Birds are disappearing. We can take beautiful photographs like these while they are still here, but there’s no technology that can put them back into the landscape once they are gone. Read on to find out how we’re preventing cranes from disappearing.

*Photos by Mei Ciming*
I love sharing numbers like these from our latest annual report, inspiring numbers reflecting the positive impact we achieve together, to save cranes and the beautiful places where cranes dance—places that sustain abundant wildlife and people. But this summer has revealed some very alarming numbers, too:

3 billion breeding birds lost from North America in the past 50 years—with massive declines for common as well as rare species of sparrows, warblers, and many others.

2.2 million acres of Amazon rainforest burned down, home to one in ten of every known species on Earth.

More than 400 parts per million of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere, far surpassing the level of greenhouse gases that climate scientists agree is too high for our rapidly warming planet.


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What a Difference a Year Makes

Darcy Love, Site Renovation Project Manager

Nearly one year has passed since breaking ground on our $10.4 million site renovation. The transformation is truly extraordinary. The new exhibits are large, inviting spaces with ponds for our wetland-dependent cranes. Six large murals are steadily emerging, featuring scenes from regions that cranes call home. Since the dawn of time, cranes have touched the human spirit, and this connection is captured at our new Cranes and Culture plaza. Visitors will enjoy an oasis highlighting the spiritual and artistic expressions of the many cultures that co-exist with cranes. The natural materials used to construct our new George Archibald Welcome Center evoke a sense of place and history. Wood ceiling beams from Wisconsin forests and stone walls are harmonious with the surroundings. And soon, we will fill our new spaces with engaging and interactive exhibits about our global work. We can’t wait for you to take flight with us!

The CRANE EVENT

The gates will open to our amazing new visitor experience on May 2, 2020!

We can’t wait for the new George Archibald Welcome Center to be your gateway to a journey around the world.

Over ten acres of new exhibits and experiences for all ages.

• Guided and Group Tours
• Nature Trails
• Zen Garden
• Expanded Gift Shop
• ADA Paved Paths
• Free Scooters
• Free Parking

Visit any time during our 2020 season and whoop it up with a Grand Opening Celebration on Saturday, May 2, 2020.

Open daily May 2 to October 31, 2020.

Discover, Care. Act. at the International Crane Foundation
608-356-9462
www.savingcranes.org

A New Crane Festival in Western Kenya

Crane festivals are a fantastic and fun way to raise awareness and pride for cranes and local wetlands. In September, our team in western Kenya launched a new festival in Kakamiga County celebrating Grey Crowned Cranes. Five hundred people were in attendance!

Many people from nearby communities gathered in preparation for the big day, including representatives from Saiwa, Kingwal, and Sio Siteko. These are our main project areas around the wetland ecosystems we are working to conserve.

Priority species in Saiwa Swamp include Slaty egret, Grey Crowned Crane, and Grey Crowned Crane. Saiwa Swamp is an important breeding and roosting area for the cranes. The land around the swamp is being used for settlements, crops, and livestock. The human population there has grown rapidly and resulted in the division of land into very small acreages for each family. This leads to the draining and cultivation of the wetland to supplement subsistence food production and consequently, wetland encroachment.

Sio Siteko wetland is a transboundary wetland extending to the Kenya–Uganda border. Sio Siteko wetlands are a rich fauna and flora repository. The wetland is also an Important Bird Area for more than 300 bird species, including several globally threatened species. Aside from its rich biodiversity, Sio Siteko provides valuable ecosystem services, including storing and purifying water that flows into Lake Victoria. Sio Siteko is not currently designated as a protected area.

Balerion Spreads Her Wings!

By Hillary Dampier, Crane Analyst

Earlier this spring, a Whooping Crane chick named Balerion hatched at the International Crane Foundation. She was raised by a seasoned pair of adult Whooping Cranes at our captive breeding facility, Crane City. She spent the summer with them—learning how to be a Whooping Crane. When Balerion was old enough to fly, she got the green light for release into the wild from our veterinary team. Next came the scary (for us) but exciting (for her) day when Balerion had the chance to spread her wings. We released her at White River Marsh in Wisconsin near a pair of adult Whooping Cranes, 67-15 and 3-17.

