Farhadpour and his colleagues.

However, Heidar did attend ICF's International Crane Workshop in India in February 1983 and his resolve to continue crane research was redoubled.

Using yellow wing tags and an oral tranquilizer (alpha-chloralose) that ICF left in Iran in the mid-1970s, Heidar and his comrades successfully marked 59 Common Cranes during the past winter. We congratulate our Iranian colleagues, and hope our Soviet colleagues can find the yellow-tagged cranes. The more we know about Common Cranes the more we can help the Siberian Cranes that number fewer than 50 birds in the wild in western Asia. Such continued international cooperation bodes well for the future of these relict flocks.



Heidar Farhadpour (center) and colleagues bag a narcotized Common Crane at Arjan National Park, Iran.

Hour 49 of the flight from Australia to Wisconsin ... an operation over the Pacific. Photo by F.S. Fishel.

Hour 69, between Los Angeles and Madison ... a successful hatch. Photo by F.S. Fishel.

FROM DOWN UNDER continued from page 1

Bill Johnson, thousands of cattle are rounded up by horse and helicopter during the dry season and beef is exported. But during the Wet, most of the men return to Normanton to rest with relatives while the cranes hatch then rear their families.

Roy, 42, was born and reared in Morr Morr and knew it intimately. From early morning until the storm clouds warned us to return to the bunk house in late afternoon, I followed Roy on long treks through the wetlands. When midday temperatures soared to 120° F. we relaxed in the shade of the white gum, bloodwood, and box trees and enjoyed a billie of tea. Sometimes a fast flowing stream intersected our path and provided a welcome dip while Roy kept a keen lookout for the gigantic crocodiles. He was always concerned that I would "get bushed" (lost), bitten by the snakes, or eaten by the crocs.

By mid-February we had located 60 crane nests and during my last week we revisited them to collect eggs. Some had been flooded, others had lost their eggs to predators, some eggs had hatched, and many eggs were rotten. But we were able to meet our quota of 36, and had 10 Sarus eggs to spare for the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service's research center near Toursville. The eggs were maintained at Morr Morr in an elec-

tric incubator kindly provided by Peter Johnson.

Then at 6:00 a.m. on February 19 I carefully placed the eggs in two plywood portable incubators and, with Neville Travis Jones and Roy in a twin engine plane, began a flight across the continent to a Pan American connection in Sydney. Dr. Richard Wright and family put us up that night and the Taronga Zoo had loaned the Wrights an electric incubator for the crane eggs.

I had timed my journey late during the incubation period for the cranes, as then the eggs would be least vulnerable to the disruptions I would cause. But with 36 eggs close to hatching, my trip was bound to be eventful. That first night in Sydney, "Roy" hatched, and during the next two days while I flew over the Pacific to Baraboo, four more cranes emerged amidst puzzled stares of fellow passengers. The chicks completed their migration in great shape, but I felt ready to drop after 72 almost sleepless hours playing crane parent.

Today, 18 beautiful Eastern Sarus and 6 healthy Brogas are being reared at ICF. When I see "Roy" under his heat lamp in our new chick rearing building, my thoughts drift back to that other Roy and the cranes in their soggy wilds under a blazing, tropical sun. Step by step, we will help bring these Eastern Sarus back to the marshes of southeast Asia where they belong.

Wisconsin Crane Count — 1984

Despite the wind, cold, and rain, Wisconsin's 1984 Sandhill Crane Count was another tremendous success. Four new counties were added to the survey to bring the total number of counties to 59. Hundreds of wetlands were observed for the first time, and a grand total of 5,677 Sandhill Cranes were counted.

Although crane numbers were slightly lower this year, probably owing to the weather, the number of participants increased dramatically. Almost 2,500 people greeted a wetland sunrise on April 14, an increase over last year of 25 percent!

This is the fourth consecutive year that a statewide Crane Count has been conducted. We now know that Sandhills are widespread in Wisconsin and nest in essentially every county of the state. To assist ICF in the analysis of the massive amount of data already collected,

a graduate student has offered to computerize the data. This will give us a better understanding of crane numbers and, most importantly, yearly changes in wetland habitats and how these changes are affecting breeding cranes across Wisconsin.

Save this date: **Sept. 29, 1984**

ICF ANNUAL MEETING

More information to come with your next newsletter.

