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# **SIBERIAN CRANE FLYWAY NEWS**



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## CAPTIVE BREEDING 2003

### ACTIVITY OF OKA CRANE BREEDING CENTER IN 2003

by *Tatiana Kashentseva*

The Oka Crane Breeding Center (OCBC) lives on the same calendar as the rest of the world, but main events, which take place here only happen during the bird breeding season, Therefore the new year starts here with the beginning of a new breeding season.

In 2003, 10 pairs of Siberian Crane bred at the OCBC. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

#### The results of Siberian Cranes breeding in 2003

Species (number of pairs)	Period during which the eggs were laid	Number of eggs laid (broken by birds)	Number of fertile eggs	Number of hatched chicks	Number of reared chicks
Siberian Crane (10)	02.04.-07.06.	40 <sup>x</sup> (7)	29	25	18

<sup>x</sup>/ - two eggs were sent to Kunovat Refuge (Yamalo-Nenetsky autonomic region) to be placed in the nests of wild Eurasian Crane

This year a six-year-old female Siberian Crane, which represents the third generation of captive-bred Siberian Cranes (a grand-daughter of the first female that bred at the OCBC in 1988), nested for the first time. Since last summer, she was kept together with a year-old male, which was reared in isolation. In spring the young pair demonstrated nesting behavior and despite the fact that the male had not yet reached maturity the female laid two eggs. One of them was artificially inseminated. The pair incubated the egg by themselves and successfully reared the chick.

One pair of Siberian Cranes laid eggs again 3 days after the full term of incubating (30 days) of the first clutch was over.

To produce offspring from birds incapable of mating eight females were inseminated artificially.

Thirty-one Siberian Crane eggs were incubated using natural or a combination of artificial and natural incubation. One egg was placed into a mechanical incubator (table 2).

Table 2

#### Results of Siberian Crane eggs incubation in 2003

Species	Artificial incubation		Natural incubation		Complex incubation	
	Eggs incubated	Chicks hatched	Eggs incubated	Chicks hatched	Eggs incubated	Chicks hatched
Siberian Crane*	1	-	11	8	18	16

12 eggs were incubated by parents, 19 eggs were incubated by surrogate parents, including both Siberian Cranes and cranes of some other species (table 3).

Chicks of Siberian Crane, which were supposed to be introduced into the wild, were raised by two different techniques: parental rearing and isolated rearing. One chick became ill at the age of one month. We had to give up isolated rearing and it was reared by people.

Table 3.

**Natural and complex incubation of eggs**

Number of incubating pairs	Number of eggs
Siberian Crane (9)	17
Red-crowned Crane (5)	7
White-naped Crane (3)	7



Feeding of chick of Siberian Crane during rearing in isolation. Photo by T. Kashentseva

In 2002 many chicks suffered from rickets, so in 2003 we have taken some preventive measures. In March we gave all the breeding cranes a course of multivitamin injections. As a result only one chick of Siberian Crane hatched with symptoms of rickets (i.e. crooked toes, weak legs).



Clinical examination of Siberian Crane. Photo by T. Kashentseva

In 2003, the work on releasing cranes into the wild continued. Two eggs of Siberian Crane, obtained from two females in the OCBC, were sent to Kunovat Refuge to be placed in the nests of wild Eurasian Cranes.

In June of 2003, three young birds at the age of one year were released at the nesting grounds of Siberian Cranes in Kunovat Refuge (Siberian Crane Flyway Newsletter, #4, 2003), and in August, six



Siberian Crane before transportation to Kunovat Refuge for release into the wild in June 2003. Photo by S. Goryantsev

chicks, which hatched that year, were released. In January of 2004, two seven-month-old cranes were released at the wintering grounds in Iran (Siberian Crane Flyway Newsletter, current issue).

As of 31 December 2003 there were 30 Siberian Cranes (15 males and 14 females) in the OCBC.

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**PROPAGATING OF SIBERIAN CRANES IN MOSCOW ZOO, RUSSIA, IN 2003**

*by Olga Rozdina*

In 2003, there were five Siberian Cranes at the Moscow Zoo. One pair (a male born in 1999 and a female born in 1998) is kept together. The cranes demonstrate all the features of a well-formed pair (unison call, territorial behavior), but they have not started breeding yet. Another pair of Siberian Cranes (a male born in 1980 and a female born in 1991) is kept in different pens because of aggressive behavior of the female. These birds are bred through artificial insemination. The male did not react to massage and it was impossible to obtain sperm. We used some medicine improving the micro flora of the intestines as well as a complex of immune stimulating herbs and vitamin therapy with the result that the sperm genesis was restored. The pair managed to produce two inseminated eggs. One of those was incubated artificially. The chick had some defects and died three days later. The second egg was incubated

by the female. The chick hatched and was reared by his own mother. The fifth bird is a male obtained from a breeding pair of Siberian Cranes in 2001. Currently we are considering the question of finding him a female.

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## **DATA SIBERIAN CRANE IN WESTERN EUROPE**

**by Rob Belterman**



Siberian Cranes in the Cracid (& Crane) Breeding Conservation Center. Photo by T. Kashentseva

During 2003 only two institutions in Belgium have bred Siberian Cranes.

In Cambron, Parc Paradisio, only one chick hatched but it died after three weeks.

25 eggs were laid at the Cracid (& Crane) Breeding Conservation Center (CBCC). All fertile eggs were laid after artificial insemination. Finally 17 chicks (from four different males and five females) hatched of which one died after three months. All chicks were reared by hand and were placed in groups after the aggression period.

Three males and one female, born in 2002 at Parc Paradisio, Cambron, were transferred to CBCC in Zutendaal; and one male, born 2001 at CBCC was sent to Tama Zoo in Tokyo.

Two young birds, born in 2002 at CBCC died in 2003.

### **Captive population in Western Europe:**

Berlin Tierpark, Germany: 3.2 (male.female)  
Walsrode, Germany: 1.1 (2)  
Private Zoo, Germany: 2.2 (4)  
Cambron, Belgium: 3.5 (8)  
CBCC, Belgium: 35.36 (71)  
Private Zoo, France: 2.2 (4)  
Tallinn Zoo, Estonia: 1.1 (2)

We were planning to send fertile eggs to Russia for the release program, but due to the outbreak of Avian Influenza in the Netherlands and Belgium, transport of birds and eggs was not allowed for several months. Fortunately no institutions with Siberian Cranes were infected.

