SIBERIAN CRANE

FLYWAY NEWS

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Photo by S. Sadeghi Zadegan

Compiled by Elena Ilyashenko
ICF/CMS Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator
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- **Luan Haiyan.** Workshop for Wetland Public Education, Xianghai, China, 1-3 August 2005
Captive Breeding 2005

Propagation of Siberian Cranes at Oka Crane Breeding Center, Russia, in 2005

by Tatiana Kashentseva

As of 1 January 2006, there were 34 Siberian Cranes at Oka Crane Breeding Center (OCBC) (16 male and 18 female birds). Chelyabinsk Zoo sent to OCBC an injured Siberian Crane, which had been brought to the zoo by a forest ranger in the fall of 2004. The bird’s wing was severely injured and later had to be amputated. There is a chance that this Siberian Crane was reared in isolation in the OCBC and in August of 2003 along with six other chicks was released into the wild in the Kunovat River Basin in North Siberia. Blood sample of the bird has been sent to the Institute of Gene Biology where individual identification and verification of the samples taken from the released chicks will be conducted.

In 2005 nine pairs of Siberian Cranes reproduced. The results are presented in the following table.

Table. Reproduction of the Siberian Crane in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species (number of pairs)</th>
<th>Laying period</th>
<th>Total eggs laid (broken)</th>
<th>Fertile eggs</th>
<th>Number of chicks hatched</th>
<th>Number of chicks reared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siberian Crane (9)</td>
<td>02/26-05/22</td>
<td>30 (1)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One pair of birds established a record for the earliest egg laying at OCBC on 26 February. Three pairs after fully incubating the first clutch laid eggs for the second time and incubated them.

Seven females unable to naturally copulate successfully, were inseminated artificially. It is interesting to note that a pair that had been reproducing only using artificial insemination since 1988, for the first time laid an egg impregnated naturally, before artificial insemination started for the season. It is quite possible that natural copulation of this pair was stimulated by observing a neighboring pair of Eurasian Cranes reproducing naturally.

Artificial incubation was not used this year. After natural incubation eight chicks hatched (88.9%). Six pairs reared one chick each. The chick of the seventh pair died on the 22nd day. The eighth chick was hand-raised because the female stepped on the egg while the chick was hatching.

Due to large financial and labor requirements for pen reconstruction, chicks were not reared in isolation for reintroduction into the wild.

Four fertile eggs in the last stage of incubation, produced by four pairs of Siberian Cranes, were transported for surrogate incubation by wild Eurasian Cranes to the Kunovat River Basin (West Siberia) (see article by Yu. Markin, A. Sorokin, A. Yermakov, and Yu. Zatsepin in this newsletter).

Fig. 1-2. Parental method of crane rearing. Photo by T. Kashentseva

Fig. 3. Hand-raised Siberian Crane chick. Photo by T. Kashentseva
Due to financial support of Cracid & Crane Breeding and Conservation Center, Belgium, one of the three pen complexes for adult cranes was renovated.

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**Propagation of the Siberian Crane in Beijing Zoo, China, in 2005**

*Zhang En-Quan, and Zhang Jing*

At present there are 29 Siberian Cranes in Beijing Zoo, including three breeding pairs. In 2005 two pairs bred naturally and 5 females laid eggs through artificial insemination. Total 11 eggs were laid by Siberian Cranes, four chicks hatched and the two of them were reared.

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Propagation of the Siberian Crane in Moscow Zoo, Russia, in 2005  

by Olga Rozdina

There were two pairs of Siberian Crane at Moscow Zoo in 2005.

One of these pairs mated and the parents raised one chick successfully. The second pair did not breed, as artificially insemination was not conducted.

At present, the only chick lives at Moscow Zoo.

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Reintroduction 2005

Siberian Crane Reintroduction in Kunovat Wildlife Refuge (Zakaznik), West Siberia, Russia, in 2005  

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

During an aerial survey conducted in Western Siberia from 10 to 22 June through the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (see article by A. Sorokin et al. in this newsletter) the Siberian Crane reintroduction work was implemented. An helicopter MI-8 was used for this purpose. Representatives of All-Russia Research Institute of Nature Protection, Oka Biosphere State Nature Reserve and Sterkh Foundation participated in this work.

On 10 June four Siberian Cranes eggs produced by four Siberian Crane pairs at Oka Crane Breeding Center were placed into two nests of the Eurasian Crane for cross-fostering rearing at the Kunovat River Basin. One nest was located near the Krivoye Lake (fig. 1). The second nest was the same one used for cross-fostering in previous years (fig.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egg number</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Date of egg laying</th>
<th>Estimated date of chick hatching</th>
<th>Eurasian Crane nest location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05-1-51(4)</td>
<td>Walsrode</td>
<td>17.05.05</td>
<td>15.06.05</td>
<td>Kunovat Wildlife Refuge, Krivoye Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-1-59(3)</td>
<td>Bilipu</td>
<td>17.05.05</td>
<td>15.06.05</td>
<td>Kunovat Wildlife Refuge, Krivoye Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-1-31(2)</td>
<td>Banul</td>
<td>17.05.05</td>
<td>15.06.05</td>
<td>Kunovat Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-1-18(3)</td>
<td>Yulya</td>
<td>22.05.05</td>
<td>20.06.05</td>
<td>Kunovat Wildlife Refuge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1-2. Eurasian Crane nest near Krivoye Lake, where two Siberian Crane eggs were placed. Photo by A. Sorokin

Table. Placing of the Siberian Crane eggs into nests of the Eurasian Crane in Kunovat River Basin in 2005
On 7 November 2005, two days after arrival of two wild Siberian Cranes, the captive-bred Siberian Crane called Suna was released into Vakhmi territory located in the Freydoon Kenar Trapping Area (Damgah) in Iran.

In 2003, Suna was hatched and reared at Oka Crane Breeding Centre (OCBC) of Oka State Nature Reserve, Russia. She was sent along with another captive-bred chick to Iran in the winter of 2003/04 and released with wild cranes. She started to migrate with wild cranes in March 2004, but only flew several hundred miles and landed near Anzali Wetland in Gilan Province, Iran. Subsequently, she was held in captivity at Bujagh National Park until February of 2004, and after this time transferred to Fereydoon Kenar and held in captivity until 7 November 2005 (date of release).

Just before the release Suna was banded with two orange plastic rings on both legs and with a metal ring. Each plastic ring has two letters - XP and HN.

Almost immediately after the release Suna joined one of the two lone wild cranes. They have paired and stayed together all the time inside the Fereydoon Kenar Damgah feeding, roosting and flying. When we saw Suna on 11 December, she acted like a wild crane. Her flight looked like a wild bird’s flight. She fed on natural food items in flooded rice fields, and was in the constant company of her new mate. She will be three years old by the 2006 nesting season and there is a possibility she may breed.

