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# **SIBERIAN CRANE FLYWAY NEWS**



**№ 1  
December 2001**

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## **CAPTIVE BREEDING**

### **Activity of Oka Crane Breeding Center in 2001**

*By Tatiana Kashentseva*

Implementing the program under the international project "The Siberian Crane," the Crane Breeding Center (CBC) staff focused on captive breeding of Siberian Cranes. In 2001, Siberian Cranes laid 23 eggs of which 21 chicks hatched. Six eggs were transported to Western Siberia for placement in nests of the wild Eurasian Cranes. Two of the six eggs were returned to the CBC, due to shortage of nests in the wild.

The Siberian Crane chicks were reared by two methods – isolation rearing (18 chicks) and by parents (1 chick). In autumn 10 chicks were released into the wild: 2 – in the Kunovat Refuge, 6 – in the Armizon Refuge (south of the Tyumen Region), 2 – in the Astrakhansky Nature Reserve (south of European Russia).

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### **Propagating of Siberian Cranes in Moscow Zoo, Russia**

*By Olga Rozdina*

For the first time at Moscow Zoo a pair of Siberian Cranes bred and one chick hatched. Currently there are two pairs of the Siberian Crane at Moscow Zoo – one breeding pair and one non-breeding pair. The female and the male of the breeding pair are kept separately because the female is very aggressive. She killed her brother when she was still a chick. The female is an adult; but she did not breed before 2001. The Crane Breeding Center of the Oka Reserve handed this bird over to the Moscow Zoo. For the last few years the male of this pair has been giving sperm of very good quality. This year, with the help of hormonal stimulation and artificial insemination, one egg was laid and one Siberian Crane chick hatched and reared by hand. It is currently in good physical condition.

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## **Field work**

### **Field work in Kunovat River Basin, Western Siberia, Russia**

*By Alexander Sorokin, and Yuri Markin*

In late June, breeding grounds in the Kunovat River basin were surveyed by helicopter. Only one (nesting) pair of Siberian Crane was sighted. Four Siberian Crane eggs from the Oka Crane Breeding Center were placed in two wild Eurasian Crane nests. These nests were located not far from the breeding territory of the Siberian Crane pair.

A follow-up survey in August showed that the Siberian Crane pair did not have a chick. Two costume-reared juveniles were released with this pair. There were no aggression between the wild adults and young birds. The juveniles were colour-banded but not marked with PTTs.

In August researches went 1500 km south by boat up the Ob and Irtysh Rivers from the Kunovat River basin to Hanty-Mansisk on the south border of Tyumen Region, where the staging area of Eurasian Cranes is located. Next year plan is to lead a group of isolation-reared Siberian Cranes behind an ultra-light aircraft (or hang glider) along this part of the Siberian Crane Western Flyway. We hope Siberian Cranes might then join Eurasian Cranes at their staging area and migrate south. Therefore the part of flyway was observed, landing sites for ultra-light aircraft scouted out, and discussions with local administration and local people about help and collaboration were conducted.

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## Reintroduction

### Release of Siberian Cranes in Belozersky Refuge, Russia

*By Anastasia Shilina*



Released Siberian Cranes with Eurasian Cranes. Photo by A. Shilina

Seven Siberian Cranes reared in Oka Crane Breeding Center in isolation were released to the island in the middle of the Big White Lake (Belozersky Refuge), Tyumen Region on 8 August 2001. The island is a roosting place of Eurasian Cranes that congregate there in autumn. At the time of the release there were nearly one hundred Eurasian Cranes on the island by the end of August there were nearly six hundred. Young Siberian Cranes were in good condition after transportation. During the next three weeks they were kept together with Common Cranes, feeding on the cropfields and flying over the release site. On 28 August the Eurasian Cranes, together with six young Siberian Cranes, left the staging area. One Siberian Crane didn't fly out. It was returned to Oka Crane Breeding Center.

