

THE UNISON CALL

- Newsletter of the North American Crane Working Group -

Vol. 31, No. 2

Summer/Fall 2022

Mark Your Crane Calendar!



**16th North American Crane Workshop
October 23-26, 2023 — Baraboo, Wisconsin**

Please Save the Date(s) for the 16th North American Crane Workshop!



The 16th North American Crane Workshop will be held **October 23-26, 2023 in Baraboo, Wisconsin, USA**. We are excited that the NACWG and our workshop will be a part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the International Crane Foundation in 2023. Baraboo is surrounded by the Baraboo Range National Natural Landmark and a long stretch of the Wisconsin River, intertwined with abundant agricultural lands that attract thousands of resident and migrating Sandhill cranes. The area offers a unique laboratory to study cranes and agriculture, which ICF has done for over 30 years. This area is also adjacent to a long-standing effort to reintroduce Whooping cranes to eastern North America through creation of the Eastern Migratory Population.

The conference will include the traditional evening welcome event, followed by two days of scientific presentations, and then wrap up with a field trip day and banquet program. The primary venue for the sessions will be the Baraboo Arts Banquet and Convention Center in downtown Baraboo. Our field trip will include part of the day at the ICF, together with a mix of crane viewing and visits to nearby natural areas and conservation partners (Aldo Leopold Foundation).

An announcement of the conference theme, special sessions, and call for papers will occur shortly, with the hopes of having both oral presentations and posters as part of the scientific sessions. The deadline for abstracts is likely to occur in mid-summer, on or about **July 1, 2023**.

Baraboo is located in southcentral Wisconsin, less than 1 hour from the state capital of Madison, and is easily reached by car, plane or train. We will be encouraging participants to car pool or coordinate travel to Baraboo where possible; possibilities of van pooling are being explored to limit the need for participants to rent cars. There are numerous lodging options in and around Baraboo to satisfy workshop participants. More information is forthcoming.

Let's see if we can "out-do" the 11th workshop from 2008 – the last time the NACWG met here. Please mark your calendars - see you in 2023!

Questions: please email conference coordinator Dr. Barry Hartup, hartup@savingcranes.org

Photo credits: Barry Hartup (above); Cover, Sandhills in Silhouette, by Tom Lynn

President's Report

Here in the breeding range of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes in the eastern populations, cranes are starting to head south, the leaves are mostly off the trees, and the days are getting shorter. The cranes are starting to think about a new season and so are we! We have a few exciting updates to share and are looking forward to the excitement of the year to come.

First of all, another big thanks to all who have been involved with the Proceedings of the Fifteenth North American Crane Workshop. The Proceedings, edited by Jane Austin and Richard Urbanek, has been published by the North American Crane Working Group. The workshop was held in Lubbock, Texas, in January 2020. The 176-page book includes 9 full papers and 6 brief communications as well as 41 abstracts of workshop presentations for which a paper was not published in this volume. The Proceedings can be ordered for \$35 from www.nacwg.org or by contacting Dr. Barry Hartup at the International Crane Foundation (hartup@savingcranes.org). Registrants of Workshop 15 will receive a copy at no additional charge.



The other exciting thing to share is we are in the process of planning the 16th North American Crane Workshop! The workshop will be held on October 23-26, 2023, in Baraboo, Wisconsin, the home of the International Crane Foundation. We will see Sandhill Cranes staging along the Wisconsin River preparing for migration, and hopefully a few Whooping Cranes passing through as well. Thanks to Board Member and Treasurer, Dr. Barry Hartup, for being our conference coordinator. I look forward to seeing many new and familiar faces at next year's workshop, so please plan to attend if you are able and share with your other crane colleagues!

As always, the Board of Directors welcomes your input on the North American Crane Working Group. If there is something we can do to better connect or serve you, or if there is something you would like to see at our next workshop, please feel free to reach out. Looking forward to seeing you all here in the Baraboo Hills next year!