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## **PROPAGATING OF SIBERIAN CRANES IN BEIJING ZOO, CHINA**

**by Liu Bing, and Zhang Jin-Guo**

Natural mating and artificial insemination techniques have been used at Beijing Zoo since 1964. Nine crane species including Siberian Crane have been bred successfully.

There are 12 crane species in Beijing Zoo, the most species of cranes in a single zoo in China. It offers a fine basis for the study on crane breeding. Therefore Beijing Zoo conducted the research "Study on the protection and breeding of Siberian Crane".

From 2000 to 2003, 42 Siberian Cranes were reared in Beijing Zoo (2000 – 9; 2001 – 11; 2002 – 10; 2003 – 12).

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(Adopted from China Crane News,  
December 2003, vol. 7, No.2)*

## REINTRODUCTION 2003

### RELEASE OF SIBERIAN CRANES IN KUNOVAT RIVER BASIN, RUSSIA

*by Yuri Markin, Yuri Zatsepin, and Alexander Yermakov*

From 8 August until 18 August 2003 work was continued on reintroduction of young Siberian Cranes, which were reared in Oka Crane Breeding Center (OCBC), Russia. The work was carried out by the OCBC staff (T. Kashentseva, K. Postelnykh, V. Borisov, T.Zhuchkova, E. Antonyuk, S. Bobkova), Y. Markin, Y. Zatsepin, (Oka Biosphere State Nature Reserve), A. Sorokin, A. Shilina (All-Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection of the MNR), A.Ermakov (Sterkh Foundation), Y. Shestakov, V. Konev, Y. Shiyarov, V. Gudkov, V. Nikiforov (Kunovat Refuge), E. Yatsuk (a student of Kharkiv University). The work was supported by Sterkh Foundation.

We would like to remind readers, that in June of 2003, three one-year-old birds were released at breeding grounds of Siberian Cranes and two eggs were put into a nest of Eurasian Cranes (Information Newsletter of the Crane Working Group of Eurasia, 2003, #6, June). One of the goals of the August expedition was to check the results of the reintroduction in June. On August 11, the territory where the Siberian Crane eggs were placed into the nest of a pair of Eurasian Crane, was surveyed from a helicopter. Their territory is situated on the lakes called Krivyje. **The pair with a single chick of Siberian Crane was spotted in 400 meters from the nest**, at an open marsh covered with cedars. When the helicopter was landing, the chick ran after his parents and then swam across a channel. The chick was caught, measured and marked with a standard metal ring on the left leg and a three-color plastic ring (yellow, black, green) on the right leg. After that the chick was carried out of the turbulence zone of the helicopter and released. He ran in the direction where his foster parents had disappeared.



Young Siberian Cranes before release into the wild. Photo by Y. Markin

On the same day, a helicopter was used to search for three one-year-old chicks, which were released near Burivaja camp on 7-8 June 2003. The territory of Kunovat Lake was thoroughly surveyed from the Huljugan River to Ruvagtort lakes but none of released Siberian Crane chicks was found. During the whole period when the expedition worked in the region of Burovaja camp, attempts were made to locate a radio transmitter attached to the ring on one of the cranes but they were unsuccessful. Moreover, a ground search was conducted for those Siberian Cranes and all attempts to hear their cries were in vain. There were no remains (bones and feathers) found which could prove that the birds were killed by predators or died of some natural causes. It makes us speculate that all three Siberian Cranes could have either shifted to another location or have begun the autumn migration to the south. Single birds and couples without chicks usually start migrating from this region in the beginning of August.

The second stage of reintroduction of Siberian Crane in 2003 included the release of six chicks born in 2003 to the basin of the Kunovat River. The chicks were reared in OCBC. One of them was raised by parents and others were raised by isolated rearing. All the chicks were in good health condition. They were safely brought to the town of Salehard by plane, and then after two days of quarantine in the facilities of Sterkh Foundation they were taken to Burovaja camp by helicopter.

The release of the birds took place on 12 August. Before the release, they were all banded with standard and color plastic rings. At first the birds were placed in a pen, and when the banding

was over one of the walls of the pen was lifted. It frightened the birds and they did not come close to that side of the pen for half an hour. Only when people came close to the opposite wall, all of the birds left the pen and walked 50 meters away. The oldest chick by the name of Kama was the first to fly. He flew to the Moipar Lake easily and confidently, then made a circle over the forest and landed at the same marsh about 10 meters from the others. After that, two other chicks also took off and made a circle.

The next two days the chicks tried to stay in the pen or close to it. If the people, who had a dog with them, came close to the chicks, the cranes let them approach to about 50 meters and then flew to Moipar Lake or to the marsh. On the fourth day after release the chicks performed the first group flight which was not provoked by man. They flew at the height of 30 meters by the side of the marsh, where in the past there were nests of wild



Siberian Crane called Kama in the flight. Photo Y. Markin

cranes. On 16 August the chicks were once again frightened by the dog. They let it come as close as 3 meters and then flew to the lake. The chicks were not seen anywhere near the camp on August 17 or the 18<sup>th</sup>, when the expedition left. Perhaps, they stayed at the lake.

After the release chicks stayed in a flock, foraged and flew together. Sometimes a bird or two went away from the others, but when they were in danger, they all flew away together and always kept each other in sight. Since the first day of their release, they fed on dragonflies and tipulides, which were abundant in sedge and horsetail because of warm weather. They also actively foraged on blueberries, which grew very well that year at tussocks along the Moipar Lake shore. Sometimes they went to the forest and fed on lingberries, which also abundant. However, during the first three days the chicks were given mixed fodder.

Another attempt was made to find the pair of wild Siberian cranes by observation from the air and ground, but it was unsuccessful. However, during the observation from the air, a pair of Eurasian Cranes was discovered with two chicks which were 50-60 days old. It was remarkable that this pair had not been registered here during the survey in June.

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## **RELEASE OF SIBERIAN CRANES IN FERAYDOON KENAR DAMGAH, MAZANDARAN PROVINCE, I. R. IRAN**

**By Yuri Markin and Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan**

On 23 December two young Siberian Cranes (male Vokhma and female Suna) were transported to Teheran, Islamic Republic of Iran. Both chicks were reared by parents in Oka Crane Breeding Center (OCBC), they were in good health and rather afraid of people.