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### Release of Siberian Cranes in Astrakhan Nature Reserve, Russia

*By Yuri Markin and Anatoly Kashin*

Two Siberian Cranes isolation-reared at Oka Crane Breeding Center were released in the Obzhorovo site of the Astrakhan Nature Reserve on 10 October. Birds were released to the place where wild Siberian Cranes were usually observed during their autumn migration. At the time of release three wild Siberian Cranes, who were recorded here from 4 to 8 October, left this territory. They took off after the first cold night on 8 October.

Two juvenile Siberian Cranes were reared by different methods. One was parent-reared (white plastic ring on right leg), the other was isolation-reared (red plastic ring on left leg).

Birds were seen last time on 12 November. On 18 November Siberian Cranes were not observed.

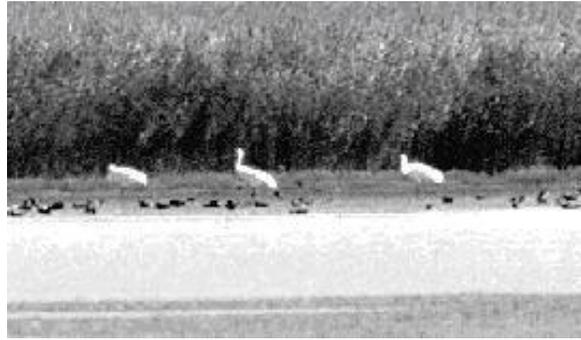
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## Autumn Migration

### West Flyway

#### Kazakhstan

On 4 September this autumn 3 adult Siberian Cranes came to Kulagol Lake near the Naurzum Nature Reserve (Northern Kazakhstan). During the entire period of observations the cranes stayed on the eastern lakeside. Two were a pair, but they were not aggressive toward the single bird. The cranes left Kulagol Lake on 25 September.



Three Siberian Crane are on the migration stopover in Naurzum State Nature Reserve. Photos by Ye. .Bragin

According to information received from local hunters, one Siberian Crane was recorded on 8-9 September on Batum Lake, which is far enough from Kulagol Lake. It most likely was a different bird from those observed at Kulagol Lake.

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### **Russia**

On 4 October 2001 three adult Siberian Cranes were recorded in the Astrakhan Biosphere Nature Reserve on the Obzhorovo site. Probably they left the territory on 9 October, because the night of 9-10 October was the first very cold night.

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### **Iran**

On the morning of 12 October 2001 three Siberian Cranes were observed at the Fereidoonkenar and Ezbaran waterfowl trapping sites (Damgahs). A pair was also reported that could be part of the trio. In case this is another pair besides the trio the total number of the cranes is five. It seems that the cranes arrived about two weeks earlier than average.

At the **Mazandaran Crane Conservation Association (MCCA)** meeting that was held in Fereidoonkenar on 27 September 2001, some Damgah keepers mentioned a sighting of 5 Siberian Cranes circling high above the area. The birds frequently moved between the Ezbaran and Fereydoon Kenar Damgahs until they selected their wintering territories.

Although it is too early to draw any conclusions, the observation of five birds upon their arrival and the previous observations of three birds may indicate the existence of alternate wintering areas. However, the Sibes seemed to be safe and without any problems. Some parts of Damgah were inundated and some parts were dry. Discussions were carried out among the duck trappers, the Department of the Environment and the Irrigation Office in order to transfer water from the local river to Damgah.

**For more information:**  
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**The Mazandaran Crane Conservation Association**

### **Central Flyway**

#### **India**

Two Siberian Cranes landed in the E block of the Keoladeo National Park on 9 November 2001 at about 9 a.m. This time they returned to Bharatpur a few days later as compared to the last year but there was nothing unusual in that. They have a long history of arrival on different dates. The latest date of their arrival was registered in January.

**For more information:**  
**Dhirendra Devarshi**  
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## Eastern Flyway

### Russia

**Yakutia.** The Strategy of the Siberian Crane Protection is being developed through collaboration of researches from the Institute on the Biological Problems and Cryolitozone and the Department of the Biological Resources of Ministry of the Nature Protection of Yakutia. The Strategy is the action plan on Siberian Crane protection and research on their breeding territories and flyway, and also their habitat conservation. The Strategy is very important because the eastern Siberian Crane population is more sustainable and plays a main role for species survival.

