

THE ICF BUGLE

Volume 25, Number 4

November 1999

World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

A Landscape for Whooping Cranes

By Jim Harris, Deputy Director

A tower stands beside the wetland at the south end of Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in central Wisconsin. Climbing its steps, I feel the tower is shorter than 25 years earlier when I first visited. Not true. It is the oaks that have grown, now much higher than our heads when we stand atop the highest platform and look north. The view is wide and wild, a vast expanse of lake and marsh and wet meadow dotted with geese, ducks, gulls, and Sandhill Cranes. Beyond the water, woodlands march out of sight.

No where in any direction can we see any sign of humanity. I remember the Whooping Crane Exhibit, just an hour away south at ICF, where staff carefully orchestrated a view for visitors without fence or building. But Necedah is no exhibit. It is real, part of a wild landscape large enough—over 100,000 acres are protected by Necedah and the three adjacent state wildlife areas of Meadow Valley, Wood County, and Sandhill—almost to elude the effects of surrounding development. Bordering the protected areas are extensive cranberry farm reservoirs and other privately owned wetlands. It is this landscape that the Whooping Crane Recovery Team recommended for the first release of Whooping Cranes into Wisconsin.

The Whooping Crane almost disappeared from North America because the tall, white bird could not adapt to changes overtaking the prairies and wetlands of the continent. The Sandhill Crane did adapt,



The view from the tower at Necedah: in central Wisconsin, over 100,000 acres of wetland and surrounding forest have been protected. For 60 years, wildlife and the landscape they inhabit have been recovering from logging, overhunting, drainage, and finally farming that failed in the 1930s. Return of the Whooping Crane would be another important step in that recovery. Photo by Jim Harris

to smaller wetlands in the midst of croplands. The Whooping Crane, however, seems more closely tied to an ancient and wild landscape. That is what I feel as I stand atop the tower at Necedah, and I realize that reintroduction of Whoopers is about much more than a single magnificent species. Reintroduction is all about the long history of the state: the destruction of its wild resources, their long and slow recovery, and about our hopes for the future.

The tall, white bird reminds us of mastodons and sloth bears and ice hundreds of feet thick. The Great Ice scoured and gorged much of what is now Wisconsin, dropped sand and gravel to plug up the drainages, and spewed meltwaters into vast Glacial Lake Wisconsin. Today, the lake is

gone, but it left central Wisconsin with endless wetlands mingling with forest.

Last century, when Whoopers perhaps still lived here, loggers began transforming central Wisconsin. Farmers then drained the wetlands. Cranes and wilds disappeared. But within decades, the farms failed with drought and the Great Depression. Many of these lost lands fell tax delinquent to the state. It is hard to imagine the heartache and hard work of countless

**Recovery Team
Recommends Release
of Whooping Cranes
in Wisconsin**

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homesteaders, that all led to nothing. To nothing, that is, except a remarkable opportunity to restore the wetlands and their wildlife beginning in the 1930s. State and federal governments bought up abandoned and semi-abandoned lands, re-engineered the drainage ditches, and restored the wetlands. Private conservationists played a role, too. Wallace Grange, for example, assembled and protected lands that he later transferred to the state as the 9,460 acre Sandhill Wildlife Area.

Recovery of the wild has continued. Since I first climbed the Necedah tower, 25 years ago, Bald Eagles have returned and Osprey, species once threatened by DDT and other pesticides. Black Bears and Porcupines and even Gray Wolves are back. Ten years of effort are restoring Trumpeter Swans as a nesting species. With passing time, the landscape is more and more complete.

From the tower, white wading birds shine in the distance, Great Egrets that look tall enough because no crane stands near. A young Bald Eagle flaps along the far shore, putting 500 ducks up into the air. The eagle ignores them. Each winter, the coldest months bring Golden Eagles, a species very rare in the eastern states.

Since the Recovery Team meeting, those of us involved with the Whooper project in Wisconsin—staff of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, ICF, and others—are busy planning what will be a complex project. For example, because ultralight aircraft will likely be used to lead the young Whoopers south in fall to Florida, a level landing field is needed close beside the release site. Actually, two or three such sites will probably be needed, where young

cranes can get to know the wetland and also know the aircraft so well that they will follow it south on the long migration. Necedah and Sandhill Wildlife Area have several such sites, one of them just east of the tower, out of sight behind the trees that have grown so tall.