On 24 December the cranes were taken by car to Fereydoon Kenar Damgah, Mazandaran Province, for the release to the Siberian Crane wintering places where a wild Siberian Crane family (pair with one chick) was present at that time. The young cranes were left at night in the kumeh of one of the trappers, Gorban Ali Azady (kumeh is a trapper's seasonal house). On 25 December the birds were put in a temporary pen, which was made inside the trapper's net called

a "Doumchal" (Doumchal is a pond net used for duck trapping). The cranes started preening soon after being released.

In the afternoon of 26 December one of the cranes, male Vokhma, was measured, marked with standard plastic rings and released to the western part of Fereydoon Kenar Damgah through the Keres – a passage used for releasing decoy ducks to damgah. The second chick, Suna, was to be released at New Sohrud Damgah, where a lone Siberian Crane was staying. However, since we were not sure whether the single cranes would stay in the damgah, we released her also in the same area at Fereydoon Kenar Damgah on 27 December. Before the release Suna was measured and marked with a green plastic ring and a satellite transmitter #33244.



Suna and Vokhma are before release into the wild. Photo by Y. Markin



Iranian team which guard and monitor the Siberian Crane wintering grounds and Yuri Markin in front of team.

pair of Siberian Cranes with a chick. Adult cranes were aggressive and tried to scare the released chicks away by attacking them. The chicks did not fly away, but just walked.

During the next two days the chicks stayed separately. On 30 December, they were first seen together at an earthen mound. In the next few days another problem arose: the crane chicks came to the sites where the trappers had dispersed some wheat to attract the wild ducks and ate it. The trappers were very unhappy because the chicks were frightening away the ducks. They tried to drive the cranes away with sticks, but they remained.

After the release local people noted several contacts between the released birds and the wild

people noted several contacts between the released birds and the wild

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## **BANDING**

### **BANDING OF RELEASED SIBERIAN CRANES, WESTERN FLYWAY**

**By Yuri Markin**

Data on banding of Siberian Cranes reared in captivity and released in Kunovat River Basin, West Siberia, Russia (breeding place), in August of 2003 and in Fereydoon Kenar Damgah, Mazandaran Province, I. R. Iran (wintering place), in December of 2003 in summarized in the table below.



Yuri Markin is placing rings onto young Siberian Crane before release into the wild. Kunovat River Basin. Photo by A. Ermakov

#### Banding of released Siberian Cranes

Name of Siberian Crane	Date of release	Place of release	Band on right leg	Band on left leg	Date of hatch in OCBC	Rearing technique
Kama	12 August 2003	Kunovat Refuge, West Siberia, Russia	Standard metal ring with number 16014 A	Bicolor black and white plastic ring	11 May 2003	Isolation rearing
Villui	12 August 2003	Kunovat Refuge, West Siberia, Russia	Standard metal ring with number 16027 A	Bicolor yellow-blue plastic ring	13 May 2003	Isolation rearing
Chunya	12 August 2003	Kunovat Refuge, West Siberia, Russia	Standard metal ring with number 16029 A	Bicolor green and yellow plastic ring	15 May 2003.	Isolation rearing
Olenek	12 August 2003	Kunovat Refuge, West Siberia, Russia	Standard metal ring with number 16030 A	Bicolor red and green plastic ring	16 May 2003	Isolation rearing
Ural	12 August 2003	Kunovat Refuge, West Siberia, Russia	Standard metal ring with number 16031 A	Bicolor red and white plastic ring	17 May 2003	Isolation rearing
Istra	12 August 2003	Kunovat Refuge, West Siberia, Russia	Bicolor red and yellow plastic ring	Standard metal ring with number 16032 A	24 May 2003	Parental rearing
Suna	26 December 2003	Fereydoon Kenar Damgah, Mazandaran Province, I. R. Iran	Green plastic ring with white number 03 and satellite transmitter #33244	Standard metal ring with number 185986	24 June 2003	Parental rearing
Vokhma	27 December 2003	Fereydoon Kenar Damgah, Mazandaran Province, I. R. Iran	Standard metal ring with number A 145985	Blue-white-yellow plastic ring	2 June 2003	Parental rearing

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## **BANDED SIBERIAN CRANES SIGHTING ON POYANG LAKE, EASTERN FLYWAY**

**BY NIKOLAI GERMOGENOV**

On the morning of 16 November 2003 Mr. Ji. Weitao's reported an observation with a pair of Siberian Cranes with a chick. Both adult birds were banded with color plastic rings. The cranes were sighted in Dahu Chi on Poyang Lake in the basin of the Yang-Tze River, southeastern China, on the wintering grounds of the eastern population. According to observers, one of the adult cranes had a green ring on its left leg, and the other had a white ring on its right leg.

According to our data, both Siberian cranes were banded on the nesting grounds of the eastern population at the north of Yakutia during the joint Russian-Japanese-American expedition.

On analyzing the data on banding, Nikolay Germogenov of the Institute of Biological Problems of Cryolitozone, Yakutia, came to the conclusion, that there are two possible answers to the question: "Which of the cranes banded in Yakutia were encountered on Poyang Lake?"

1. Most probably, it was the pair, in which both adult birds were banded on 23 July 1996 with white and green rings without numbers as well as other color rings and standard aluminum rings. One of the cranes was banded with **a green ring on its left leg** and a standard ring A234055 as well as a white ring placed below the standard one on his right leg. The other bird was banded with **a white ring on its left leg** and a standard ring A234050 as well as a blue plastic ring placed below the standard one on its right leg. In this case, one of the birds has rings on its right leg missing (or they were not noticed). As for the other bird, the position of the white ring was confused and the rings on the right leg were not noticed (or they are missing). This is the most probable version, if the birds were sighted from a long distance away.
2. It might be a new pair formed by one of the three adult birds banded with green rings (as well as other color and standard rings) in 1996 and one of the birds banded as a chick with white rings (although that was done on the left leg) in 1991.

There are no other likely variants. Anyway, the researcher did not notice other color and standard aluminum rings (or they are missing).

In our opinion, the first variant is more probable.

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## **SUMMERING AND ATUMN MIGRATION 2003**

### **CENTRAL POPULATION**

#### **Uzbekistan**

On 5-10 October 2003, at the border of Bukhara and Kashkadarya Regions, about 10 km south of Deukhon Lake, a Siberian Crane was spotted in a flock of 15 Eurasian Cranes. The observation took place at 10 o'clock in the morning. The birds flew as if they had just taken off to the air. The flight of the flock did not look like a transit one. The flock flew at the height of 150 m, and the birds were very well seen. (Observations were made by A.Kasakov, the head of the Amudarya State Basin Inspection).