*For more information:*  
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**Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use, Amur Region.** On 27 May 2001, A. A. Konyushok (one of the Park's friends and frequent visitors) reported a sighting of several "white geese." During a ground survey conducted on May 28, we found six Siberian Cranes with reddish-brown neck coloration. Spring 2001 was very dry in the Amur Basin, there were no standing water in the most part of the Muraviovka wetland. Only one small "lake" (~200m in diameter and ~1 m deep) remained, filled by rain water. This spot was picked by six young Siberian Cranes for a stopover. Most of the time they stayed in a tight group, sometimes splitting into pairs, sometimes roaming around as single birds, but always trying to stay within a 10-m radius from each other. The birds preferred places with water nearly half-way up their legs. In mid-May, this temporary wetland was used as a stopover by a large flock (up to 1000 birds) of White-fronted Geese. During our observations (9:00-11:20 a.m.), six Siberian Cranes spent most of the time feeding (standing or slowly wading in the water) or resting. They performed all their activities (feeding, wading, resting, cleaning, watching) together, as a group. At 11:20 a.m. on 28 May all six cranes took off in south-west direction.

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**The Jujin Autonomous Region.** According to information from Natalia Nikolaeva, one adult Siberian Crane was recorded in Obluchensk Region on 20 June. The bird was feeding on a small lake near village.

*For more information:*  
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**Dauria.** Two adult Siberian Cranes were observed during August-September on Torey Lakes, in the buffer zone of the Daurisky Nature Reserve. They kept separate; one was on a cornfield, another - in the wetlands.

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### Mongolia

In Eastern Mongolia, near Tyra Lake (the territory of the International Reserve "Dauria") a single adult Siberian Crane was registered on 13 July 2001.

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## CONFERENCES

### **Central Asian-Indian Flyway Workshop (Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 18-21 August 2001)**

*By Alexander Solokha*

The Central Asian-Indian Flyway international workshop, focusing on conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Wetlands, was organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on 18 and 19 August 2001. The goals of the workshop were as follows:

- To develop co-ordination and collaboration among the Central and South Asian and Trans-Caucasus States in research and conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats.
- To examine the current conservation status of migratory waterbirds and wetlands in the Central Asian-Indian Flyway (CAIF) and to propose a new initiative in the region.
- To review the draft of the Action Plan for conservation of migratory waterbirds and wetlands in the CAIF and to develop recommendations for follow-up.

The State Committee for Nature Protection of the Uzbekistan Republic Government hosted this workshop under a hosting agreement with the UNEP. Funding for the workshop was provided by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS, the Bonn Convention) and Wetlands International.

This workshop was the first significant event on the way to large-scale co-operation on conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and Wetlands in the Central Asian-Indian Flyway. At the same time, it was the key point for the recent Wetlands International project, which should promote international co-ordination of conservation efforts between Range States from Russia in the north to the Maldives in the south.

In the next session, national delegates were invited to present the status of wetlands- and waterbird conservation and use in their countries. All the participants believed that future international co-operation should promote conservation activity in their countries and in the region as a whole.

Much attention in the workshop was paid to reviewing and further developing a draft action plan. At the end of the first day the first draft of the action plan, which was prepared before the workshop, was presented by Mr. Ward Hagemeijer (background development & implementation issues) and Dr. Alexander Solokha (priority actions). Then, the next day, two separate language groups discussed the draft. The Russian-speaking group represented Russia, Central Asian States, Mongolia and Georgia, while the English language group comprised representatives from South Asia, Middle East States, and Armenia.

Both groups were asked to draft amendments to the proposed action plan. After lunch, both groups presented their amendments to all the participants. The comments were discussed, redrafted and included in the text. The action plan including the amendments was discussed once more by the whole group.

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