Through the reintroduction, we will get to know this landscape well. The release team must take the place of crane parents, and of the once unbroken crane tradition that meant survival for the Whooping Cranes. People, not adult cranes, will introduce the chicks to the wild.

Through this reintroduction, all of us—the release team, bird watchers, media, and the general public—have the chance to discover or rediscover one of the last wild landscapes of the Midwest. And as the young Whoopers wander in the years after their release, they likely will visit other wetlands, mostly the biggest and best in Wisconsin. As people follow them, with their hearts and perhaps also with their feet and eyes, they can learn that their wetland heritage need not be lost, if people take care and take action.

People impatient for Wisconsin Whoopers must visit ICF and the Whooping Crane Exhibit to see the only Whooping Cranes now in the state. But anytime, they can also visit the tower at Necedah, and then explore. To the north, Sandhill Wildlife Area has two more towers. To the west, little roads vanish into quiet places, and wildlife wait.

The four refuges are located north and west of the city of Necedah. For more information about Necedah, please call 608-565-2551, and for Sandhill, call 715-884-2437. ♡



Gathered in the stacks of the Ron Sauey Memorial library, Canadian and US members of the Whooping Crane Recovery Team finalize their historic recommendation to release Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin. Photo by Peter Murray

Recovery Team Recommends Release of Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin

The Whooping Crane Recovery Team met at ICF from September 21-23, 1999, and issued a summary statement:

The Canada/US Whooping Crane Recovery Team recommends that a migratory population of Whooping Cranes be reintroduced in the eastern U.S. with birds summering in Wisconsin and wintering at Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge/St. Martins Marsh Aquatic Preserve in Florida.

The WCRT recommends that the first releases should occur in Central Wisconsin, contingent upon satisfactory results from:

- 1. Assessment of contaminant levels that a summering Whooping Crane population could be exposed to;*
- 2. Assessment of aircraft overflights that could affect a breeding Whooping Crane population and reintroduction efforts using ultralight aircraft; and*
- 3. A Sandhill Crane trial migration from Central Wisconsin to Florida by ultralight.*

Approvals must now be obtained from the Regional Office of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Wisconsin and the other states along the proposed flyway, and the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyway Councils. Efforts are also underway to develop the contaminant and aircraft overflight studies. State and federal agencies and ICF hope to cooperate next spring on the experimental release using Sandhill Cranes, working with ultralight aircraft under expert guidance and operated by Operation Migration. If the two studies and the experimental release yield suitable results, the release of Whooping Cranes might begin as early as spring 2001.

A breeding habitat assessment for Wisconsin was coordinated by Dr. John Cannon and supported by donations to ICF by George Ranney, Sr., Windway Foundation, and Consolidated Papers Foundation. ♡

A Sunny Celebration

By Kate Fitzwilliams, Public Relations Director

The 1999 Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 18 brought ICF members together from all over the world. We couldn't have asked for better weather or better company. This year, to welcome members, we set up a hospitality tent near the parking lot. Early morning birders—returning from their bus trip to Briggsville, WI and Aldo Leopold's shack—descended upon the donuts and coffee with unparalleled vigor.

An informal discussion, *Whoop it Up!*, in the Amoco Whooping Crane Exhibit was hosted by ICF veterans Marianne Wellington and Claire Mirande. Members and staff discussed topics ranging from injuries to genetics. Tom Stehn, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge biologist and Annual Meeting keynote speaker, was kind enough to wrap up the afternoon's discussions. The audience listened to a preview of his evening speech about his work with the last wild flock of Whooping Cranes and his role as Whooping Crane Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The "behind the scenes" Crane City tour was once again the highlight of the day. Members were treated to *insider stories* told by staff while walking down Broлга Blvd. listening to crane calls.

These same calls, although quieter at a distance, were still audible during the new Stedman Landscape Trail tour. Everyone at ICF is proud of this new prairie trail that shows off the results of thousands of hours of backbreaking prairie restoration work. For some, walking through 6 ft. high Indian Grass is as exciting as a pair of Whooping Cranes unison calling.

Jim Harris, Deputy Director, concluded the daytime activities at a packed Cudahy Theater giving a slide talk on the results of ICF's ongoing conservation project in Cao Hai China.