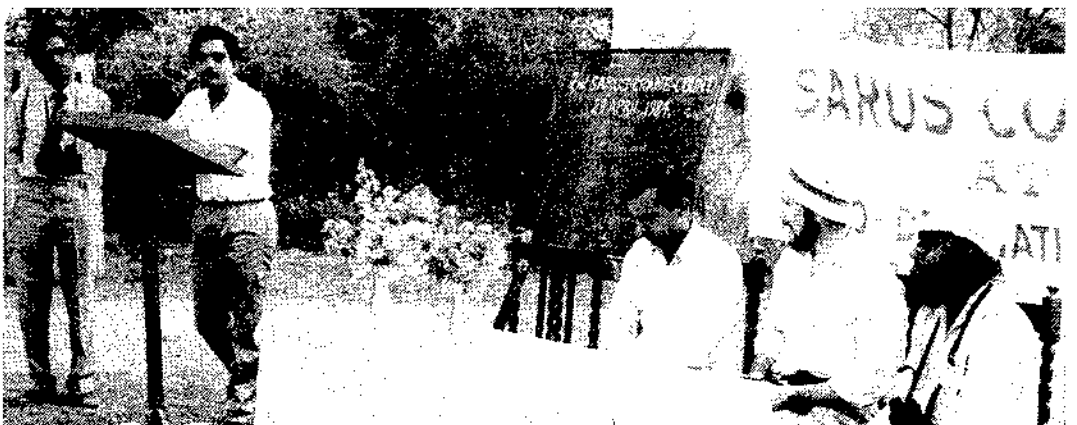
A MILLION CRANES

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Park near Bharatpur in the State of Rajasthan. Organized by the Ghana Keola Deo Natural History Society, the Bombay Natural History Society, and the Forestry Department of Rajasthan, 82 volunteer observers gathered at twelve sites during the morning of April 29. They tallied 657 Sarus Cranes, in contrast to 258 counted one year ago.

The count at Bharatpur is particularly important because local people are interested and involved. Until recently the Keoladeo National Park, which is also winter refuge to the last flock of Siberian Cranes visiting India, was threatened by overgrazing of domestic animals and by the cutting of forests. The Sarus count is a means of involving the nearby people in crane research and thus conservation.

These research initiatives are a vital step in preserving India's cranes. We hope additional areas in southern Asia will follow India's fine example.



Mr. Krishan Kumar (Ghana Keola Deo Natural History Society) at the podium, Mr. R.G. Soni (Deputy Chief Wildlife Warden of Rajasthan) left at table, Mr. Charles Pickett (U.S. National Zoo), and Dr. V.S. Vijayan (Bombay Natural History Society) officiate at the returns of the Sarus Crane Count at Keoladeo National Park.

Spotlight: Marion Hill



Marion Hill was scheduled to give a presentation at ICF's research meeting this spring, but her nametag presented something of a problem. We didn't know what to put on the line used for the job title. Over the last six years, Marion has done every possible type of work at ICF from scrubbing water buckets to hosting receptions. After extended deliberations, we finally decided that the perfect designation for Marion was simply "The Volunteer."

There are several ways to measure Marion's contributions to the Crane Foundation. You could total time, which numbers in the thousands of hours over the years — by far the most ever given to ICF by a volunteer. You could count crane chicks she has helped to rear, no doubt over a hundred. Or you could count the people she has introduced to ICF: she is ICF's busiest tour guide by summer and does over half our talks at schools each winter. She has probably talked to 10,000 people about cranes.

But if you asked a staff member how they would measure Marion's contributions, they'd recite stories not numbers. Last year for example, while the Cudahy Visitor Center was still under construction, a busload of senior citizens pulled up for a tour. It started to pour rain, and there was nowhere for the group to go. Marion, undaunted, jumped onto the bus and told crane stories over the intercom system until the rain stopped.

This winter Marion had an especially heavy schedule of school presentations, including several four-programs-in-a-day dates at "tough" inner-city schools. She was beginning to wear out, wondering if her efforts were paying off at all, when she overheard a little boy in a restaurant telling his family all about the lady who visited his class to tell about the "whooper birds!"

At an organization that has always attracted extraordinary volunteer contributions, Marion Hill is truly the volunteer. Her talk at the research meeting was (by the way) on how to recruit, train, and retain volunteers. It was the only talk during the conference that was applauded at the end.

Crane Researchers Unite!

by Shirley Russman, Supervisor
of Aviculture

"Welcome Crane Researchers" proclaimed the sign over the Campus Motel in Baraboo, where sixty people met for the 3rd Annual ICF Research Meeting on March 9-11. Crane enthusiasts (ranging from bird watchers and students to professors, private bird breeders, and veterinarians) from all over the country gathered to discuss current problems in crane research.

