ICF Responds to Threat of Crane Trade in Africa

By Kerren Morrison, Manager, African Cranes, Wetlands and Communities Program

Cranes are revered across the world. Yet their special value leads to illegal removal from the wild. In Africa, we believe trade in cranes to be a major threat to all four endemic species – Grey and Black Crowned, Blue and Wattled. In response, the African Crane Trade Project was initiated by ICF and the Endangered Wildlife Trust in mid-2006.

We found that people take cranes for diverse reasons, including domestication, or the taming and keeping of cranes for personal use. Domesticators report cranes do not usually live long, are prone to diseases and injury, and have very low breeding productivity – accordingly, there is continuing motivation to remove additional birds from the wild.

The words “illegal animal trade” conjure up images of animals squashed into containers as they travel across country borders undetected. Cranes do not escape this inhumane behavior; they have been doubled up in crates with half standing upright and the others upside down to maximize numbers in a confined space. And this is just one point along the chain between capture and a new life for these cranes, if they survive.

This project aims to implement a mix of mitigation strategies in order to safeguard healthy, viable wild populations of Africa’s cranes. Photo by Mike Enders, Wanderlust Photo

Continued on page 2
Notes from ICF President Jim Hook: Successful Transitions at ICF

May 9, 2007 was a red-letter day as two long-time International Crane Foundation colleagues were recognized for their significant contributions to conservation.

The Wisconsin Historical Society honored the lifetime achievement of the two leaders with a trip to the state’s annual History Maker Gala in Milwaukee. At the event, two former colleagues were honored for their contributions to the conservation of cranes.

During the ceremony, George Archibald, the founder of the Wisconsin Historical Society, presented the Society’s Abbott-Lloyd Award for Distinguished Environmental Conservation to an award recipient who was named in recognition of his contributions to the conservation of cranes.

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Field Notes - 2007

Continued Progress in Preventing Crane Damage to Seedling Corn
By Anne Lacy, ICF Sandhill Crane Projects Manager

This season was the second year that the chemical anthraquinone, sold under the name Avicide™ was used to deter cranes from damaging newly planted seed and germinating corn in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota. Results from the field in 2007 are encouraging. Cooperating with area farmers, we tested the efficacy of the chemical for the first time available in a liquid seed coat form as well as a powder hopper box treatment. In our study area we monitored both corn use and corn planting. In these fields we recorded an estimate of the number of seedlings in areas used by cranes and areas where we have not observed cranes feeding. The fields treated with Avicide™ retain more seedlings per meter even in areas used by cranes. As you can see in the picture, corn seed from a corner of a treated field (left side) was eaten by cranes; the area treated with liquid Avicide™ (right and top) left intact. We are committed to facilitating communication between the corn growers and the Avicide™ manufacturer to work out remaining product issues in the coming years.

Siberian Crane Range States Meet to Protect the “Lily of Birds”
By Mary Mercer, Communication Coordinator, UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project

In May, eleven countries came together in Almaty, Kazakhstan to talk about conservation of the elusive Siberian Crane. This gathering was the Fifth Meeting of the Range States under the Convention for Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding for Siberian Cranes. Representatives openly brainstormed on critical issues and reached consensus on conservation approaches for the roughly 3,500 Siberian Cranes that survive.

One of the noteworthy outcomes was the official launch of the Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and other Waterbirds, recognizing an initial 10 sites from five countries. The Site Network will focus conservation efforts on sites of international importance for the Siberian Crane along the West and Central Asian flyways. An Action Plan will be developed to provide training and support to reserve staff while encouraging exchanges and partnerships among sites.

In addition, comprehensive conservation plans for each of the three flyways were developed collaboratively. Delegates agreed to explore the possibility of an international trust fund to ensure sustainability of the project activities. Wetlands International, theCridds Breeding and the Conservation Breeding Center signed the MOU as partners.

To learn more: Visit the GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project www.ecoscp.info or www.cms.int/species/siberian_cranes/lily_bird.htm

Restoration at ICF
By Alison Duffy, Field Ecology Program Coordinator

Before joining the ICF Field Ecology Department in October, I coordinated volunteer activities, public outreach and restoration efforts for The Prairie Conservation Alliance at Ridge Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP). I am excited to use and develop these skills on ecosystems at ICF and see the potential for how restoration can be applied on private lands in Wisconsin and elsewhere in the world. Restorations at ICF headquarters present a unique opportunity to learn from long-term ecologic monitoring and to share that information with other projects.