Hillary Thompson, International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, Wisconsin

hthompson@savingcranes.org

The Unison Call is a forum to share news, updates, and opinions. It is published twice yearly by the **North American Crane Working Group**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in Wisconsin. Electronic (PDF) versions of past issues of the newsletter can be downloaded free of charge from our website (www.nacwg.org). **The views expressed in *The Unison Call* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of NACWG.** Comments and contributions are always welcome; send to Daryl Henderson at nysquirrel1@gmail.com

Crops for Cranes in Colorado's Yampa Valley

by Nancy Merrill

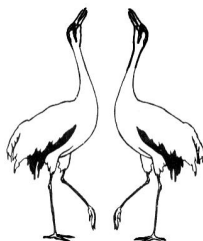
Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition (CCCC) is pleased to announce some exciting new developments with its Crops for Cranes program. When CCCC began this program in 2015, the primary goal was to provide the Greater Sandhill Cranes of the Yampa Valley (as well as cranes from other Rocky Mountain states that stage in the Yampa Valley) with sufficient food to successfully fuel their migration to their wintering grounds. A secondary goal was to have reliable areas for viewing the cranes during the annual Yampa Valley Crane Festival that takes place over Labor Day weekend.

In late summer cranes move to agricultural fields to feed on grains such as wheat, oats, barley and rye that are left in the fields after the harvest. These waste grains provide important nutrition for the cranes prior to migration. Over the past 50 years, the acreage grown in grain crops has significantly decreased in the Yampa Valley primarily due to economic factors. CCCC was concerned that if this trend continued, it would negatively impact the cranes and perhaps cause the cranes to leave the area altogether. This would be a huge loss for the biodiversity of the valley.

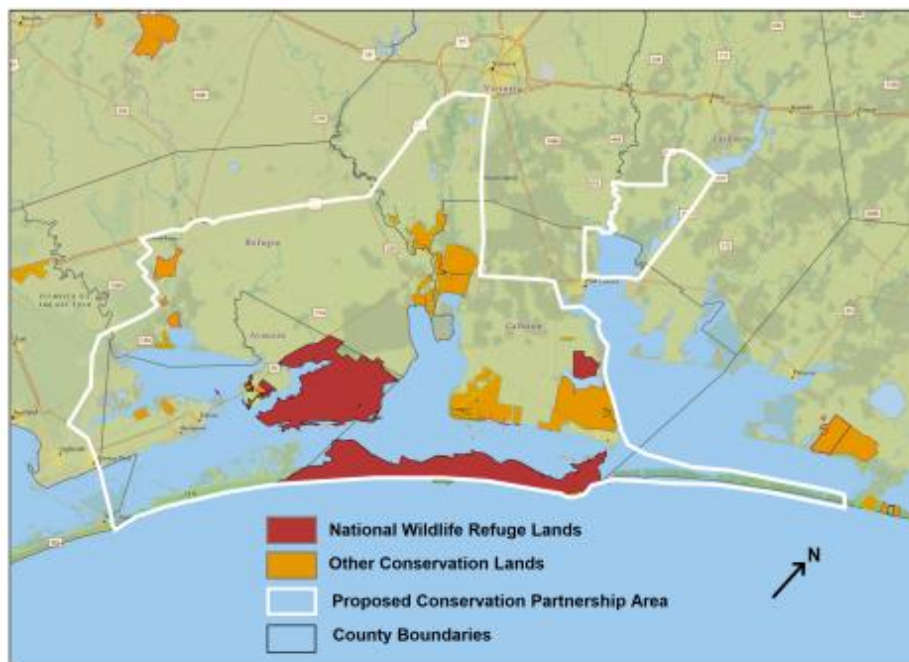
In 2015 CCCC began partnering with farmers, private landowners, and conservation organizations to grow and dedicate 10-12 acres of their grain crop to the cranes. CCCC devised individualized compensation arrangements with each partner who participated in the program. However, because of the challenges of farming in the Yampa Valley, it was difficult for the farming partners to commit to growing crops for cranes on an on-going, yearly basis.

In 2022 CCCC succeeded in enrolling two new properties in the Crops for Cranes program that will enable CCCC to consistently grow grain crops for the cranes year after year. Both properties are located in the heart of the cranes' staging area in the Yampa Valley. A generous CCCC donor purchased the first property specifically to help the Crops for Cranes program. On this property CCCC is working with a local farmer to grow wheat for the cranes and in addition, working with the Land Institute of Kansas to grow Kernza, an experimental perennial grain crop that does not require tilling and planting year after year. The second property is part of a family ranch that practices regenerative agriculture, a type of agriculture that focuses on topsoil regeneration, increasing biodiversity, and improving resilience to climate change. CCCC has signed a renewable, 5-year contract that calls for growing a grain crop or crane-friendly cover crop on acreage located in a prime area for crane staging.