The other lone bird stayed in Ezbaran Damgah. It sometimes visited the Fereydoon Kenar Damgah, but did not join the other two birds.
Special thanks are extended to Iran's Department of Environment and Mr. Azadi, (a waterfowl trapper), who kept the female Siberian Crane for the last six months before she was released.

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Band 2005

Band 2005

Banding of Siberian Crane Chicks in Yakutia, Russia, in 2005

by Yuri Markin, Alexander Sorokin, and Nikolai Germogenov

On 17 August 2005, during the aerial survey of the Siberian Crane breeding habitats in the Kytalyk Resource Reserve in Yakutia (see N. Germogenov’s article in this newsletter), eight chicks were banded with white plastic rings with black numbers and with standard metal rings (see table). Banding was conducted by the staff of the Institute of Biological Problem of Cryolithozone, Yakutia, the All-Russian Research Institute of Nature Protection, Oka State Nature Reserve, Russia, and International Crane Foundation.
Table. Banding of the Siberian Crane chicks in the Kytalyk Resource Reserve of in Yakutia on 17 August 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Bands on left leg</th>
<th>Bands on right leg</th>
<th>Weight of chicks, kg</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
<th>Number of pair (according of the register by the Institute of Biological Problems of Cryolithozone)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>174*</td>
<td>A145980**</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>70°55'03&quot;5/147°54'93&quot;</td>
<td>№ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>A145958</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>70°51'68&quot;0/147°57'66&quot;</td>
<td>№ 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>A145959</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>70°54'82&quot;9/148°06'07&quot;</td>
<td>№ 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>A145960</td>
<td>4,3</td>
<td>70°55'90&quot;8/148°17'16&quot;</td>
<td>№ 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>A145962 (Маша)</td>
<td>4,7</td>
<td>71°07'54'44&quot;/148°22'56&quot;</td>
<td>№ 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>A145963</td>
<td>5,6</td>
<td>71°00'47&quot;5/147°57'72&quot;</td>
<td>№ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>A145964</td>
<td>4,1</td>
<td>71°00'16&quot;0/147°53'43&quot;</td>
<td>№ 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>A145965</td>
<td>4,6</td>
<td>70°59'11&quot;7/147°44'36&quot;</td>
<td>№ 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 174 -197 – white plastic ring 80 mm wide and 27 mm in diameter, with black number.
** - A145980, A145958-145960, 145962-145965 – standard metal ring with word ”Report to Moscow”.

According to information from a birdwatcher, received by Simba Chan, Flyway Officer of the North East Asian Crane Site Network, one chick banded with white plastic ring with number 174 was seen in early December at Poyang Lake, the main wintering site of eastern population of the Siberian Crane in China.

Fig. 2. Siberian Crane chick banded with white plastic ring with black number 174 in Yakutia, Russia on 17 August 2005. Photo by A. Sorokin

Fig. 3. Siberian Crane chick banded with white plastic ring with black number 174 in Poyang Lake Nature Reserve, China, in early December. Photo by Poyang Lake NNR staff

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Information from Breeding Sites 2005

Western and Central Flyways

Monitoring of the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds in Western Siberia in 2005

by Alexander Sorokin, Alexander Yermakov, and Yuri Markin

Aerial and ground surveys were conducted in June 2005 in West Siberia: Kunovat River Basin (KRB), area between Konda and Alymka Rivers (KAM), and Berezovo Region between KRB and KAM. Representatives of All-Russia Institute of Nature Protection, Oka State Nature Reserve and Sterkh Foundation participated in these surveys with financial support of the Sterkh Foundation and UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project.

These surveys were planned for the following purposes:

- monitor the Siberian Crane population;
- specify the list of species to be used as indicators;
- develop methods to identify indicator species for monitoring under activities of workplans for the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project;
- interview local people about Siberian Crane sightings at project sites and along migration route.

At KAM, two along Siberian Cranes were seen in different days. Distance between sighting points is less 10 km. The first cranes was in breeding plumage (feather stained), and it is possible that it was not alone. The second one was not seen well. Since the survey was conducted late in season lush vegetation prevented spotting of even brightly white as the Siberian Crane.

During air surveys in KRB and Berezovo Region Siberian Cranes were not seen, but very interesting information was obtained from local people and later confirmed (table). For instance, the information about the Siberian Crane pair recorded in Zazhimchar River Basin (part of project site) was confirmed.

Table. Siberian Cranes sighted by local people in West Siberia in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Siberian Cranes</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Person who observed/Respondent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Siberian Crane among</td>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td>20 km from Tobolsk</td>
<td>O. Budyldin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eurasian Cranes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salekhard (Fish Factory)</td>
<td>V. Valeev</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Siberian Cranes in</td>
<td>30 June 2005</td>
<td>Kunovat River right bank up to Pittayugan River in</td>
<td>A. Konev (s.Lopkhari), U.Tyrlin (Khanty people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flight (were seen very</td>
<td></td>
<td>the huge marshes between these two rivers</td>
<td>from that site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two (pair) Siberian</td>
<td>Summer 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Siberian Cranes</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Zazhimchar River Lake (It seems that they are from</td>
<td>A. Shestakov (director of Kunovat Wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>Refuge)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1. Siberian Crane habitats in Kunovat River Basin. Photos by Yu. Markin

Fig. 2. Siberian Crane habitats between Konda and Alymka Rivers. Photos by Yu. Markin
Monitoring of other waterbirds such as Eurasian Cranes, swans, ducks, etc., was conducted during the expedition. Total of 27 species of waterbirds were counted.

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Eastern Flyway

Ground and Aerial Surveys of the Siberian Crane Breeding Sites in Yakutia, Russia, in 2005

by Maria Vladimirtseva and Nikolai Germogenov

A ground survey of the breeding sites of the Siberian Crane was implemented by S. Sleptsov, Consultant on Field Monitoring of Waterbirds, in May and June of 2005 in Yakutia, under the activities of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP). Surveyed territory included Yelon Specially Protected Zone of Kytalyk Resource Reserve, within the control site area of 1,314 square kilometers, and adjacent territories. S. Sleptsov found 16 territorial pairs of the Siberian Crane, including nine nests and 11 pairs and seven nests of the Sandhill Crane.

An aerial survey was implemented on 17 August as part of the SCWP International Workshop with participation of representatives from International Crane Foundation, All-Russian Research Institute of Nature Protection, Oka State Nature Reserve, Yakutia Institute of Biological Problem of Cryolithozone and the staff of Allaikhovskaya
Inspection for Nature Protection of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). The same territory where the ground survey was conducted, an aerial survey with MI-8 helicopter was carried out. A census of the Siberian Crane and other waterbirds was made, and the territorial distribution of the Siberian Crane nesting pairs mapped. On the whole, 15 pairs of the Siberian Crane and three pairs of the Sandhill Crane (one with a chick) were registered. Eight Siberian Crane chicks were caught and banded.