Most exciting was an opportunity to restore native prairies because fire is an integral part of these communities’ ecology. The Field Ecology burn program is an example of ICF’s local efforts to involve private landowners in conservation, which is critical to protecting habitat for a wide range of species—including prairie cranes. This spring our staff burned a large number of private sites in Sauk County, and at BAAP, as well as at ICF. Participation in the Field Ecology burn program is an example of ICF’s local efforts to involve private landowners in conservation, which is critical to protecting habitat for a wide range of species—including prairie cranes. This spring our staff burned a large number of private sites in Sauk County, and at BAAP.

Crane Care and Beyond
By Dr. Barry Hartig, ICF Director of Veterinary Services and Chris Kelley, ICF Veterinary Technician

Caring for the captive crane flock is “Job #1” for the Veterinary Services team at ICF. In the past year, we conducted 1,000 health evaluations of our cranes, including treatment of acute conditions, annual physical exams and preventive health testing. But our work extends well beyond individual animal care—we also support ICF’s conservation programs, teach veterinary college students, and conduct research.

In 2006, Dr. Hartig continued to chair the Health Team of the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (ICF is the lead health care provider for the reintroduced cranes in Wisconsin). We provided advanced training for four professional colleagues and 15 veterinary students. Last June, Dr. Hartig gave four presentations to the Crane Conservation Coordinating Committee of the Chinese Association of Zoological Gardens in Shanghai, China. We authored four research reports on topics including emerging infectious diseases (West Nile Virus, infectious bursal disease virus) and developmental abnormalities in Whooping Crane chicks. We also published in the journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Lastly, we have hosted an important workshop of the Whooping Crane Health Advisory Team in September 2007: the first such meeting in 15 years.

Field Notes on page 16
This past year has been a period of transition for the International Crane Foundation (ICF). We have seen the successful turnover of ICF leadership, and the critical rebuilding of our development function. I am very happy to have David Koehler as our development leader and with his new, full complement of staff, expect great things going forward. We have also filled key vacancies in our Crane Conservation and Field Ecology departments and expect to hire a Director of Conservation Education before the end of the year.

As I look back on my first year as President and CEO, I am pleased with the progress we have made. Infrastructure improvement has focused on a strengthened organization, improved communication, and better transparency in our financial reporting. Yet some things stay the same—a testament to the strength of ICF as we continue to have the visionary leadership of George Archibald and the continued support of long-time generous donors and a committed, active Board of Directors. I am pleased that my predecessor, Jim Harris, continues to make a strong contribution to our success, particularly in the international arena. Jim’s presence in East Asia and his strong mentoring of our emerging Africa program will have a very positive impact on our future.

We also continue to maintain best-in-class performance in our ability to allocate funds directly to support conservation programs. We typically hold fundraising and administrative expenses to 10-12% of total expenditures and have performed within this range again in 2006-07. I have spoken to the past of our Four-Star, Hall of Fame rating with Charity Navigator, a highly respected watchdog of non-profit organizations. We are proud of our financial position and want to share the story with our broad membership.

For the first time, in an effort to more broadly distribute our financial results, we include this year's annual report for the twelve months ending March 31, 2007, in the summer issue of *The ICBRagle*. Although both sources and uses of funds in 2006-07 are down slightly from the previous year because of a reduced capital budget, we had a net increase and positive year. We continue to see strong growth in net assets, the best measure of our net worth as a foundation. This trend reflects very strong growth in our endowment.

This next year promises to be exciting. We are bringing our well-crafted Master Site Plan back onto the near term horizon and will begin design work for the first exhibits we hope to open in April 2009. What we are now calling the Africa exhibits will involve substantial rework of our existing Wadedale Crane enclosure, located just west of our Gift Shop. The new exhibits will feature natural settings for the African crane and strong interpretation of our field conservation efforts on the African continent. This exciting work will be featured in our 2007 annual campaign. We are thrilled to report a very generous gift by ICBF Director Bob Dolichen from the Dolichen Family Foundation, that will provide strong support for this project and our Africa programs. We expect the Africa exhibits to be the first in a series of steps we take to renew and enhance our public areas as we implement our Master Site Plan.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Meeting scheduled for Saturday, September 22, 2007. We have a great event planned and would like to share our promising future with you. Thank you for finding this work meaningful and for your generous support which makes it all possible.