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### **WESTERN POPULATION**

#### **Kazakhstan**

In the autumn of 2003, first time for the last several years, Siberian Cranes have not been registered on flyway in the territory of the Kustanai Region. Perhaps, that was caused by the lack of observations: the surveys of the lakes were restricted both in time and in space. Firstly, we did not have enough resources, and secondly, the number of sites suitable for cranes to stop has increased several times. During the period of lake depression in 1997-2001, cranes could be found only on some small basins where water remained. In 2002 soon after the lake reservoirs

were filled again, there were only a few places suitable for Siberian Crane stops because waters stayed rather deep and shores became almost completely overgrown with reeds. By autumn 2003 the situation changed. The second half of July and August were extremely windy and dry, which is why the water level quickly dropped and vast areas of shallow water with open shores appeared.

Two big lake systems of Naurzum Nature Reserve, Aksuat and Sarymoin, have very long and indented coastlines, which substantially reduces the chances of discovering white cranes.

The questionnaire, which were carried out very widely, gave us two probable spots where Siberian Cranes were seen. Still there are some doubts as to their trustworthiness because of unusually early terms of those meetings. The first account was given by a hunting inspector of Naurzum Nature Reserve, who was supposed to have seen three Siberian Cranes at Jarkol Lake on approximately the 12-15 August 2003. Unfortunately, this account was not checked for two reasons: it did not seem trustworthy and it was given several days after the observation. Moreover, the birds were watched without any binoculars. The same inspector announced in 2001 that he had seen Siberian Cranes, but after a detailed interrogation, it turned out that he had seen great White Herons, which are also very rare in the periods of drought.

The second account was given by V.Sahno, chairman of Kamystrinsky Regional Society of Hunters. It proves the possibility that Siberian Cranes passed the territory of the region in the middle of August or in the beginning of its second half. According to his story, a hunter saw a couple of Siberian Cranes on around 18-20 August on a small open lake to the north of Kulukol Lake. At first, he took them for Great White Herons, but the birds were obviously bigger and had red bills. This point is 190-200 km to the west from Naurzum (there was a reliable report of an encounter with white cranes there in 1997). The dates of both encounters are very close and this fact adds reliability to the accounts.

It is worth mentioning, that in the past Siberian Cranes used to appear in Naurzum even at the beginning of August (Miheev, 1939), but in the last three decades all the encounters were registered at the beginning of October and rarely at the end of August, and only once, in 1984, a Siberian Crane was registered on Bolshoy Aksuat on 11 August.

Based upon these accounts, let us suppose, that, as it happened in previous years, three Siberian Cranes, one adult individual and a couple, passed the territory on their flyway. Although they came 2-2.5 weeks earlier than usual, and did not stay for long. If it actually happened this way, I might have missed them, because there were no observations carried out at the lakes at that time. Perhaps the early terms of flyway could be explained by the supposition that they did not spend the main part of the reproductive season on their usual breeding grounds, but somewhere to the south of them.

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## **Russia**

In autumn 2003 there were no migrating Siberian Cranes observed on the delta of the Volga River.

At Objorovo and Damchik sites of Astrakhan State Nature Reserve, where Siberian Cranes used to stay in autumn in previous years (more often at Objorovo site), the conditions for them were favorable enough. There were a lot of spits at the mouths of the channel and the vast areas of shallow water of sea bays. The level of disturbance was also relatively low. Weather conditions also were satisfactory.

The observations at the sites of the possible stops of Siberian Crane at Objorovo were carried out by ornithologists of the reserve (N.D. Reutzky, D.V. Bondarev), inspectors (A.A. Kashin and others) and A.I.Moldovsky. At Damchik site the observations were carried out by the author, ornithologist N.N.Gavrilov and inspectors from the Reserve. The survey of the Reserve and some other places of the Volga Delta for the sites of the possible stops of Siberian Crane, which was carried out from the air on the 6 of November 2003 by A. Sorokin and Y. Markin, did not give any new information on Siberian Crane.

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## Azerbaijan

On the 12 of November 2003 between 15:30 and 16:00, in Shirvan National Park, Azerbaijan, I watched three flying birds. Unfortunately, I did not see them very well. Shirvan National Park is situated 80-100 km northward of Baku, in the coastal zone of the Caspian Sea. I was visiting an exhibition at the museum located in the base of an observation tower, when some of the park employees came running in and announced that they had just seen flying flamingoes. (They were speaking Azerbaijani and Russian, so my colleague Mehty had to interpret for me).

I ran out and saw the birds flying several hundred meters away from me, so that I could see their silhouettes, but not the color. However I am a hundred percent sure, that they were not flamingoes but cranes (I participated several times in flamingo and other wading bird counts in Africa). I am also a hundred percent sure that those cranes were of the *Grus* genus species and not of the *Anthropoides* genus. As I saw only the silhouettes, I cannot tell for sure whether they were adult birds or chicks, and whether they had rings.

The birds were flying southward to Iran along the coastal line of the Caspian Sea, approximately 10 km into the mainland. The territory of the park is covered with low growth of saline semi-desert vegetation.

I discussed the event with Azerbaijani ornithologist Elchin Sultanov and suggested that the birds we had seen were Eurasian Cranes. Elchin said, though, that the local people know both flamingoes and Eurasian Cranes very well and could not mix them up. However, the Siberian Crane is completely unfamiliar to them, because the bird is very rare, so they could confuse it with a flamingo. What is more, it is very unusual for Eurasian Cranes to fly in small groups in Azerbaijan in November. Therefore I propose that they were Siberian Cranes.

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## Iran

According to the information from the local people, a single wild Siberian Crane came to the wintering grounds in Fereydoon Kenar Damgah on **1 Novem-ber 2003**. For two days nobody saw it, but on 3 November this crane was registered in New Sokhrud Damgah. In the following period the Siberian Crane constantly moved between these two damgahs: it fed in Fereydoon Kenar Damgah and spent nights in New Sokhrud Damgah.



Siberian Crane music. Photo by Yu.Markin



Pair of Siberian Crane with chick at the Fereydoon Kenar Damgah. Photo by Sadegh Sadeghi Zadeگان

A pair with a chick came to the wintering place on **13 November 2003**, probably at night. Early in the morning (6:30 a.m.), trappers saw this family in Esbaran Damgah, then, at 8:30 a.m., the birds were spotted in Fereydoon Kenar Damgah. In December, the wild family constantly stayed in FDK damgah, but had to feed at different sides of it, as the water level so high as it has rarely been this winter.