Several of the presentations — for example, "Analysis of the White-naped Crane Studbook" — focused on the need to maintain genetic variability while breeding cranes in captivity. Although the conference had no decision-making powers, participants agreed they should restrict breeding in order to propagate particular lines underrepresented in the captive crane population.

The conference was most significant as a chance to strengthen cooperation between geographically scattered researchers. Continued communication is essential if efforts are to be integrated toward protecting threatened species. Presentations and discussions explored topics of prime concern to all crane breeders, including standards for pen and rearing facilities, suggested protocols for avoiding epidemics, and veterinary related problems in cranes.

All in all the 3rd Annual ICF Research Meeting was a great success. When the meeting's evaluations were returned, the only complaint was not seeing cranes on the field trip — cold weather had delayed arrival of the Sandhills. Next year we can promise to cure this problem as the 4th Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the March Crane Workshop in Grand Island, Nebraska where hundreds of thousands of cranes pass through during their migration.

The Bottom Line

by Bob Hallam, Development
Coordinator

Our staff is bracing itself for what will likely be a record year for attendance at ICF. We expect our new advertising and promotional budget to attract between 18-20,000 visitors for 1984. This growth in sales, tours, and membership will offset the increase in our mortgage expenses following construction of the Sauvey Hatchery and Chick-Rearing Complex.

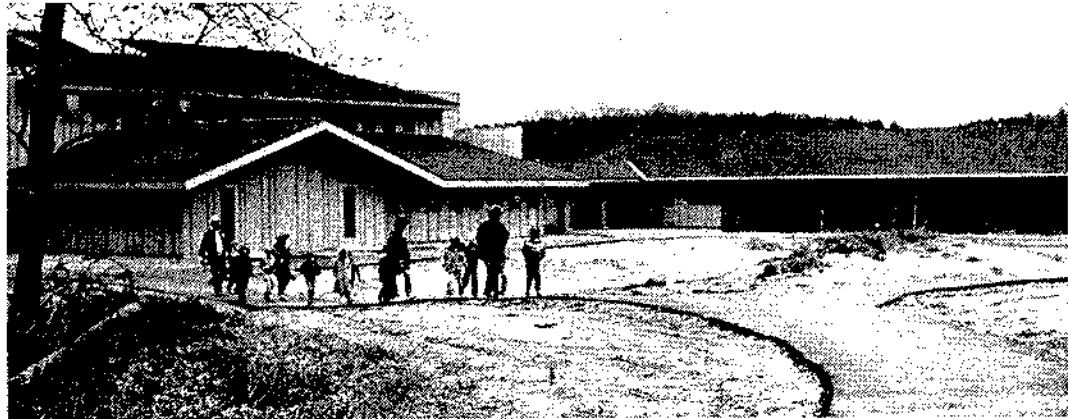
The greatest portion of the advertising budget will promote ICF in the Baraboo-Wisconsin Dells area. We have printed 50,000 brochures for distribution throughout the area this summer. We have also run a 1/2-page ad in the *Wisconsin Dells Territory Guide* that will be distributed throughout the Midwest. We have erected directional signs on Highway 12 and on County A. Public Service Announcements (PSA's) have been developed to urge the television viewing audience to visit ICF's new headquarters. The PSA's will go to television stations in Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago.

We certainly hope all of our members will visit ICF this year to see the new site and buildings. Bring along some friends and encourage others to visit ICF.

THE WISH LIST

In the past, we've been blessed with your generous responses to our wish list. If you would like to find a new home for any of the following items, we would put them all to good use here at ICF:

riding lawn mower • cassette tape recorder • lens or camera body for Pentax (either screw or bayonet mount) • surgical scissors • typing table • paper cutter • air compressor • metal detector • heavy duty electric drill.



ICF's new headquarters, the Norman and Claire Sauvey Hatchery and Chick-Rearing Complex, has just been completed. Our next newsletter will feature these facilities and their dedication on May 18, 1984.

Contributions

Received January through March, 1984.

Grants and Awards:

Anonymous
Wolf Brehm
Citizens Natural Resources Association
Francis Dewing Foundation
Alma Doten Trust
Ellinger Foundation
Evjue Foundation
Johnson Wax Fund
Johnson Company Ltd.
Madison Audubon Society
Mason Foundation
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