*Jim Hook*
More Field Notes - 2007

Success in Southeast Asia
By Jeff Barzen, ICF Field Ecology Director and Tom Trien, ICF Director of Southeast Asia Programs

Decades of work is paying off in Vietnam. At Van Lam National Park, water management schemes developed in the early 1990s have now been implemented for three years in a row. As a result, cranes have returned to their declining as fishponds recreational vegetation has been restored. These results come through the efforts of the ICF, the US Forest Service, dedicated staff at Van Lam, students at Vietnam National University, Hu Chi Minh and Can Tho Universities, and others. Through similar collaboration, ICF and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have worked with 14 non-for-profit organizations in the Mekong Delta. In addition to these intensive, site-based activities, ICF has worked to improve the capacity of wetland scientists living in Southeast Asia. To that end, the ICF sponsored training for a group of 20 students in training wetland ecology and conservation at the Hoa An Field Station of Can Tho University. The 20 graduate students increased the number of participants to the last five years to 120 by involving universities of Can Tho, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Satellite Images Assist Discovery of New Wetlands Important to Cranes in Northeast China
By Su Liying, Research Associate

In recent years, with graying demand for water, many wetlands are shrinking in northern China, and some are disappearing. I have studied the wetlands of Songliao Plain, important for cranes and other waterbirds in the breeding season and for Siberian Cranes stopping over migration to and from the Siberian tundra where they breed. Satellite images make it clear that, aside from Zhalong Marsh, the largest of these wetlands now lie near Daiting. In particular, stable wetlands lie north of Daiting Reservoir and extend west to Houping Reservoir. These wetlands have survived and grown due to the protection of the city’s sources of drinking water and gradual usage of the reservoirs. A broad range of wet meadows and grasslands lie adjacent; varying rainfall creates dynamic shifts each year among open water lakes, reed marshes, wet meadows, and grasslands providing different types of habitat for many birds. These wetlands play a similar role to well-known wetlands, such as Zhalong and Xingjiang. This past mid-October, I was lucky to visit Daiting and see Siberian, Red-crowned, White-naped Cranes with many other species of ducks and migratory birds. New these wetlands are being considered for protection, for the sake of the migratory cranes and other birds.

You are invited to ICP’s 34th Annual Meeting, Saturday, September 22, 2007

ICP’s 34th Annual Meeting celebrates the power of partnership and the global community of scientists, educators, and people like you who care about cranes.

For 34 years, ICP’s conservation achievements have been recognized in the past by our focus on the challenges facing our country and our ecosystem. Our programs demonstrate that solutions to these challenges facing our country and our ecosystem are possible when brave people work together.

Join us in September and meet the ICP staff members from around the world who are working to make a difference because of your active support.

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting:

Register is now open for the following annual meeting held at the Ho-Chi Minh City Convention Center:

Hilton Garden Inn: 669 (plus tax)

For other lodging options, contact the Ho-Chi Minh City Convention Center at: (903) 255-1100 or 2304064. Link to the website of the Hilton Garden Inn.

Accommodations:
Ho-Chi Minh City Convention Center: $65 (plus tax)
ICP Reagan Bloch: $44 (plus tax)


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Volunteers Make a Difference
By Korie Klink, ICF Volunteer Coordinator

As the International Crane Foundation (ICF) moves through its 34th year, we are constantly reminded of the infinite value of our volunteers. Last year, ICF volunteers donated over 20,000 hours of time... that's equivalent to 10 full-time employees! Our work would be impossible without such extraordinary gifts of time and talent.

The positive impacts are far reaching. Through our Volunteer Naturalist program, volunteers strive to involve each visitor in the complete ICF experience, encouraging them to continue their education about cranes and conservation beyond their visit through field experiences, the internet, and conservation action. Many visitors become ICF members echoing ICF's hopeful messages around the world.

Through our in-depth training and mentoring programs for volunteers, you, too, can become a part of this essential element of ICF. Volunteer opportunities exist throughout ICF.

Should you, or someone you know, wish to volunteer at ICF, please contact the Conservation Education Department by phone at 608-356-9462 x 127 or email at ed@savingcranes.org.

Kids are Craniacs, too!

Anna Jochem, of Big Flats, WI, an ICF member since she was a toddler, created the artwork for this new t-shirt when she was just seven years old. At the time, her father, artist and designer Jay Jochem, was working on original paintings of cranes to be featured on ICF headquarters signage and website. Anna, inspired by her gifted dad, came home from a visit to ICF and drew her favorite cranes from memory. Gift Shop manager Barb Bluske raves about the new t-shirt, “It’s our most popular kid’s tee ever!”

The tee is available in our Baraboo Gift Shop or on our website in four colors and kid’s sizes 2T, 4T, Youth S, M & L, $9.99 (+shipping) 608-356-9462 x 121 or www.craneshop.org

CRANCES OF THE WORLD

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Saturday, September 22, 2007
Invitation and Reservation form on Page 11