Numerous photos were taken during the aerial inspection to be used for the detailed description of Siberian and the Sandhill Cranes biotopes, and it is planned to use these to design hanging calendar for the year 2006 with the support from the regional insurance company “Sterkh”.

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Information from Migration Stopovers in 2004-2005

Western Flyway

Sightings of Siberian Cranes During Spring and Autumn Migrations in Kazakhstan

by Yevgeny Bragin

In spring 2005 water level was a very high throughout the Kostanay Region, creating good conditions for waterfowl, but difficult ones for observers.

Seven Siberian Cranes were sighted on 4 May 2005 in a place about 3 km north of Novonezhinka Village (N 52°27' E 64°05') (Kostanay Region, Northern Kazakhstan) by Vladimir Parastatov, Head of the Regional Hunting Society. This man knows the Siberian Crane very well since he participated in expeditions in 1998-1999 and saw Siberian Cranes on Kulagol and Sankebay Lakes. This group of cranes was also seen by two local people from the village of Novonezhinka in the same day – 4 May. One of them (a cowboy) saw 5 birds last year (2004) about the same time.

Prior to receiving the information from Parastatov, a game inspector from Naurzum Nature Reserve informed me about six Siberian Cranes on 28 April 2005 he saw in the south of the reserve. It may be true, since the man participated in a workshop for game inspectors of the reserve, at which I taught them about cranes.

In the autumn 2005 at least three records of Siberian Cranes were made in Kostanay Region:
- one pair – on 17 September near Zharsor Lake
- one adult – on 28 September, also near Zharsor Lake
- one adult – on 27-28 October in Naurzum Nature Reserve. The weather was freezing rain. It was the latest sighting of the Siberian Crane in the entire observation history at Naurzum. The adult crane looked quite healthy.

We also received an unconfirmed report from the north of Kostanay Region.

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Central Flyway

Unpublished Sightings of Siberian Cranes in the Middle Amudaria River, Uzbekistan

by Maxim Mitropolsky

Zoologists A. Yefimov and M. Kashtankin reported about two sightings of Siberian Cranes in migrating flocks of Eurasian Cranes in the fall 1989 were registered in the middle part of the Amudaria River. The first sighting was made on 30 September, 17 kilometers NNE of the station Darganata (N 40°30’ E 062°10’). A Siberian Crane was flying with a flock of 35 Eurasian Cranes. The second sighting, also of a single Siberian Crane in a flock of 25 Eurasian Cranes, occurred on 26 October 14 km NNE of the station of Kabakly (N 39°50’ E 062°30’).

It is important to note that the places where sightings were made lie on the main spring and fall migration flyway of the Eurasian Crane and some other large birds, which crosses the Kyzylkum Desert from the lower Syrdaria through the valley of the Amudaria, in Badkhys area direction (South Turkmenia) and further to the Middle East.

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The Eurasian Crane Wintering in Afghanistan
by George Archibald

Under the capable direction of Ghulam Malikyar, Save the Environment of Afghanistan (SEA) is the only non-government organization (NGO) dedicated to the conservation of wildlife among the some 2000 other NGOs in the war-torn mountain nation. Since 2002, ICF has supported a team from SEA both to determine the distribution and threats to Eurasian and Demoiselle cranes that migrate across Afghanistan. They also promoted the conservation of cranes through the distribution of posters and the construction of an excellent exhibit for cranes at Kabul Zoo. In this exhibit, we hope to display breeding pairs of three species: Eurasian, Demoiselle, and Siberian Cranes. The Siberian Crane once migrated across Afghanistan between breeding grounds in subarctic regions of western Siberia and wintering areas in India. The last pair was last seen in India during the winter of 2002-2003. Shooting along their 3500 mile migration route is believed to have caused their demise.

During my brief visit from 16 to 20 December, in company with three colleagues from SEA, we drove from Kabul nine hours north through the mountains along excellent newly surfaced roads to the Amudaria River that marks the border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Through the work of Uzbek ornithologist, Dr. Yevgenia Lanovenko, we know that in recent years thousands of Eurasian Cranes spend the winter on lowlands in Uzbekistan on the north side of the Amu-Daria. She reported that large flocks flew back and forth between the two nations. Not realizing that cranes might be wintering in Afghanistan, researchers from SEA had conducted their work during the migration periods in autumn and spring.

The small Afghan town of Hairtan borders the Amudaria across from the Uzbek city, Termez. Upon inquiring from security guards on the outskirts of Hairtan, if there were cranes in the area and who might know about them, we were delighted when he confirmed that indeed there were cranes. A restaurant owner, Abdul Nabi Gechi knows cranes well and confirmed that many hundreds were present through the winter, moving to and from sandy islands on the river in early morning and in the evening.

Fig. 1. Colleagues from Save the Environment of Afghanistan (SEA) present a poster from Iran of Siberian Cranes to restaurant owner, Mr. Abdul Nabi Gechi (third from right). In the background is the Amu-Daria River and then Uzbekistan. Photo by G. Archibald

That evening in the nearby city, Masar Sharrif, we met Ghulam's nephew, Qais Agah, whom Ghulam had interested in studying cranes the previous winter. Qais is a university student majoring in agriculture. On some weekends he looked for cranes and reported thousands of Eurasian Cranes and one small flock of 17 Demoiselle Cranes wintering in the border areas. The Demoiselles roosted at night in a wetland where garbage from Masar Sharrif was dumped. Qias also reported low levels of crane hunting.

Both Gechi and Agah reported that the major wintering area for cranes was near the town, Shurtapa, about 60 km west along the river from Hairtan. Unfortunately, we did not have time to visit that area. But ICF left a small grant with Qias to help him to study cranes every second weekend until all birds have departed for the breeding grounds in early April. I was delighted to deliver to Qias excellent educational materials that Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, Elena Ilyashenko, had brought from Moscow and gave to me in Azerbaijan. Qias will distribute these materials to the local people in an effort to completely ban the shooting of cranes.

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Eastern Flyway

Waterbird Monitoring in Eastern Yakutia, Russia, in 2005

by Nikolai Germogenov

Monitoring of water birds in Eastern Yakutia was conducted by the staff of the Institute of Biological Problem of Cryolithozone within the frame of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. The following regions were monitored: Ust-Maisky Ulus (district) (Kyupsky and Chabda Resource Reserves), Tattinsky Ulus (Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reserve), and the territory of Tomponsky Ulus. Monitoring included spring/fall bird migration, bird population structure, a number of counts on nesting grounds, and data gathering through a questionnaire. Analysis of the collected data allowed us to make conclusions on the present state and future prognosis of the endangered species and their habitats.