The wild pair approached to inspect this new crane, who seemed to appear out of nowhere. With fingers crossed, we watched the interaction. To our delight, they decided to take her under their wings. Now, we see them together regularly. In fact, we hardly ever see them apart. Balerion, now known as 79-19, has been stretching her wings, learning to fly; and is getting ready for migration. We hope the pair will take her south, and we are excited to see where they turn up next!
Accomplished, greatful, motivated. Looking back on the past year, these are our sentiments. Your contributions to the International Crane Foundation resulted in amazing accomplishments.

Here are just a few:

- 34 priority stopover sites for migratory cranes identified and monitored by our team in China
- 100,000 indigenous tree seedlings produced and distributed to 40 farmers and 10 schools for wetland restoration in Kenya
- 2,000 women in rural communities in Cambodia increased their household incomes from crane-conservation handicraft business
- 34 new Crane Custodians monitoring Grey Crowned Cranes to enhance breeding success in Kabale, Uganda
- Engaged over 17,000 people at 193 outreach events in 11 states in North America for Whooping Cranes and Sandhill Cranes
- Provided 23,500 pounds of crane food for our captive flock

We are so grateful for your support that made all this possible, but there are still many sites to protect, trees to plant, and cranes to feed, and it won’t happen without you. Please use the envelope in this issue for a donation now at year-end to carry the momentum into the new year.

Ways to Give
Call: 608-356-9462, ext. 807
Donate at: savingcranes.org or Return the envelope in this issue

Landmark Volume on Cranes Published!
We are happy to share the news that the Crane Conservation Strategy has been published. This landmark volume provides a wealth of information to guide conservation of the world’s fifteen species of cranes and their ecosystems. It reflects the work and knowledge of dozens of devoted colleagues in the international IUCN SSC Crane Specialist Group, under the leadership of the International Crane Foundation. It updates and builds upon the group’s first report, The Cranes: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan (1996).

The strategy charts a comprehensive course forward for crane conservation and synthesizes information on the challenges and opportunities that face cranes. Crane Specialist Group members and other scientists from around the world contributed to sections, provided information, and conducted reviews. Altogether, 31 section authors from the Crane Specialist Group and 194 others reviewed or contributed to the development of this strategic plan.


Each year we update this infographic to give an overall picture of each Whooping Crane population. We have gotten used to the number slowly increasing each year, but this year it didn’t. There are a variety of reasons for this, the main one being that birds that have been missing in the wild for an extended period were finally taken off the roster and presumed dead. The captive population is aging, so a decrease in that number is natural. And the threats that face Whooping Cranes every day – predation, power line collisions, and illegal shootings account for losses. Once again, we are reminded that species recovery is fragile, indeed.

Are you looking for a unique gift?

Share your love of cranes with your family, friends, and colleagues by giving them a gift membership. Members receive exciting benefits, including free admission to our newly renovated site, opening May 2, 2020! Whether you purchase your gift membership online or by phone, we can customize your special gift. To ensure holiday delivery, please order by December 16. Call 608-356-9462 ext. 807.

Show the animal lover in your life how big your heart is with the gift that supports animal care every day. You can help us care for our cranes by adopting a crate species! Your $100 adoption will provide food, veterinary, and keeper care for one year. Savingcranes.org/support-icf/adopt-a-crate

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Winter is coming – which means it’s time for our new super snugly fleece hat! This 100% polyester royal blue hat features our logo embroidered on the front. One size. $25

Our hand-made origami crane zipper pulls are sure to brighten your day! Each pull features a folded crane embellished with beads and a charm. $4.95

Handcrafted from Fine Silver clay, this pendant depicts the Big Crane petroglyph. Signed by the artist and marked .999 FS - Fine Silver. It measures 7/8 x 7/8” and comes with 1 mm black cord, ready to wear. $45

www.CRANESHOP.org is the only website you’ll ever need to give the gift that gives right back! All proceeds support our conservation efforts. FREE SHIPPING TOO!