With the addition of these two properties, nearly 100 acres will be dedicated to CCCC's Crops for Cranes program into the future. CCCC is grateful to all the farmers, ranchers, private landowners and conservation organizations in the Yampa Valley that are helping CCCC take care of the cranes.



USFWS Proposal for Expanding Conservation for Aransas National Wildlife Refuge



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to advance conservation in the Coastal Bend region of Texas through expansion of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge currently includes land in Aransas, Calhoun, and Refugio Counties. The expansion could include land in Jackson, Matagorda, San Patricio, and Victoria Counties. As part of the proposal, the Service will prepare a Land Protection Plan for the refuge, which will position the conservation community to better address the current and future needs of wildlife and wildlife habitat in the Coastal Bend region as opportunities for future conservation arise.

The Service has worked with conservation partners to identify a conservation strategy centered on maintaining the long-term viability of the existing refuge and the species that depend on it. The strategy focuses on key coastal prairie and marsh habitat that supports Whooping Crane and Mottled Duck. Many other species will benefit from protection of the same habitat, including endangered species like Black Rail as well as species that could become endangered if conservation action is not taken. A draft expansion boundary has been identified, within which the Service and its conservation partners could reach voluntary agreements with willing landowners to protect and restore priority wildlife habitat. The area inside the expansion boundary is called the Conservation Partnership Area.

The expansion process begins with a science-based review of the species and habitat types that occur in the Coastal Bend region. Public input is an important next step in the planning process that helps the Service decide where and how to expand the refuge boundary in the future. After a scoping period and conversations with stakeholders, the Service will develop a draft Land Protection Plan for the refuge that outlines the proposed expansion boundary.

The draft plan will be released for public comment and be subject to environmental review before the Landscape Protection Plan is finalized. The map above shows the draft boundary of the proposed Conservation Partnership Area.

For more information see <https://www.fws.gov/story/2022-06/expanding-conservation-aransas-national-wildlife-refuge>

Regional Reports

Aransas—Wood Buffalo Whooping Crane Population Summary 2016-2021

Breeding season	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021 [†]
No. of nests detected at WBNP (May)	78	98	87	97	102‡
No. of fledged chicks detected (August)	45*	63**	24	37	50 (out of 98 nests)
Average no. of chicks per nest [#]	0.57	0.64	0.28	0.38	0.51
Estimated no. of birds at Aransas NWR in the primary survey area	489 95% CI 428-555	505 95% CI 439-576	504 95% CI 412-660	506 95% CI 343-678	543 95% CI 426-781
Estimated no. of juveniles at Aransas NWR	50 95% CI 36-61	49 95% CI 42-58	13 95% CI 10-19	39 95% CI 26-52	31 95% CI 20-51

[†]No surveys were conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19; I could not find published 2022 breeding data (nest counts, fledgling counts) for Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) — Ed.

[‡]Most nests ever recorded, breaking the previous record set in 2017. Ninety-eight of 102 detected by aerial survey, 4 more were detected on satellite imagery by volunteers through the crowdsourced Zooniverse project: <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/whcr-cr/whooping-cranes/about/results>

*One family with twins; **four families with twins

[#]20-year average is approx. 0.48 chicks per nest

WBNP 2016 data are preliminary results from the Canadian Wildlife Service, with thanks to Mark Bidwell; 2017 nest survey data are from Mike Keizer, Parks Canada; 2017 fledgling data are from CBC News, August 16, 2017 (www.cbc.ca/news); 2018 data are from an article posted by Cabin Radio, Yellowknife, NWT, September 7, 2018 (<https://cabinradio.ca>), citing Rhona Kindopp, Parks Canada; 2019 nest survey and fledgling numbers were reported by Friends of the Wild Whoopers (<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/>), July 12 and August 8, 2019; 2021 data are from the Zooniverse project site (URL above); Aransas NWR winter data are from 'Whooping Crane Updates' at the ANWR website.