Thanks to UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project financial support, the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran could hire five people to guard and monitor the Siberian Crane wintering grounds.

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## **EASTERN POPULATION**

### Russia

From 17 to 19 October 2003 near Lebedinskoe and Novoselskoe villages, Primorsky Krai, Russian Far East, we observed an adult Siberian Crane more than once. It was in the flock of White-naped Cranes, and it was not banded. Cameramen of Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), South Korea made a video film about this Siberian Crane.

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### Japan

According to the information from Chihiro Kobayashi, Crane Park Izumi, Kyushu, Japan, on 9 December 2003 a Siberian Crane was observed at the Arasaki protection area for cranes, Izumi wintering site, Japan. Siberian Crane is only a vagrant to Japan.

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## **REPORT STUDIES**

### **On Encounters with Siberian Crane in the Turkestany Territory at the Beginning of the XX Century (Central Flyway) (from the manuscript by N.A. Zarudny "Birds of Turkestan" 1906-1918. Tashkent)**

**By Yevgenia Lanovenko**

N.A. Zarudny is a prominent ornithologist who lived at the end of IX - the beginning of XX century. He worked in former Turkestan and southeastern Persia where he carried out his scientific investigations. The results of his research were published in his monographs "Birds of Kyzylkum Desert" (1914), "Birds of the Aral Sea" (1915) and more than 40 articles. He did not manage to publish his generalizing work "Birds of Turkestan". Currently Zarudny's manuscript "Birds of Turkestan" is stored in St.-Petersburg, in the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

N.A.Zarudny was a very keen researcher. His enthusiasm infected those who were around him. He had his own correspondent network, which included his fellow officers, who served in Turkmenistan and went in for hunting. They regularly informed him about their meetings with birds and sent him their trophies. Here we present some passages from his manuscript, devoted to encounters with the white crane during the period of 1908-1916.

<b>1908</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russov saw near Chinaz.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A hunter killed a single Siberian Crane on 24 September near Arys railway station. The bird stayed alone</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to G.N.Kustov's information a bird was killed by sarts at Nizhny Angren at the end of September</li> </ul>
<b>1909 г.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Siberian Crane was killed near Kazalinsk on 15 April</li> </ul>

<b>1911 г.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Perovsk I was told that one bird was killed by local hunters in spring, at the beginning of April.</li> </ul>
<b>1912 г.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On 19 October Bilkevich (according to his letter) killed one bird from a pair in Dushak. It happened in the evening, when it was already dark, near a small lake.</li> </ul>
<b>1916 г.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A group of three birds were noticed at the shore of Shelavkul on 3 March</li> </ul>

The dates are presented as they were given by the author, so they correspond to the old calendar. To transform them to the new calendar it is necessary to add 13 days as Gregorian calendar was adopted in Russia and other countries, which belonged to the former Russian Empire on the 18 of February 1918.

Modern variants of the geographical names, which were mentioned in the text above:

Chinaz – Stary Chinaz, a settlement 60 km southeast of Tashkent;

Nizhny Angren – the low flow of the Angren River, 40 km south of Tashkent;

Kazalinsk – a town in Kyzyl-Orda region, on the Syrdarya River in Kazakhstan, northeast of the Aral Sea;

Perovsk – now Kyzyl-Orda, Kazakhstan;

Dushak – a mountain about 70 km west of Ashgabad (Kopetdag, Turkmenistan);

Shelavkul – a lake, which probably was not far from Tashkent.

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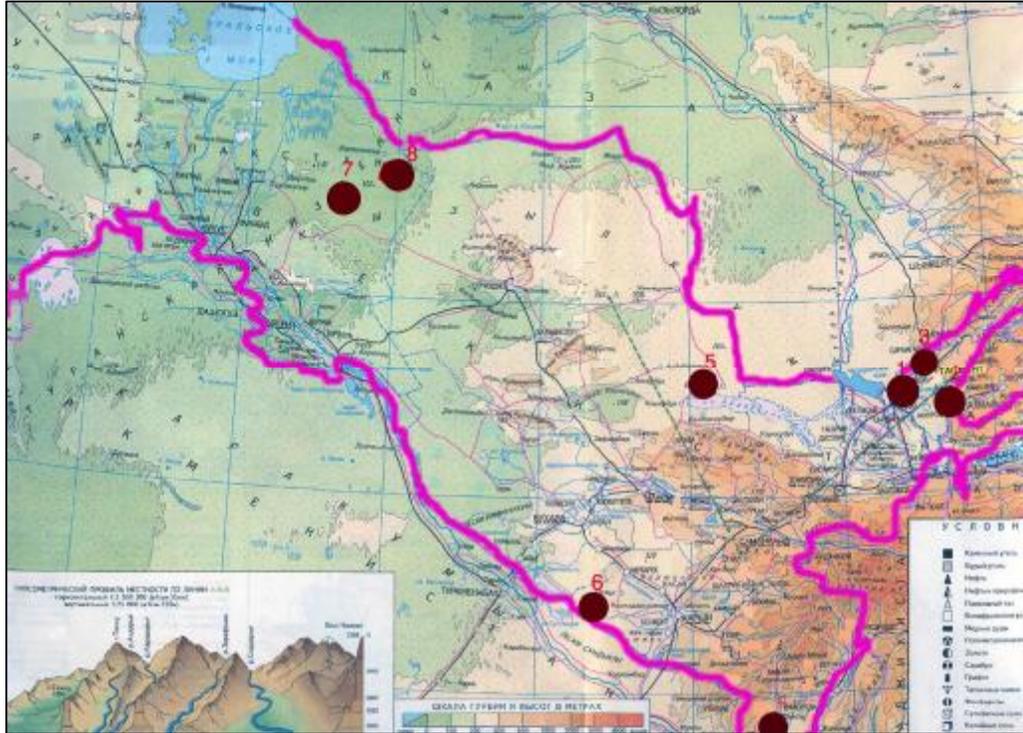
## **GEOGRAPHY AND PHENOLOGY OF SIBERIAN CRANE ENCOUNTERS IN UZBEKISTAN (CENTRAL FLYWAY)**

**By Yevgenia Lanovenko**

Writing this report, we tried to mention all the encounters with the Siberian Crane, which were registered in Uzbekistan, and used all available sources. The information on sites of white crane stops was kindly supplied by A. Sorokin, Yu. Markin and A. Shilina. We tried to give as full a description of each encounter as possible.