Monitoring of bird migration started in 2004 in Kyupsky Resource Reserve, two kilometers from a small village of Tumul (where a special watchtower for bird counts was built in April 2005) near a small Nuottara River, and in Kuoluma-Chappanda Resource Reserve near the mouth of the Kuoluma River.

During the 2005 spring migration of the Siberian Crane, 203 cranes were counted not far from Tumul village according to personal observations and questionnaire data. This number represents about one percent of total Yakutian breeding population of the Siberian Crane. Most cranes were counted from 11 to 16 May (95.5 %). Eurasian Cranes were seen on 14 (three birds) and 28-29 May (1 bird). During the entire migration period more than 2000 Baikal Teals were observed (0.5% of the world population).

In addition, along the flyway in Kyupsky Resource Reserve, such rare birds as Lesser White-fronted Goose, Brent Goose, Far Eastern Curlew, Little Curlew and Osprey were sighted and counted.

The fall migration counts of water bird on the same territory were conducted from 22 September - 9 October. The Siberian Crane migration was observed here from 23 September - 9 October. Thirty Siberian Crane flocks were counted, each flock consisting of three to 110 birds, 438 individuals total, or more than 10% of the world population. Young cranes were observed in 20 flocks; 149 adults and 51 juveniles were counted in 17 well-observed flocks. The majority of Siberian Cranes was observed during 3-4 October, during heavy snow-storms, lasted from 30 September - 6 October, when 86.3% of all birds were counted. All birds flew during the day-time from 10.35 a.m. - 17.15 p.m. Siberian Cranes were flying mainly at 100 - 300-400 meters above the ground; the main flight direction was to the south and south-west.

From Toburen Lake, located just across the watchtower, and from around the lake, three observations of the Siberian Crane flocks stopped for rest were reported. The three migrating flocks consisted of three, four, and three (including one chick) birds. Three large migrating flocks of the Baikal Teal were also observed.

At Chabba Resource Reserve (Ust-Maisky Ulus), the extensive wetlands with lakes and small tributaries of the big Maya River were searched. At Kyupsky Resource Reserve, near Tumul Village, the lake system between the Aldan and Nuottara Rivers along the Siberian Crane flyway corridor, as also explored. In present, the necessity of management these territories is being assessed.

Data for satellite images processing were collected to make an inventory of wetlands. Key sites were established in the valley of the Maya River, eastern border of Chabda Resource Reserve. On these territories the Siberian Crane flyway crosses the key breeding sites of the Hooded Crane (5 pairs were found) and habitats of the Crested Honey-Buzzard, the Eurasian Woodcock and the Baikal Teal – birds rarely seen in this region.

A survey of the Siberian Crane migration stopovers along the Maya River from the U-Yuryakh River to the Krasivaya Mountain was conducted in order to organize the research work on cranes and breeding territories in 2006.

A working group of helpers for crane research in the Maya River area was established from nature protection inspectors, workers of Hydro-Meteorological Service and Federal Service on Veterinary Inspection and Flora-Sanitary Service.

In Tomponsky and Tattinsy Uluses, according to a report from P. Maximov, Chief of Inspection of Nature Protection of Tattinsky Ulus, Siberian Cranes were registered twice in spring of 2005: on 5 May three Siberian Cranes were observed at the creek of the Khandyga River, and on 23 May two cranes were seen on the Aldan River, the Chappanda territory. Fall bird-watching was conducted at these Uluses from 30 September to 6 October on the Aldan River and its lake system stretched for five kilometers along the left bank of the Kuoluma River. On 30 September, in two different parts of a small island on the Aldan River, two pairs
of resting Siberian Cranes were sighted. Three times in October migrating Siberian Cranes were observed in the twilight of the early morning.

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Monitoring of the Siberian Crane During Spring and Autumn Migration in China in 2005
by Chu Zhaoyuan, Wang Hui, and Meng Derong

A Siberian Crane monitoring was conducted at Lianpengshan in Beidaihe, Jiangsu, and in Cangzhou, the Yellow River Delta Wetlands and littoral of Qinhuangdao-Beidaihe-Tangshan of Huabei area during spring and autumn of 2005.

At the Lianpengshan monitoring sites of Beidaihe several sightings of Siberian Cranes were made in autumn of 2005. Total 14 Siberian Cranes including 2 chicks flew over this area in southwest direction between 24 October - 15 November.

At the Jiangsu monitoring sites no Siberian Cranes were found during spring and autumn migration of 2005.

In Huabei area only a pair of Siberian Cranes with one chick was seen in the Yellow River Delta Wetlands in spring of 2005. This family flew into Nature Reserve in the middle of March, stayed there for 7 days and then flew out. In Cangzhou and on littoral of Qinhuangdao-Beidaihe-Tangshan, Siberian Cranes were not sighted in spring of 2005.

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Study of Number Dynamics and Habitat of the Siberian Crane in the Delta of Huanghe River, China
by Lu Juan-Zhang, Shan Kai, Zhu Shu-Yu, and Yu Hai-Ling

The Delta of Huanghe River in an important stopover of cranes. A migratory Siberian Crane was first found here in 2001. A program "Study on the number, distribution and habitat of Siberian Crane in the Delta of Huanghe River" was conducted in 2002-2003. This program revealed the following:

1. Number dynamics of Siberian Cranes in the delta in 2002-2003. During fall migration, 54 cranes were found in the delta. They mainly gathered on the beaches near the estuary of Huanghe River, Dawenliu Administrative Station, and stayed there for a long time. Six cranes were sighted during spring migration, mainly at the Estuary Administrative Station on the north bank of Huanghe River, where they stayed for a short time.

2. Migratory dynamics of the Siberian Crane at the delta in 2002-2003: during fall migration cranes flew along the river, their first arrival and last departure being between the end of October and mid to late November respectively, they stayed for 2-3 weeks. During spring migration, cranes flew over inland, they arrived and left the delta in early March.

3. Habitat distribution: Siberian Cranes concentrated on the inshore beaches facing the estuary of the river, or in inshore intertidal zone with tidal ditches.

A census was continued after the project was completed: 90 Siberian Cranes were found at the Ecological Recovery Area of the wetland, and 13 cranes on the estuary beaches from mid October to early November 2004; 10 cranes at the Ecological Recovery Area in mid March to early April, the latest departure date was on 13 April 2005.