"*Craniac*" students and teachers from Kentucky joined ICF for the weekend and had a blast with long-time ICF member Jean Skaife. Sandra Adams and Janet James, two teachers at Jessamine County Schools in Nicholasville, Kentucky, want to involve their students in restoring wetlands for migrating cranes. The weekend visit to ICF was just the beginning of a new partnership. Funded by a Goals 2000 grant, fourteen classrooms will collaborate with ICF to learn about wetland depletion and the

plight of the Whooping Crane. Students will apply knowledge learned to bring about public awareness and new legislation in Kentucky for better wetland preservation.

Following dinner at the Voyager Inn in Reedsburg, Wisconsin, ICF awarded Dr. George Gee, project leader of the endangered species section at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland, a plaque of appreciation. Since 1975, ICF has worked



with Patuxent

to bolster the captive population of Whooping Cranes. Gee Whiz, the famous Whooping Crane hatched by Tex, was named as a tribute to George Gee, for his part in collecting fresh semen from a male Whooping Crane and sending it to Madison for ICF-human imprinted female, Tex.

Departing ICF veterinarian Dr. Julie Langenberg was recognized for her outstanding contribution to crane conservation. ICFers dabbed their eyes while watching a humorous yet poignant slide show of Julie's 12 years at ICF. Julie has accepted a job as the Wildlife Veterinarian for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. She is also a newly appointed Whooping Crane Recovery Team member. ICF was lucky to have Julie, and we look forward to continuing our work with her in her new position.

The evening ended with Tom Stehn and his characteristic good humor and command of the subject: Whooping Cranes. Tom has been monitoring these cranes for the last 17 years on their wintering grounds in Texas.

ICF staff thanks all of its members who made possible yet another successful Annual Meeting. ~✿



Lufthansa, ICF's official airline, brightened up the hospitality tent where members were able to relax and mingle. Photo by Betsy Didrickson

The weather allowed cocktail hour at the Voyager Inn in Reedsburg, Wisconsin to be outside! ICF member Kathy Branch, Rajendra Suwal, director of the Lumbini Crane Conservation Center in Nepal, and ICF Board President Mary Wickhem enjoy the evening. What a great turnout! Photo by Kate Fitzwilliams



Dr. George Gee accepts an award from George Archibald for his outstanding work with Whooping Cranes at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland. Photo by Allan Beach



Jim Harris proudly gives Julie Langenberg, DVM, the golden stethoscope award for her 12 years of veterinary service to ICF. Julie will be moving on to become the Wildlife Veterinarian for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Photo by Allan Beach



Maya Valeyeva painted the three-story education center's mural. An observation deck is attached to the second story and gives visitors a grand view of the wetlands that surround the park. Photo by Svet Zabelin

Building a Future

By Kate Fitzwilliams, Public Relations Director
and Elena Smirenski, Program Secretary

The Amur, the world's largest free-flowing river, stretches for 3,000 miles along the Russian-Chinese border and inside Russia, from the steppes of Mongolia in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. In the summer of 1970, this river captured Sergei Smirenski, a student from Moscow State University. By the mid-1970s, he was motivated to create a place where people and wildlife could coexist. In 1991, Sergei, with help from ICF, launched the Amur Program of the Socio-Ecological Union to demonstrate that this land could be developed in a way that benefits people, economy and wildlife. In 1993, with the help of the POP Group Corporation (Japan), the Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use was initially established on 11,000 acres leased for 50 years from the local government. The park protects important habitat for Red-crowned, Hooded and White-naped Cranes, Oriental White Storks, and many other migratory birds. In the beginning, the park's sole structure was a hand-made sign.

In 1994, teachers from New Jersey hosted the first environmental summer camp for local children at the park. This team bravely spent three weeks sleeping in old tents with nothing except a beautiful landscape to look at and equally beautiful children with whom to work and play.