1. In spring of 1878, a single bird was noticed by V.F.Russov by Chinaz. (Pleske, 1888)
2. The first half of October 1909 (new calendar). A bird was killed in the low flow of Angren (according to Ostapenko, the source is unknown, 1987). Probably this is the same record as in N. Zarudny notes (see article above).
3. On 8 April 1972 on the Keles River not far from Tashkent (Kashkarov, Tretjakov, Lanovenko, 1977) Ye. Lanovenko spotted a Siberian Crane, which flew over a wheat field in a small flock of Eurasian Cranes late in the morning. The birds flew at the height of 20 m and were easy to recognize. Such flight supposed that the birds were not passing the territory but made a stop in this region during migration. At that time nearby fields were green with wintering crops. They alternated with small sites of uncultivated land covered by green ephemera of flood plain. The river had steep loose banks and some shallow spots. The settlements were 1-2 km away from that place.
4. In March 1975 in the low flow of the Surkhandarya River there was a crane spotted, whose feathers were rather fair. However, it is not possible to tell for sure whether it was a Siberian Crane or another species. (Ostapenko, 1987).
5. On 4 April 2002 a pair of Siberian Cranes was seen at the northwestern coast of Aidarkul lake, where the birds stayed for almost a week foraging at a small wheat field near the lake next to a flock of a hundred Demoiselle Cranes. (Observations were made by I.Primov, the head of Navoi district of the Aidar-Arnasay State Basin Inspection). Coordinates: N 41.05; E 65.53
6. On 5-10 October 2003 at the border of Bukhara and Kashkadarya regions, about 10 km south of Deukhon Lake a white bird was spotted in a flock of 15 Eurasian Cranes. The encounter took place at 10 o'clock in the morning. The birds flew as if they had just taken off to the air. The flight of the flock did not look like a transit one. The flock flew at the height of 150 m, and the birds were very well seen. (Observations were made by A.Kasakov, the head of the Amudarya basin inspection).

7. On 22-23 October 1998 data was received from a satellite transmitter attached to a chick of a wild pair of Siberian Cranes, breeding in the basin of the Kunovat River. The source of the transmittance was in the Kyzylkum Desert. 10 km south of the Beltau heights. This territory is characterized by leptosoles and takyrs with artesian wells.
8. From 7 October to 5 December 2003, a satellite transmitter, which was attached to a Siberian Crane chick raised by a family of Eurasian Cranes in the basin of the Kunovat River sent its signal. The source of the signal was in the Kyzylkum Desert southeast of the former bed of the Amudarya River, where there are sandy dunes with rare artesian wells.



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## FIELD WORK

### SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVE SIBERIAN CRANE WINTERING GROUNDS IN I. R. IRAN

**BY YURI MARKIN AND SADEGH SADEGHI ZADEGAN**



Habitats near Turkmenistan's border where Eurasian Cranes stop during spring migration, Khorasan Province. Photo by

On 4-8 January 2004 there were surveys conducted in Khorasan Province in northeastern Iran adjoining Turkmenistan's and Afghanistan's borders. Special attention was paid to a site near Turkmenistan's border, where a PTT signal was coming from. The satellite transmitter was attached to an adult Eurasian Crane, which was caught and banded in the Kunovat River Basin, Western Siberia, Russia.

Our surveys showed that near Turkmenistan's border and along the

Hari Rud River there are not any habitats suitable for cranes to winter and stop over. There are few water reservoirs there and some of them, like lakes Sarakhs and Khangiran, are very salty. Nevertheless, Eurasian Crane migration is common there, and the spring migration is more visible than the autumn one. In spring, Eurasian Cranes fly south and southwest.



A salt lake near Turkmenistan border where Eurasian Cranes stop during spring migration, Khorasan Province. Photo by Y. Markin



"Cheshmeh Shour" reservoir near the Turkmenistan's border, Khorasan Province. Photo by Y. Markin



Eurasian Crane wintering grounds near Afghanistan's border, Khorasan Province. Photo by Y. Markin



Survey of Eurasian Crane wintering grounds near Afghanistan's border, not far from the town of Saleh Abad, Khorasan Province. Photo by Y. Markin

We could find suitable habitats only near Afghanistan's border and discovered Eurasian Crane wintering grounds near the town of "Saleh Abad". We received reports of the presence of about 200 Eurasian Cranes at the time of the survey. There is not much water there either, but there are some irrigation ditches, which are enough for cranes to winter. This area constitutes the second furthest north wintering grounds of Eurasian Cranes. The first one is in Uzbekistan near Afghanistan's border (CWGE Information Newsletter #3, #4-5).

We could not make a survey of further sites towards the south, where other Eurasian Cranes probably winter, due to strained political situation near Afghanistan's border.

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## EDUCATION

### CRANE DAY CELEBRATION IN 2003

*By Elena Ilyashenko*

In 2003, an educational event named "The Crane Day" was held at 29 sites in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Belarus thanks to the financial support of a Lufthansa Air Company and UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. The organizers aimed at raising public awareness of cranes as the most rare and endangered group of birds and the necessity of certain conservation measures to preserve them.

In 2003 the financial support from Lufthansa Air Company and UNEP/GEF project on conservation of the Siberian Crane and its habitats allowed to conduct a Crane Day celebration in 29 regions, in compare of 11 regions as it was in 2002. Special attention was paid to the territories located within Siberian Crane range. Therefore, the celebration took place in the town of Salekhard (Western Siberia, which contains the breeding grounds of the western population) and in Chokurdah settlement (Yakutia) in the immediate vicinity of the breeding grounds of the eastern population. The celebration was also held along the migration route of the white crane: in Khingansky, Daursky, and Astrakhansky Reserves, in Muravjovski park of stable development (Russia), in Kustanay area (Kazakhstan) and in Tashkent (Uzbekistan). In Uzbekistan, the event was fully devoted to the problem of Siberian Crane conservation. An excellent Crane Day Celebration was held in Oka State Nature Reserve where the Oka Crane Breeding Center is situated.

According to the information from the reports, the celebration has gone well. Most of the participants were children from the young ones to teenagers as well as college students. In some places, representatives of the local authorities also took part in the celebration. Local press and television made reports on celebrations held in Kustanay area (Kazakhstan), Daursky State Nature Reserve (Chita Region) and Khingansky State Nature Reserve (Amur Region).