Adopted from China Crane News, Vol. 9(1), p. 25
Introduction of Tumuji Monitoring Sites
Cheng Wan-Jun

Tumuji monitoring area is located in Xinganmeng in Inner-Mongolia and mainly includes Tumuji National Nature Reserve (NNR). The total area of Tumuji NNR is 94,830 hectares, of which the water area 5360 hectares, 5.7% of the total area; marsh and wetland area 22,060 hectares, 23.3% of the total area; grassland area 36,890 hectares, 38.9% of the total area.

According to the monitoring results, 15 Siberian Cranes stayed at Tumiji in the summer of 2004 (for about 40 days), and 5 Siberian Cranes in summer of 2005 (as of 27 June). From 22 April to 9 May, monitoring activities were conducted at 12 monitoring sites, such as Wubulinchuan of Keyouqianqi, Wulan River of Manzutun, Qianxigang Wetland of Taohemu, Shumugou Wetland and Tumuji area. The largest group of 200 Siberian Cranes was found at Tumujipaozi, Longwang Lakem Bailing Lake, and other wetlands rich with water and vegetation (water plants, cattail, and reeds).

The Siberian Crane numbers were the largest in autumn (380 birds) and in summer (200); in large groups, only 7% were chicks.

Cheng Wan-Jun
Management Bureau of Tumuji NNR
Inner Mongolia

Sightings of the Siberian Crane along the Eastern Flyway

Japan

A young Siberian Crane was seen in Iwate Prefecture, northern Honshu of Japan in early November of 2005:
http://homepage2.nifty.com/yotsuya/

Simba Chan
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simba@birdlife-asia.org

China

6 Siberian Cranes were seen in Haidaihagapaozi, Keerqin National Nature Reserve on 15 September 2005.

In June 2004, 12 Siberian Cranes were reported to stay through the summer by the bird monitoring staff of Dalai Lake Environmental Bureau, Hulunbeier City. Cranes were seen on Eergune River (52°25’ N, 121°40’ E) in the north of Qiqian Forest Farm, in northern Daxing’an Mountain. There are bushes and swamps near the river. These cranes are probably non-breeding sub-adults.

Xing Lian-Lian, Yang Qui-Sheng, Pan Yan-Qiu, Inner Mongolia University
Information from Wintering Sites 2005/06

Western Flyway

Siberian Cranes Wintering in I. R. of Iran in 2005/06

by Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan

On 5 November 2005, at 8.00 a.m. I received information from local people (trappers) on the arrival of two Siberian Cranes to Fereydoon Kenar. Later behavior of the two wild Siberian Cranes showed that they were two single birds. They kept separate from each other. During the winter, one of these cranes joined a captive-bred female and they stayed at the Fereydoon Kenar Damgah, the other lone bird stayed in the Ezbaran Damgah and visited Fereydoon Kenar Damgah sometimes, but has not joined the group of two.

Fig. 1-2. One of the two wild Siberian Cranes that arrived in Iran on 5 November. This lone crane stayed at Fereydoon Kenar Damgah and later joined a captive-bred released Siberian Crane female.

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Eastern Flyway

Information on Wintering Waterfowl at Poyang Lake, China, in 2004/05

by Ji Weitao and Wu Jian-Dong

Population size and distribution of wintering waterfowl including the Siberian Crane were surveyed in the entire Poyang Lake area in winter 2004/05. First, an aerial survey around the lake was conducted from 1 - 3 February 2005. Then a synchronized waterfowl count in 5 provinces and one city in the area of middle and lower valleys of the River Changjiang was conducted from 15 to 24 February 2005.

1. Aerial survey

The survey area covers Poyang Lake (including Junshan and Qingnan Lakes), the waters and grassy islets of Saihu Lake and Chihu Lake in Jiujiang. A summary of the Siberian Crane census results during aerial surveys is shown in table below.
Table. Results of aerial surveys of 1 - 2 February 2005

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<tr>
<th>Territories covered by aerial surveys</th>
<th>Number of Siberian Cranes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jinxian County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kangshanhu Migratory Bird Nature Reserve, Yugen County</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve</td>
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<td>Nanjishan Nature Reserve</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3131</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Ground survey in middle and lower valleys of Changjiang River

This ground survey covered nearly 95% area of Poyang Lake region and was conducted by only two survey groups for 10 days. 2683 Siberian Cranes were counted.

*Adopted from China Cranes News, vol. 9(1), p. 17*

Field work

**Winter Ecology of Eurasian Cranes in Uzbekistan: Preconditions for the Siberian Crane Reintroduction**

*by Yevgenia Lanovenko*

During 2001-2005, the members of Uzbekistan Crane Working Group (UzCWG) carried out an ornithological survey of the Eurasian Crane wintering sites in southern Uzbekistan. As a result of this survey, new regularly used wintering place of the Eurasian Crane was discovered near the town of Termez, on the right bank of the Amudarya River flood plane on the border with Afghanistan. The number of cranes has changed over years. The lowest number was recorded in 2001 (6,010 individuals), while the highest number was observed in 2004 (22,169 individuals). In 2002, 2003, and 2005 the number of wintering cranes remained more or less stable: 12 030, 11 652 and 10 745 birds respectively.

In winter 2004/05 we implemented an ecological survey and monitoring of the Eurasian Crane on its wintering sites near the town of Termez, carried out under the supervision of International Crane Foundation (ICF) and with the financial support from Winday Foundation. The project named "Ecological survey and monitoring of the Eurasian Crane in wintering grounds in southern Uzbekistan" lasted from October 2004 - April 2005. Active involvement of ICF, in particular George Archibald, Claire Mirande and Elena Ilyashenko, made the implementation of this project possible.

Project activities included a study of wintering conditions of Eurasian Cranes in southern Uzbekistan. The study aimed at supporting stability of this area and identifying possible ways of its usage as a potential wintering site for Siberian Cranes bred in captivity.

To achieve this aim it was necessary to survey the state of Eurasian Crane habitats; identify major threats to overwintering cranes; including the dynamic of winter temperatures; conduct seasonal monitoring of crane numbers in stable wintering grounds; and study of crane behavior and food resources in winter. To understand the Eurasian Crane ecology we had to study their morphological traits, namely, the length of the track of mid-toe. We also assessed the stocks of *Ciperus rotundus*, the major food of the Siberian Crane in winter, to explore wintering possibilities for this bird.

Fig. 1. Abandoned and overgrown fields are wintering habitats of Eurasian Cranes in the south of Uzbekistan. Photo by Ye. Lanovenko
We could not make any conclusions after studying the literature on observations of the migrating Siberian Crane in Termez area (Ostapenko, 1990) and PTT data from their flyways over southern Turkmenistan, not far from the southern border of Uzbekistan. Based on the surveys of ecological conditions of crane habitats in southern Uzbekistan, we selected three territories that can serve as roosting places for Siberian Crane during migration. Also, these sites are worthy to be examined for their potential as wintering places for Siberian Cranes bred in captivity.