Nine camps later, the 1999 team from Wisconsin consisting of three naturalists, four teachers, one school principal, one forest service employee, an ICF board member and his wife—reached Muraviovka Park and were greeted by impressive headquarters! A two-story house includes two apartments for staff families and seven guestrooms. A three-story education center is now decorated with wonderful crane murals created by Maya Valeyeva, Sergei's former student. A third building is a brick storage facility with three rooms. Each meal was served in a dining shelter offering comfort and a scenic view of crane wetlands. Freezing cold drinking water was available from a well and pumped by a gas generator. Earlier teams of teachers would have thought they had died and gone to heaven. We knew we were lucky. Arriving home three weeks later, we learned that electricity had finally reached the park! Solar panels now run refrigerators, computers and printers. Showers, a sauna, and a grain storage facility have since been built, while plans to replace the campers' tents with cabins are underway. And most importantly, since 1994, summer and fall numbers of cranes in the park have doubled!

After ten environmental camps with Russian and American teachers working side by side with children ages 8 to 16—many of them orphans from the surrounding area—460 kids have been exposed to the idea of appreciating nature. Nature appreciation is a harder lesson to teach than one would think in a country where people's lives are not even appreciated. Depression, poverty, alcoholism, and crime are common. The majority of orphans have living parents who are alcoholics and unable to care for them.



Howard April, Wehr Nature Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, conducts a class on water quality. Campers loved this class because collecting the water samples meant hiking into the wetland, and getting dirty like a real field researcher. Photo by Kate Fitzwilliams


In 1997, the Park established the Demonstration Farm with 350 hectares of croplands. The park's goal is to help local communities improve farm productivity while at the same time protecting and restoring adjacent wild resources. Photo by Jim Harris



Children must learn that the hope of a better future comes from within. The park helps them discover this. The environmental camp reinforces it. Environmental activism and citizen responsibility can be building blocks of a democracy. Sergei encourages campers to plant trees in the park showing them that after camp, they can make a difference in their own back yard, ultimately helping people and nature.

More than 50 American teachers, high school and university students have participated in the camps. Americans, who usually think of Siberia as a place of punishment, bring back a new vision of a place and people striving for a brighter future. In the process, American teachers and their hundreds of students back home, gain a sense of global citizenship.

To find out more about this program, next year's teacher expedition, and supporting organizations like Friends of Muraviovka Park, check out ICF's website at www.savingcranes.org.

In 1999, Muraviovka Park has received support from: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Wallace Genetic Foundation, POP Group Corporation (Japan), Woodland Park Zoo, Rawhide Boys Ranch, The Andree Wagner Peace Trust, Trust for Mutual Understanding, Lux Foundation, Lands' End Inc., Friends of Muraviovka Park, Middleton High School, The Amur Region Ecolund, Tambovka District Administration, Melinda Herrold, Diana Mayberry-Hatt, Sara Simmonds, Mr. Edmund Stanley, and Anderson Yang. 



Harry Parrott, U.S. Forest Service employee, walks with his new friends to the kids' camp just down the road from the park headquarters. These girls were among the many orphans we fell in love with. Thanks to the kind donation from Land's End, Inc. in Dodgeville, Wisconsin, we were able to give these children brand new clothes! Photo by Carolyn Parrott



Campers and teachers were thrilled to celebrate the Fourth of July with us. We offered to cook for all of them. Having planned and prepared most of the meal in America, we proudly served sloppy joes, baked beans, artichoke dip, cranberry bread, chocolate chip cookies, and s'mores. This camper tries his first sloppy joe! Photo by Kate Fitzwilliams

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ICF's Official Airline

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Want to help? Please contact Deputy Director Peter Murray at 608-356-9462 ext. 153.