The dates of the celebration were not the same in different areas but for the most part the events took place on 7 and 14 September.

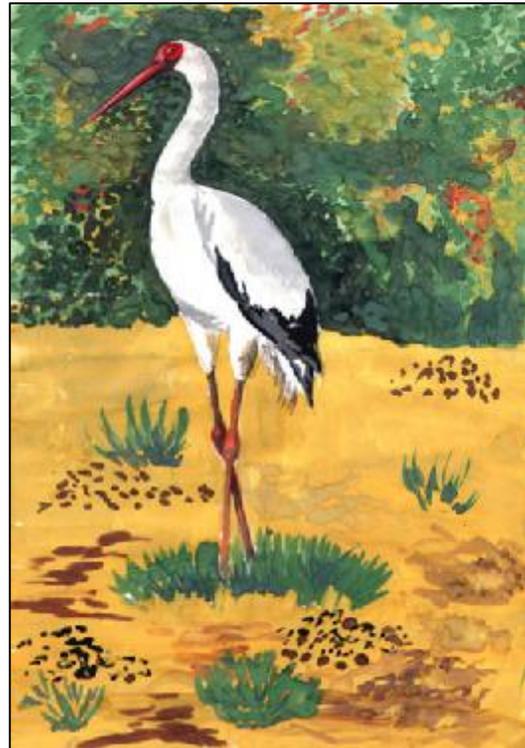
The forms of the celebration were also different depending on the region and the creative imagination of its organizers. In the majority of rural regions, the event, which included theatrical performances, contests, poems and songs about cranes, also incorporated excursions to the fields where flocks of cranes gather before migration. The children not only admired these remarkable birds, but also took part in counts thus helping ornithologists who work in those regions a lot.

The Crane Work Group of Eurasia prepared and published information materials on cranes including the mini-encyclopedia by V.Y.Flint "101

Questions about Cranes" and booklets on 7 species of cranes, which live in Russia and neighboring countries. The working group issued 7 different badges (representing 7 species of cranes inhabiting our country) and a sticker "The Crane Day. 2003" to reward contest winners. All these materials were sent to the regions to use as information and prizes at the celebration.

Almost everywhere, there were drawing competitions. Many organizations sent the drawings they had collected to the Crane Working Group of Eurasia to hold a general drawing competition and to select the best works for a future exhibition.

There was also a competition for the best script held among teachers and students. Many organizations send their programs, verses and songs. These materials were developed and prepared for publishing as methodological recommendations. It is planned to send them to the places where the celebration is to be held in 2004.



It is very encouraging to find among these materials verses and stories composed by children. Obviously, the children tried hard and were captivated by the subject.

In some places, the celebration was accompanied by ecological games, which added a lot of interest to the event, and helped children to form better understanding of the processes, which take place in nature.

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## CONFERENCES AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS

### SIBERIAN CRANE FLYWAY COORDINATION MEETING ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA, 22 AUGUST 2003

**By ELENA ILYASHENKO AND CLAIRE MIRANDE**

On the 22 of August the second Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination Meeting (SCFC) meeting was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The goal of the meeting was to inform partner organizations and other countries with Siberian Cranes of the goals for Siberian Crane Flyway coordination under the GEF/UNEP Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (SCWP) and the Convention for Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane (CMS MoU).

Sixteen participants from Mongolia, Japan, Russia, China, USA and Germany took part in this meeting. They represented the SCWP, CMS, North East Asia Crane Site Network (NEACSN), UNDP/GEF Wetland Project in China, Institute of Biology of Mongolian Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) in Russia and Greifwald University in Germany.

The main objective of this meeting was to strengthen the links between Western and Eastern Flyways, within the Eastern Flyway and also with related initiatives. At the meeting the following items were discussed: flyway level coordination, training goals, goals for "twinning program" involving Chinese and Russian sites, research goals, development of a centralized database for SCWP and links to other databases, information exchange and proposals for establishing a Central Asia Site Network for cranes and other waterbirds.



Participants of Siberian Crane Flyway Coordination meeting.  
Photo by C. Mirande



Claire Mirande, Director of UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. Photo by E. Ilyashenko

As a result of discussion on strengthening the links within the Eastern Flyway it was decided that national Coordination Centers would be established at the National Bird Banding Center (NBBC) in Beijing headed by Qian Fawen and in the Institute for Biological Problems of the Cryolithozone in Yakutsk headed by Maria Vladimirtseva. It was proposed that Maria Vladimirtseva be considered for official representation in the Siberian Crane

Task Force (e.g., as member or technical advisor), proposed to be established under the NEACSN (discussed at the NEACSN Crane Work Group meeting the next day). Maria was proposed to serve as the key contact person and to manage the technical implementation of the SCWP activities in East Russia.

To strengthen the links on the flyway level within the framework of the SCWP, it was agreed that the Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator would attend meetings of the NEACSN. It was requested that the NEACSN Flyway Officer or his designee should reciprocally participate in meetings of the proposals for joint participation of the SCWP. A representative of the NEACSN was requested to serve as Advisor to the Western Flyway Coordination Group under the SCWP and the Convention for Migratory Species MoU for Siberian Cranes. The links between NEACSN and SCWP should be addressed in the draft NEACSN-Action Plan (AP) 2006-2010.

Potential topics for the regional level training under the SCWP for 2004 were examined, including ecotourism or data management. Russian and Chinese colleagues supported the idea of exchanging visits between sister sites under the planned SCWP "twinning program" in order to share experiences and improve site management. Possibilities discussed for site selection included:

- Poyang and Kytalyk (wintering and breeding site within a flyway)
- Poyang and Fereydoon Kenar (wintering areas)
- Kytalyk and Kunovat (breeding areas)

Poyang and Kytalyk were proposed for Phase 1 exchanges under the SCWP.

Proposals for deployment of PTTs (satellite transmitters) on Siberian Cranes in East Asia in 2004 were discussed. Plans to capture 2-4 juvenile cranes at the Kytalyk Resources Reserve (breeding sites of the Eastern population of Siberian Crane) with goals to learn more about the spring migration and the summering area of the juveniles were discussed. Topics covered included availability of funds, number and type of PTTs, and proposed responsibilities. Qian Fawen proposed that the potential for capture of Siberian Cranes at Poyang Lake should also be examined this winter. Further discussion with Russian colleagues in Moscow and Yakutsk was needed before plans could be finalized.