The Amudaria River flood plain has good food resources, protection from harsh weather conditions and can serve as a secure place for roosting on river shoals; besides, it is a protected area. But we do not know where almost 80% of wintering Eurasian Cranes spend night. The major drawback of this territory is that it is under military control and thus provides no free access for the investigators.

Kaudom marshland near Jarkurgan Town also has satisfactory feeding conditions and protection from harsh weather. As the water is shallow, there is no place for roosting that is safe from terrestrial predators. The territory is not under governmental protection. Shepherds use this territory as a pasture and local residents freely hunt for waterfowl. So there might be a conflict of interests between hunters and UzCWG.

Aktepe water reservoir. The food resources are scanty. There are some shallow places with littoral reeds and places to hide from inclement weather. However, the roosting place is not protected from terrestrial predators. The territory is under protection as a game refuge and has a hunting lodge. This area could serve our needs better than others.

Within the framework of the project some educational activities were carried out, including distribution of information about the Siberian Crane among key stakeholders in the region and lectures for Termez State University students, border guards, local people and schoolchildren. During these activities we used booklets, stickers, R. Bateman posters as prizes. We also showed the ICF film about the Siberian Crane translated into Uzbek language and, our computer presentation. We organized a Crane Celebration for schoolchildren in the village of Gagarino using educational materials prepared by the Crane Working Group of Eurasia with financial support from the CMS Secretariat and UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project.

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A Project to Improve Crane Conservation in Azerbaijan

by Elchin Sultanov

With support from the International Crane Foundation, the Azerbaijan Ornithological Society (AOS) implemented the first phase of the project on improvement of crane conservation and survey of crane habitats in Azerbaijan with an emphasis on the endangered Siberian Crane.

The project’s tasks are the following:

• Improve public awareness of local population about cranes, especially the Siberian Crane, by distributing education materials and organizing annual Crane Celebrations.
• Conduct ground surveys to identify crane stopovers during migration and wintering sites, especially the Siberian Crane, and prepare a detailed map of crane distribution in Azerbaijan.
• Conduct a crane counts during spring and autumn migrations;
• Create efficient respondent network on the Siberian Crane and other cranes to help monitoring of sites.

According to the project goal, ground surveys and crane counts were conducted during spring and autumn 2005 in western (Samukh, Goygol), northern (Goychay), central (Agghol), south-eastern (Lankaran, Astara) and south-western (Nakhichivan Autonomic Region) parts of Azerbaijan.

Staff and volunteers of AOS (Elchin Sultanov, Seymur Mammadov, Turkan Abbasova, Rafik Huseynov, Shahlar Talibov, Tahir Kerimov, Nigar Agayeva and Arzu Mammadov), with support of active workers at Lankoran (Abbas Abbasov), Nakhichivan (Arzu Mammadov), Aggyol National Park (Abulfas Samedov), took part in our field expeditions.

In addition to ground surveys, local people were questioned about the Eurasian, Demoiselle and Siberian Crane sightings in 2002, 2003 and 2004. Specialists and birdwatchers from Germany (Yonathan Etzold, Hartmut Muller) and Great Britain (Chris Magin) also provided data on crane sightings. In total, 5831 Eurasian, 2579 Demoiselle and 19 Siberian Cranes were sighted in 2002-2005. A summary table of crane sightings according to surveys and questionnaire results is shown below.

For the first time in Azerbaijan a Crane Celebrations were organized in Baku, Sumgait and Nakhchivan cities with support from the International Crane Foundation and the Crane Working Group of Eurasia.

Some problems were encountered in the course of the project implementation:

• Lack of adequate financing (Azerbaijan is not officially included in the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project) for field research of migration, regular monitoring of sites, publishing and distribution of posters, booklets and other materials.
• Lack of qualified and trained people on sites capable to identify cranes.
• Poor involvement of local communities in crane conservation.

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Education

The International Crane Celebration in 2005

by Elena Ilyashenko

In 2005, the Crane Celebration was held at approximately 60 sites in Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan as well as in two newly involved countries - Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. It will also be organized in January – February 2006 in Iran, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

New printed materials (pins, brochures, and stickers) were prepared due to support from the CMS Secretariat and the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project. They were used for education and as prizes for winners of different competitions.

Within the frame of the Crane Celebration, most sites took part in the All-Asia Children’s Art Exchange programme. They held children art contests and sent art to the national coordinators.

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First Crane Celebration in Azerbaijan

by Aida Aghaeva

In 2005, the Crane Celebration was held for the first time in Azerbaijan with the support from the International Crane Foundation, the Crane Working Group of Eurasia, the CMS Secretariat and the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. Azerbaijan Ornithological Society (AOS) organized this event, and Aida Agayeva, the member of AOS, coordinated the celebration directly on sites.

Crane Celebration was held in three cities – Nakhichevan, Sumgait, and Baku.

In Nakhichevan it was held on 13-15 October with the active assistance from Takhir Kerimov (Scientific Secretary of AOS) and Arzu Mamedov (volunteer of AOS, post graduate student of the Nakhichevan Academy of Science). More than 150 people participated in this event, including members of Youth Ecology Center, personnel of Ecological Police, students of Nakhichevan State University, members of AOS, representatives of the Institute of Biological Resources – a branch of the Nakhichevan National Academy of Science, and Nakhichevan Ministry of Ecology. On 15 October, the participants of the event visited the sites of crane migration. The Crane Celebration was covered by mass media: on 14 October it was reported in the local TV program “Khyabyarlyar” (News) and on 15 October – in the newspaper “Shyarg Gazeti”.

In Sumgait the celebration was organized on 29 October 2005 and hosted by the school #3. About 55 people celebrated the Crane Day, among them the 9th grade students, AOS members, teaching and administrative staff of the hosting school and journalists. Schoolchildren read poems and stories about cranes, asked riddles. AOS representatives (Elchin Sultanov and Aida Agayeva) presented the scientific information on cranes and their habitats and finished the celebration with ecological games. This event was covered by newspapers “Birzha+”, “Azerbaijanskiye Izvestiya” (“Azerbaijan News”) and “Nezavisimaya Gazeta” (“Independent Newspaper”).

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On 7 November, the AOS office in Baku also hosted the Crane Celebration, with participation of AOS members and students of the Biology Department of Baku State University. Discussion of crane ecology, behavior, population biology, their number in Azerbaijan, and the importance of their conservation was also held.
In all places of Crane Celebration eco-educational materials were distributed: posters designed by AOS, brochures, badges, and the book by V.Y. Flint “101 Question About Cranes”, provided by the Crane Working Group of Eurasia.