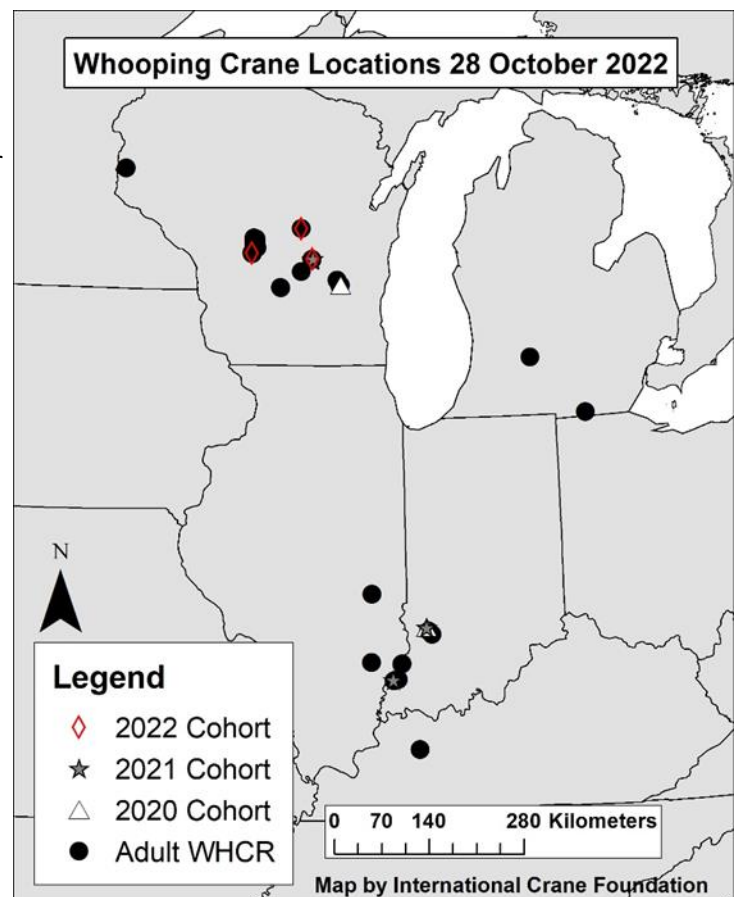
Regional Reports *continued*

Update on the Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes

Hillary Thompson, North America Program Crane Analyst, International Crane Foundation

Current population size and status

As of 28 October 2022, the current estimated population size is 76 cranes (38 females, 35 males, 3 unknown). Eighteen of these 76 individuals are wild-hatched and the rest are captive-reared. To the best of our knowledge, there are around 44 Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin, 2 in Michigan, 4 in Illinois, 2 in Kentucky, and at least 11 in Indiana. Whooping Cranes are definitely on the move this time of year! The rest of the cranes are likely somewhere between their breeding and wintering areas or haven't been seen in the past month. Since the update in February, there have been 3 confirmed mortalities mostly due to unknown causes. Additionally, this summer, one juvenile wild-hatched Whooping Crane was captured and placed in captivity at the International Crane Foundation due to a wing injury that would prevent him from flying. Most Whooping Cranes spent the summer in Wisconsin, but 2 unpaired cranes were in Michigan.



Nesting Season

In 2022, we recorded a total of 31 nests by 24 breeding pairs of Whooping Cranes, from which 14 chicks hatched. Two of these chicks made it to fledging, both of which are still on the breeding grounds with their parents. This does not include 1 nest of a hybrid Sandhill-Whooping Crane pair in Michigan, and 2 nests of a hybrid pair in Dodge County, Wisconsin. The numbers reported here are the total we observed but there may have been a few missed nests or chicks who only lived a few days. We recovered 2 eggs from abandoned nests, collected 4 eggs from 4 occupied nests, and conducted forced re-nesting for 9 additional nests. In total we collected 22 eggs, most of which were brought into captivity for rearing and release and one was swapped into a nest with infertile eggs. Eight nests failed due to a variety of known and unknown causes. Additionally, 1 nest was incubated full term, but the pair was confirmed later without chicks, and 1 nest had an unknown outcome. Breeding pairs of Whooping Cranes this year were in Juneau, St. Croix, Green Lake, Marquette, Sauk, Portage, and Dodge Counties, in Wisconsin.