Mongolian team was represented by Baidan Dorjgotov, Badamjan Lhagvasuren, N. Tsevenmyadag (from left to right). Photo by C. Mirande

During the presentations on database management and information exchange it was decided:

- To discuss with CMS the possibility of funding the translation of the CMS Conservation Plans into both Russian and Chinese languages;
- To send new information about Siberian Cranes to Elena Ilyashenko, Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, who maintains the SCFC website
- Information on the Eastern population of Siberian Crane should be exchanged between Simba Chan, Qian Fawen, and Maria Vladimirtseva, with copies to Elena Ilyashenko

A proposal to establish a Central Asia Site Network (CASN) for cranes and other waterbirds was discussed. The successful NEACSN would be used as a model of lessons learned and applied. The participants approved this proposal and noted that CASN would be a valuable system for countries working together. It was noted that language would be less of a problem in Central Asia than for the NEACSN. The structure of the proposed network should be simpler since there is less variation of habitats and most species use the same sites.

A very useful presentation was given by Roman Nikolaev of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, concerning the need to raise federal recognition by the Russian

federal government of the extensive protected areas established under the authority of the Sakha Republic. The participants agreed that it is also important to increase international recognition of these sites (i.e., NEACSN site certification or designation as Ramsar sites).

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## **SIBERIAN CRANE WETLANDS PROJECT – FIRST PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**BY CRAWFORD PRENTICE**

The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project started in April 2003 after two years of preparation. The first project steering committee meeting was delayed due to the SARS outbreak in China, and the project start-up was facilitated by "project mobilization workshops" in Moscow (attended by participants from Russia and Kazakhstan), Tehran (Iran) and Harbin (China). The first steering committee meeting was eventually held in Moscow in September 2003. The main aims of the meeting were: to approve annual workplans for 2003; to approve the project's operations manual; and to foster cross-linkages between different countries participating in the project - China, Russia, Iran and Kazakhstan. These aims were achieved, consolidating the basis for effective management of the project.



Crawford Prentice, International Technical Advisor of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. Photo C. Mirande



Crawford Prentice is working with Russian National Coordination Unit. Photo C. Mirande

Some news was shared on the prospects for the project in Kazakhstan, where governmental re-structuring had delayed the project start-up. The UNDP/GEF Kazakhstan Wetlands Project was recently approved, paving the way for consideration of the Siberian Crane Wetlands Project by the relevant authorities. The Steering Committee unanimously expressed its continued support for Kazakhstan to join the project as soon as possible. In addition to the main aims, the meeting discussed the monitoring and evaluation framework for the project, with the introduction of a "logframe tracking form" relating progress to indicators in the project's logframe matrices. It was also proposed that the World Bank /

WWF Protected Areas Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool should be applied to all project sites on an annual basis in order to monitor the project's impact on the management of these internationally important wetlands.

The meeting also included capacity-building exercises for the national teams in developing detailed workplans through breaking down of activities into component steps, and developing Terms of Reference for consultant inputs. It was agreed that the second Steering Committee meeting would be held in Beijing from the 24-27 of February 2004.

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## A BRIEF REPORT ON THE TRAINING COURSE OF THE NORTH EAST ASIAN CRANE SITE NETWORK IN MONGOLIA, 25 AUGUST – 1 SEPTEMBER 2003

By SIMBA CHAN

Cranes are graceful birds with a high cultural significance. That's why many visitors go to reserves with cranes. On one hand this will help the reserve to justify its existence by providing financial benefits to the local community, and it is also a good opportunity to educate the general public about the need for natural conservation. However, if the management is not good, the reserve will rapidly deteriorate because of the adverse impact on the environment.



Barry Cooper and Simba Chan made presentation on training on ecological tourism. Photos I. Wong

In 2001 and 2002, The North East Asian Crane Site Network organized two workshops, at Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China and Kushiro Marshes, Japan respectively, to discuss how to improve education and visitor management of crane sites. It was at the Kushiro Workshop that a training course on education and visitor control was suggested and approved.

The training course was held at the Daguur Strictly Protected Area, Dornod Province, Mongolia from the 25 of August to the 1 of September 2003. Throughout the week all the participants stayed on the Mongolian steppe by Duruu Lake at the Daguur Strictly Protected Area. All were housed in Mongolian gers and tents.

More than 50 people from reserves in Russia, Mongolia and China participated in the training course. The training course aimed at training potential trainers who would go back to the reserves and train their education staff. It will also help the nature reserves to draft and implement a plan on environmental education. On each day there were plenary presentations, group discussions and reports. At the end of the day, environmental games were played both for fun and for education. We had tested the environmental games on children of the herdsmen and



Participants from Mongolia, China and Russia. Photo by I.Wong

found the games to be very useful to convey concepts of nature and environment to the younger generations.

On the 29 of August all training course participants visited the Chuluukhoroot Village, and were greeted warmly by the local community. On the 30 of August, representatives of the nearby community paid a visit to the campsite at Duruu Lake. In one week, delegates from different countries built a strong friendship that will improve the cooperation of the locals in the future.

After the training course, the reserves that participated in the training were asked to go back to discuss how to plan for education and visitor management with their colleagues in their own reserves, and send back a plan to the facilitators for compilation of a proceedings before mid –

2004. There is hope that experience of some of the better reserves could serve as a good example for the less experienced ones.



Training participants lived in Mongolian gers during week.  
Photo by I. Wong.

The main facilitators of the training course are: Barry Cooper (The Royal Society for the Protection Birds, U K), Idy Wong (Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden, Hong Kong), Li Fengshan (International Crane Foundation, USA), Keith Metzner (UNDP in Eastern Mongolia), Jan Dierks (Expert on ecotourism, Germany), Claire Mirande (International Crane Foundation, USA), Elena Ilyashenko (Crane Working Group of Eurasia, Russia), and Simba Chan (Wild Bird Society of Japan and Flyway Officer of the Crane Site Network). The lecture and discussion had to be translated into four different languages: Russian, Mongolian, Chinese and English, by some of the translators: Mikhail

Parilov (Khingansky Nature Reserve, Russia), Sanchir (UNDP in Eastern Mongolia), and Badamjav Lhagvasuren (Mongolian Academy of Science).

The training course is principally funded by the Danone corporate Group (France), and the Nippon Keidanren Committee on Nature Conservation (Japan). The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project and GEF China Wetlands Project have also contributed to sponsoring the travel costs of some Chinese participants.



Participants took part in ecological games and excursions. Photo by I.Wong.

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