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Siberian Crane Festival in Salehard, West Siberia, Russia, in 2005
by George Archibald

Exactly on the Arctic Circle in the frontier "boom" city of Salehard, crane conservationists from far and wide gathered to celebrate Russia’s Siberian Crane Festival. Here at the mouth of the mighty Ob River at the base of the Yamal Peninsula and just east of the Ural Mountains, Salehard sits at the north end of a vast flat basin that stretches more than a thousands miles south across a wilderness of forests, lakes, rivers and wetlands.

The Ob River Basin is the breeding ground of Siberian Cranes that migrate to Iran and India. It is also home to indigenous people, the Khanty. The Siberian Crane is a sacred bird to the Khanty. They keep their herds of reindeer away from the wetlands where cranes are nesting.

The Siberian Crane Festival has been a celebration of hope. It included a brilliant exhibition of children’s art, photography, carving and sculpture. There was even a captive female Siberian Crane from Oka Nature Reserve (Ryazan Region). And while hundreds of local people appreciated the exhibits and the crane, the crane specialists gathered in a conference room to share reports and to make plans for the restoration of the Siberian Cranes. The celebration was sponsored by the Sterkh (meaning the Siberian Crane) Foundation.
I am hopeful the Strekh Foundation will continue to sponsor the Siberian Crane Festival annually to celebrate the completion of what we trust will be a successful migration of Siberian Cranes with ultra-lights. Perhaps these “Flights of Hope” will also, through ITERA’s support and the media’s interest, engender interest in helping the Siberian Cranes in all other nations along the perilous flyways. It is our dream that during the next two decades, the people of West Asia will be responsible for the revival of flocks of Siberian Cranes migrating between the great Ob River Basin and India and Iran.

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Meetings

Western/ Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane (and other waterbirds)

by Elena Ilyashenko, Crawford Prentice, Claire Mirande, and Lyle Glowka

The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project (SCWP) has a stated goal to develop flyway site networks with nomination procedures for sites harmonized with other site network schemes. Wetlands International is currently working with the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) on an initiative to develop the Central Asian Flyway Action Plan to Conserve Migratory Waterbirds and their Habitats that would include a provision to establish a site network for migratory waterbirds in the Central Asian Flyway (CAF). At the “Waterbirds Around the World” Meeting, Edinburgh (April 2004), side events were held to discuss steps needed to develop these two related initiatives. Joint discussions focused on exploring the best mechanisms to link these initiatives, identifying frameworks for cooperation and applying lessons learned from the successful North East Asia Crane Site Network (NEACSN) established under the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy.

Participants of the Fifth Meeting of Signatory States to the CMS Memorandum of Understanding on Conservation Measures concerning the Siberian Crane (CMS MoU) (Moscow, April 2004) agreed on the need to
establish a network of sites critical for Siberian Cranes of the Western and Central populations in order to promote the protection of key wetlands. They also agreed that the site network will be established within the framework of the CMS MoU. This MoU involves the Siberian Crane’s 11 Range States and provides the basis for developing and implementing flyway level conservation plans for the Western, Central and Eastern populations of Siberian Cranes.

The initiative to establish a Siberian Crane site network under the CMS MoU would focus attention on: sites of importance for the conservation or recovery of Siberian Crane populations; sites which are also important for other migratory cranes and waterbirds; and involving local people in conservation efforts at the sites.

It was recognized early on that the establishment of a Siberian Crane site network under the framework of the MoU would have additional benefits for other cranes and waterbirds. In addition to being of critical importance for Siberian Cranes, such a network would be the first step towards developing a more comprehensive site network for migratory waterbirds under a wider framework proposed within the CAF initiative. The main aim would be to start the Siberian Crane site network development process quickly, while the more extensive CAF framework consultations continued. The proposed Siberian Crane site network would eventually be integrated within the wider site network under CAF. Consequently its characteristics would need to be compatible with this aim.

The preliminary conclusions of the CMS MoU’s Inter-sessional Working Group were presented to the UNEP/GEF SCWP’s Third Project Steering Committee Meeting (SCM3) in December 2004 in Iran. The process, title, objectives, site selection criteria, scope of activities to be conducted under the network, and opportunities for interaction and exchange were discussed throughout this meeting. The SCM3 participants recommended that the site network be called the Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Crane (and other waterbirds) (WCASN-SC).

As the last step of the site network discussions, the meeting to endorse the proposed Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes (and other waterbirds) (WCASN), New Delhi, 13 June 2005, agreed on criteria and qualifiers for selection of sites for the network (see http://www.sibeflyway.org); the information (datasheet) required for nomination of sites; and procedures for nominating, reviewing and approving sites. It was agreed that the vetting of nominations would be conducted by a Site Nomination Review Working Group, composed of one representative from the breeding range (Russian Federation), two representatives (rotating)
from the staging areas (Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan initially), two representatives from the wintering range (I. R. of Iran and India), as well as BirdLife International, Wetlands International and the International Crane Foundation. This Working Group will operate on an interim basis until its Terms of Reference are developed and approved at the Sixth Range State Siberian Crane MoU Meeting in 2007. The Working Group would make recommendations to a WCASN Committee for approval.

A preliminary list of 21 sites proposed by the participating countries for inclusion in the site network was presented to the meeting, including eight sites covered by the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project. The states were encouraged to formally nominate these sites once the site nomination template had been finalized.

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<td>• Ab-i-Estada</td>
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<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Uzbekistan</th>
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<td>• Naurzum Lake System</td>
<td>• Termez</td>
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<td>• Zharsor &amp; Urkash Lakes</td>
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<td>• Kulykol Lake</td>
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<td>• Tontegir &amp; Zhanshura Lakes</td>
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<td>• Ural River Delta</td>
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Finally, the scope of technical activities to be included under the site network was outlined, and it was agreed that these activities would be integrated into the existing Conservation Plans under the CMS MoU. The final proposal for the site network, as agreed at this meeting, will be attached as an addendum to the Conservation Plans for the Western and Central populations.

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The UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project’s Fourth Project Steering Committee Meeting, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 30 November – 2 December 2005

by Crawford Prentice

The Fourth Project Steering Committee Meeting was held at the Alatau Health-Resort Hotel, an enormous building with corridors the length of airport runways, set in parkland with the Tien Shan mountains as a backdrop. The meeting was hosted by the Forest and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the national executing agency for the Siberian Crane Wetlands Project (SCWP), and the logistics were efficiently organized by national project staff. The meeting was attended by participants from all four project countries, regional project staff, Convention on Migratory Species representative and the UNEP Task Manager.