Regional Reports *continued*

Fall releases of parent-reared cranes

During September 2022, two parent-reared cranes raised at the Calgary Zoo, 81-21 and 82-21, were released in Juneau County, Wisconsin, at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge. These two birds were part of the 2021 cohort and were released as one-year-olds. Upon release, the two split up and did not associate with other Whooping Cranes. Unfortunately, neither of them survived very long, 81-21 was found dead in September and 82-21 in October.

A juvenile parent-reared crane, raised at the International Crane Foundation, 90-22, was released in Green Lake County, Wisconsin, where we released 85-21 last year. She was soon associating with a group of nearby Whooping Cranes and was adopted by male 3-17 and female 67-15. This pair has adopted parent-reared chicks in the past, 79-19 in the fall of 2019 and 85-21 in the fall of 2021. The group is still in Wisconsin, but we hope they will migrate together to Alabama this fall!

We are planning to do one more release this fall, of a juvenile raised at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Maryland, female 88-22. Her release was delayed due to an injury, which has now healed, so we hope to release her on the wintering grounds in Indiana near adult Whooping Cranes during November 2022.

Louisiana Whooping Crane Update

Eva Szyszkoski, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Reproduction — The 2022 nesting season began with the initiation of the first nests on 12 February and ended with the last nest concluding on/by 12 June. Louisiana was in drought status for all of breeding season, however this did not seem to affect nesting success.

A total of 27 nests by 17 pairs were confirmed in 7 parishes (Acadia, Allen, Avoyelles, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, and Vermilion) in central and southwestern Louisiana and one county (Jefferson) in southeast Texas in 2022. Fourteen pairs consisted of individuals who had previous experience nesting together, two pairs consisted of individuals who had previous experience with other cranes, and one pair consisted of individuals who were both nesting for the first time. Three pairs that had nested in 2021 did not nest in 2022.

A minimum of 50 eggs were produced in 2022. Thirty-one eggs were confirmed fertile, of which 16 died prior to hatch (6 early dead, 3 mid-dead, 7 late dead) and 15 successfully hatched, 14 in the wild and 1 in captivity. Seven other intact eggs were collected and were either non-viable or of unknown fertility and the remaining 12 eggs disappeared or broke at the nest.

Of the 27 confirmed nests, 6 were incubated to full term or beyond with no hatch, 5 were abandoned or failed prior to full term, 9 successfully hatched 12 chicks, 3 had eggs pulled prior to full term, and 3 had eggs swapped into them.

Regional Reports *continued*



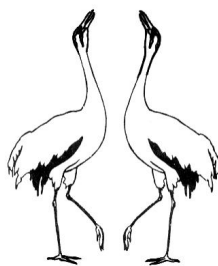
Female L3-11 with her 2-day-old chick, LW13-22 in Allen Parish (7 May 2022). LW13-22 hatched from an egg pulled from the Eastern Migratory Population in Wisconsin which was swapped into pair L3-11 & L1-13's nest. LW13-22 remains alive.

A total of 15 chicks hatched in the wild in 2022; 12 to their biological parents and 3 from egg swaps. Two egg swaps were conducted with eggs produced by Louisiana cranes and one swap was conducted with an egg that had been collected from a nest in Wisconsin. Eight chicks survived to fledge, including a pair of siblings.

Captures — An additional 7 free-flying cranes were captured for transmitter replacement on 11 days of attempts from 2 February – 26 April 2022, for a total of 24 captures during the 2021/2022 capture season. Unfortunately, due to 3G networks being turned off over the course of 2022, all of our Microwave GSM transmitters, 7 of which that have been deployed for less than 1 year, are expected to fail by the end of the year.

Mortalities — Mortalities from February through September 2022 included two adult females and one adult male in Louisiana, and one adult male in Texas.

Current Population Size — As of 30 September 2022, the Louisiana non-migratory population consisted of a maximum of 76 individuals (38 males, 28 females, 10 unknown). Estimated distribution included: 69 in Louisiana, 1 in Texas, 4 not recently reported and 2 of unknown status or long term missing.