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- Radio/Cassette player for listening to crane vocalizations
- Low mileage van
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- Slide projector carrying case
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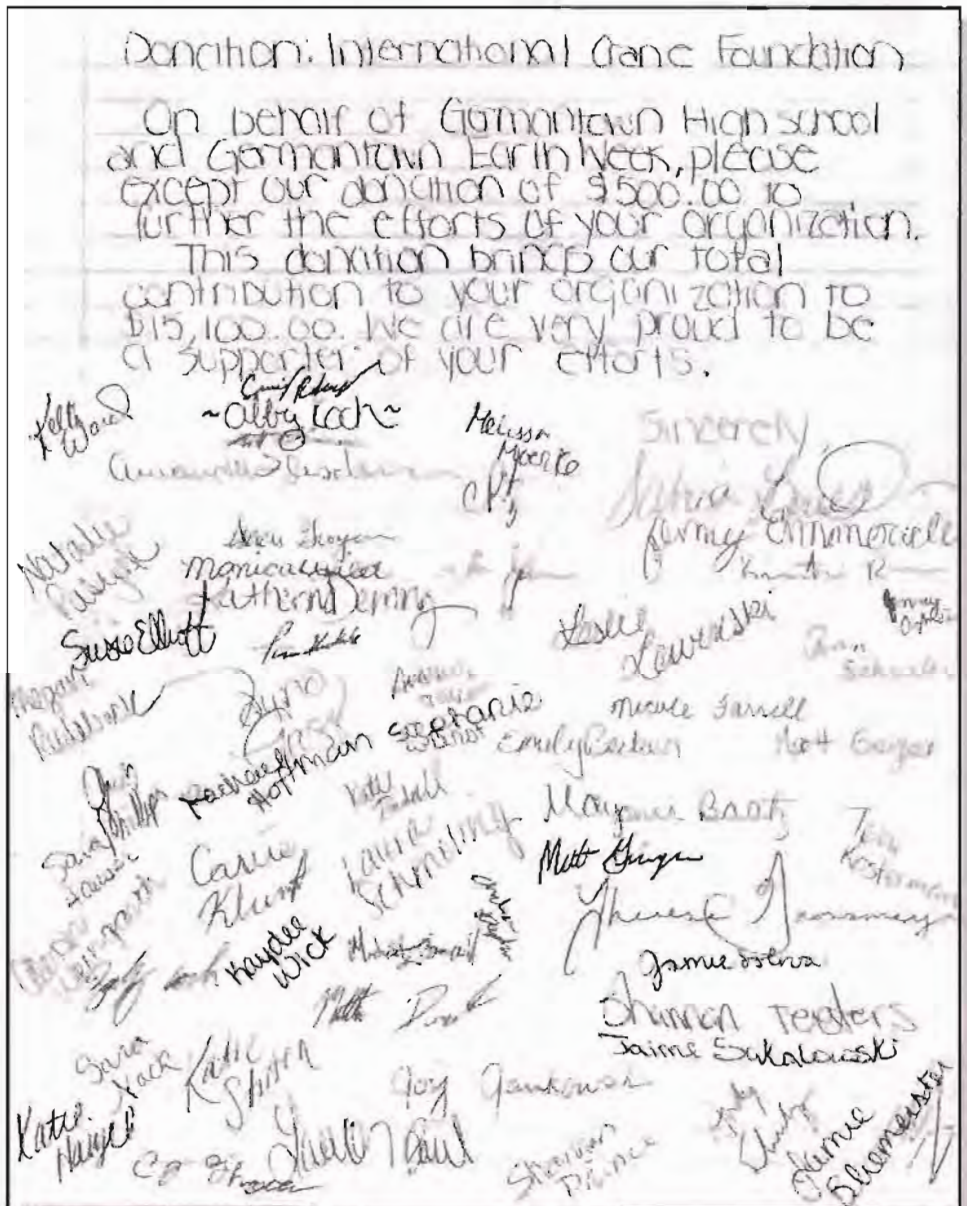
Thank you, Caring Clippers!



Keeping track of the publicity ICF generates has been a lot easier thanks to the many members who send in news clippings featuring cranes and/or ICF. Keep up the good work and keep an eye out for ICF in the news. ✂

The School That Keeps on Giving

Chuck Ritzenthaler's classes from Germantown High School have been supporting ICF's programs for 24 years. We are humbled by their consistent donation of time and money to ICF. Thank you for your impressive support, Germantown High School! ✂



The ICF Bugle is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Bugle comments or questions? Please write me at kate@savingcranes.org or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913

Editor: Kate Fitzwilliams

Memberships are vital to ICF. Please join or give a membership to a friend at the following annual rates.

Student or	Associate	\$100
Senior Citizen ...	Sustaining	\$250
Individual	Sponsor	\$500
Foreign	Patron	\$1,000
Family	Benefactor ...	\$2,000

1999 Bird-A-Thon

By Bob Hallam,
Development Coordinator



In 1999, ICF's annual Bird-a-thon raised over \$24,500 for the Ron Sauey Conservation Fund and ICF operations. Income from the Sauey Fund supports the Ron Sauey Library for Bird Conservation. Over \$204,500 has been raised since 1988. We wish to thank all who participated this year.