Much of the meeting was procedural, with review of annual reports for 2005, review and approval of annual workplans for 2006, plans for the project’s mid term review, and additions and revisions to the project’s Operations Manual. Operational issues were also discussed and resolved as far as possible.

The first morning focused on a review of activities in Kazakhstan, including presentations on the related UNDP/GEF Kazakhstan Wetlands Project and the UNEP/GEF Econet project for Central Asia, attended by local observers as well as Steering Committee members. Given that Kazakhstan formally started the project only in January 2005, the great productivity of this team and evident commitment to the project were exemplary. Achievements to date include the extension of Naurzum Nature Reserve by 103,687 ha, establishment of its
buffer zone and an increase in the annual budget for the reserve, documentation for the establishment of a zakaznik at Urkash-Zharsor, important legal steps for Kazakhstan’s participation in the Ramsar and Bonn (CMS) conventions, and monitoring of migratory waterbirds in North Kazakhstan.

Notable accomplishments in other countries included: organization of a major exhibition on the Siberian Crane in Salekhard (West Siberia), extension of Kytalyk Resource Reserve in Yakutia to 2.1 million ha, identification of additional flyway sites in Yakutia, water management plans prepared for three sites in NE China linked to regional water plans, aerial surveys for Poyang Lake and NE China sites, and flyway monitoring at key sites across China. In Iran, a new office was opened to support management of Fereydoon Kenar and management training provided to reserve staff; eco-agriculture guidelines were developed based on pilot projects at this site, and the penalty for killing a Siberian Crane doubled to $12,000.

The meeting followed up on site nomination criteria and information requirements for the West/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane (and other waterbirds), following its establishment at the CMS meeting in New Delhi in June 2005. Improvements to the regional database system were presented and national contact points identified for data exchange. The meeting also identified staff exchange goals between sites, pending confirmation of available budgets, with planned participation of Chinese staff in PTT marking in Kytalyk in Yakutia in August 2006 (postponed from 2005), and Yakutian project staff participating in ground surveys in NE China in spring 2007. Collaboration with other network sites will be sought with the NE Asia Crane Site Network. Joint waterbird surveys in north Kazakhstan in autumn 2006 will be conducted with Russian experts.

In 2006, it is planned to deploy 4 PTTs in Yakutia to study spring migration of Siberian Cranes and 5 PTTs to study movements around Poyang Lake Basin in winter. An additional PTT is available to put on a wild bird in Iran. China offered to host the fifth project steering committee meeting in September 2005, which will focus on discussion and endorsement of the recommendations of the upcoming Mid Term Review.

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Workshops of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project in Yakutia, Russia

by Maria Vladimirtseva

On 13-25 August 2005, three international workshops under the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project took place in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), one of the project territories in Russia.

During the first meeting on 14-15 August in Yakutsk almost all levels of project implementation were presented: regional level representatives (C. Mirande, Project Director; C. Prentice, International Technical Advisor; M. Stishov, Technical Advisor for Russia and Kazakhstan), national level representatives (A. Sorokin, National Coordinator, Russia; V. Vlasenko, Project Financial Manager, Russia; Y. Markin, Consultant) and site level representatives (N. Germogenov, Director of Yakutia Coordination Unit, (or YCU); A. Degtyaryov, YCU Manager; I. Bysykatova, YCU Program Assistant; M. Vladimirtseva, YCU Technical Assistant). The first stage of the project was reviewed and the draft of the budget for the year 2006 for the YCU was developed. In addition to that, the next meeting on the intermediate results of the project (medium-term revision) was discussed and planned, and the decision was made to approve the terms of references for the YCU consultants as soon as possible.

The second workshop was held on 16 August 2005 in Chokurdakh Village where the administration of Kytalyk Resource Reserve is based. For this meeting, along side with participants of the first one (with the exception of V. Vlasenko and A. Degtyaryov), the key local people were invited, such as Nikolai Akhnovsky, Deputy Governor of Allaikhovskiy Ulus (District); Tatyana Stryukova, Kytalyk Resource Reserve Manager; Ivan Danilov, Head of Allaikhovskaya Inspection of Nature Protection and the YCU Consultant on Alternative Land Usage in Kytalyk Resource Reserve and Adjacent Territories, as well as the representatives of Inspection of Nature Protection and Ecological Education of Schoolchildren. As a result of the meeting, the key people for Kytalyk gained better understanding of the project and its activities, and the representatives of the regional and national coordination groups became aware of such problems of the Resource Reservation as the lack of qualified personnel and negative reaction of some land-owners to the expansion of the protected areas.

On 24 August in Yakutsk the scheduled meeting of the Local Steering Committee with the participation of the Project Director Claire Mirande, took place. The head of the Committee, Nikita Solomonov, Minister of Nature Conservation of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) shared his vision of the YCU project activities, and reported the history of Siberian Crane research in Yakutia. The Committee was briefed on the results of the workshops and field research at Kytalyk Resource Reserve.

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Workshop on the Monitoring Plan for the Siberian Crane and Other Globally Significant Waterbirds, Qinhuangdao, China, 26-27 July 2005

by Jiang Hong-Xing

The UNEP/GEF SCWP NCU of China office held the Workshop on the monitoring scheme of the Siberian Crane and other globally significant waterbirds species along their flyway in China for 2004-2005 in Qinhuangdao Wildlife Conservation Centre on 26-27 July 2005, assisted by Qinhuangdao Forestry Bureau of Hebei Province. 28 persons attended the workshop including Dr. Li Fengshan, Technical Advisor of China; Prof. Wang Qishan, member of China National Project Advisory Group; Wu Zhigang, China National Project Consultants; Dr. Qian Fawen, China National Project Manager; and Dr. Jiang Hongxing, China Technical Assistant.
The purpose of this workshop was to summarize and exchange the results of monitoring of Siberian Cranes along their flyway in China for autumn and winter 2004, and spring 2005; analyze and evaluate the existing problems and find their solutions, and discuss and perfect the monitoring plans, especially the sites, time and personnel. The representatives affirmed significant progress achieved in 2004-2005, and after the two days of exchange and discussion, this successful workshop was closed.

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Workshop for Wetland Public Education, Xianghai, China, 1-3 August 2005

by Luan Hai-Yan

Exchange Workshop for Wetland Public Education was organized by Xianghai National Nature Reserve Management Office and held from 1 to 3 August 2005 at Xianghai, Jilin province. 34 people from the International Crane Foundation, University of Wisconsin, USA, The Chinese Academy of Forestry, Beijing Brook Education Center, Heilongjiang and Guizhou Provinces participated in the workshop to communicate the development and use of local public education text books based on the introductions of public education activities at Caohai Reserve, Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve, Xianghai National Nature Reserve, Naolihe Nature Reserve and Zhalong National Nature Reserve.

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