First place and grand prize went to Judith Bautch. Judy won a framed print by Owen Gromme entitled "Bald Eagles and Osprey." Second place went to Cathryn Steuer, with Michael John Jaeger taking third. All top three finishers received a framed print by Owen Gromme entitled "Downy Woodpeckers in Winter."

The other top-scoring teams were Steve Brick (4th), Becky AIsup (5th), Tom Schmidt (6th), Carla and Dale Oestreich (7th), Geri Vander Leest (8th), William Ebbot (9th), and Nancy Bischof, DVM (10th). Each team has received Birds of Wisconsin by Owen Gromme donated by the University Wisconsin Press. All who watched birds and raised money also received an 8" bird clock sponsored by the Wild Bird Center of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

We wish to also thank Chuck Brei of Meuer Art of Madison, Wisconsin for donating and framing the downy woodpecker prints. ↵

EASY as 1-2-3

Every time you shop for groceries, make a donation to ICF through the Pick 'n Save We Care Program. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Register at your Pick'n Save store for a new Advantage Plus Savers Club Card.
2. On the registration form designate: 365300 (the ICF charity code) to be sure your donation goes to ICF.
3. Shop at Pick'n Save.

The more you buy,
the more you give to ICF!

Website Wonders

By Betsy Didrickson
ICF Librarian

ICF has had an Internet presence since 1996, but this summer has brought some innovative changes to our beloved website. The first change was a new and easy to remember URL (universal resource locator). Please surf on over next time you are online: www.savingcranes.org.

ICF's website receives an average of 3,000 hits per month. As if that isn't



ICF Sweatshirt

enough to keep webmaster **Debbie Nieuwenhuis** busy, Debbie recently ventured into "e-tailing" by creating the new CYBIRD Store. The CYBIRD Store is a virtual store on the ICF website. With one click of the mouse ICF's most popular gift items appear on screen in living color. Gift choices range from cozy crane sweatshirts to silver crane earrings. Simply phone or fax in your order and it will arrive on your doorstep within a few days. Why not buy



Shirt with ICF Logo



Crane Christmas Cards

your Christmas cards or do your shopping without leaving home—all while helping endangered birds and wetlands. You can kill two birds with one stone, oops bad bird pun.

For teachers, there is a new website called "Crossing Continents" designed to involve classrooms in satellite tracking Sandhill Cranes from Siberia back to the U.S. If this sounds interesting to you please contact the coordinator at explorer@savingcranes.org.

The Ron Sauey Memorial Library's portion of the website has been newly re-designed.



Men's and Women's watches

To enter directly, key in: www.savingcranes.org/library/library.html. Two full-text crane books are available there, as well as two searchable databases. A page on cranes in folklore and mythology is currently in the works.

We hope you enjoy these changes and welcome any comments or suggestions. ↵

Art Boosts Conservation

By George Archibald, Director

ICF considers the Siberian Crane (Sibe) to be the most endangered of cranes. During their migration across Asia, the Sibes visit 12 nations. Hunting and loss of wetlands threaten these most aquatic of cranes. Widespread education is needed to sharpen public awareness and conservation action. To help, Robert Bateman created this magnificent painting of an open wing back threat of a male Sibe. Thousands of posters will be made and distributed along the Asian flyways. The original painting "Siberian Crane," (36" X 36", acrylic on canvas) is for sale on a first come, first served basis at US \$50,000. Robert and Birgit Bateman have generously offered to provide the full amount of the sale for the conservation of Siberian Cranes. If the painting is sold through the Bugle, the entire proceeds will be given to ICF. If a gallery or some other agent sells it privately, they will be entitled to 16.6%.



"Siberian Crane," painted by Robert Bateman for the conservation of Siberian Cranes.



During the Fall of 1990, Bob and Birgit Bateman had the chance to visit with two juvenile Whooping Cranes and a Sandhill Crane in ICF's Chick Yard. Thank you Bob and Birgit for your generous and beautiful contribution to the Siberian Cranes.

The painting forms part of a one-artist show to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in October of 2000 and will be available to the new owner in December of 2000. Interested parties may call Alex Fischer at the Bateman Studio at 250-653-4647.

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International Crane Foundation

E11376 Shady Lane Rd. (608) 356-9462
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