Regional Reports *continued*

Mississippi Sandhill Crane Update

Scott Hereford, Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR, Gautier, MS



Raptor bownet being set by Madison Alsbach and Hefan Zhang, American Conservation Experience.

Nesting 2022. A record 43 pairs nested with a total of 63 nests, matching last year's high. Five pairs nested three times. There was one new territory G18W. There was one new pair 1901 and unbanded female, although five other pairs had a new member. Crane 718 changed mates between clutches. Crane 1202 changed from longtime unbanded female mate to RR20 at the end of the season. Five pairs did not nest. We found 25 nests, another 32 were inferred from behavioral or other evidence. There were 17 nests in ponds and four each in savanna and hydric swamp strands. Four nests were found using GSM GPS transmitter locations, the first time for three of the pairs. Three nests were known to be predated and at least five were lost to flooding. Ten chicks fledged, the second highest ever, including one set of twins. The last fledge was well into September, the latest known ever.

Banding. We successfully tested a raptor bownet to safely and efficiently capture a crane. On one occasion, we even caught two. We would be interested to know if any other colleagues have used this method. Interns Madison and Hefan built a new version of Indian toe nooses, what we are calling the noose hoop, and hope to report soon on its results.

Regional Reports *continued*

Release. We are preparing the Fontainebleau and Headquarters netted pens to receive and acclimate two cohorts of captive-reared juveniles. Three are scheduled to be transferred to Fontainebleau on November 1 and another six to Headquarters on November 2.

Personnel. We said farewell and thank you to American Conservation Experience Interns Madison Alsbach (WI) and Hefan Zhang (NY) who completed their year here and did a fabulous job. We welcome Theresa Williams (CA) and Jake Power (IL) as they will begin their 1-year ACE internship. There was a large turnover in the staff at Refuge Headquarters with only myself and Melissa Perez, Park Ranger, not changing during 2022. Jeremy Edwardson is the new Refuge Complex Leader. There are three other new admin and budget staff. The second wildlife biologist position (vice Angie Dedrickson) remained vacant.

Lesser Sandhill Cranes, Annual Summary

Homer, Alaska, Summer 2022

By Kachemak Crane Watch

Nina Faust of Kachemak Crane Watch submitted her group's annual summary for 2022. Some highlights are given below; the full document can be found at <http://cranewatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Annual-Sandhill-Crane-Summary-2022-1.pdf> — Editor

Season Summary — After a long winter with snow still three to four feet deep on the ridge above Homer, the first crane observation on April 13th marked the beginning of crane season and the celebration of spring's arrival. On April 19th, a Crane Watch report logged the first Sandhill Crane on the ground in Homer. A huge snowpack on the ridge does not stop or slow down the cranes' arrival. With abundant estuary habitat, tidal areas, and upland areas on south-facing ridge slopes, arriving cranes have many choices of feeding spots despite a deep snowpack at higher levels.

Nesting Report — June and the first half of July were warm and rain free, perfect weather for nurturing baby Sandhill Crane colts during their most vulnerable time.

This year, 49 nests were reported, and 90 colts hatched. Other reported nests that did not have complete information were not included. Seven nests failed but the cause of loss was not observed. Coyotes, eagles, loose dogs, crows, ravens, and other predators can take the eggs or colts. A total of 59 colts fledged, a 65.6% success rate, compared to 68% last year. Twenty-one single colts fledged, while 19 crane pairs raised twosomes, a total of 38 fledged colts.

This year has been quieter in terms of injury reports. One dead colt sent for necropsy at the State Veterinarian's office died from the effects of a blunt trauma to its abdomen. A necropsy on a second crane colt is still pending. A concern about Avian flu prompted a quick response to these two unknown deaths.

Count Days — August 20th, August 27th, and September 3rd were the 6th Annual Sandhill Crane Count Days. Kachemak Crane Watch hosted an evening crane count at Beluga Slough from 6 p.m. till sunset, counting adults and colts as they flew in. Citizen scientists areawide called in sightings all day to help Kachemak Crane Watch gather information on crane numbers and locations before the average departure date in mid-September. September 3rd had the most cranes of the three evenings at the Beluga Slough fly-in, with 26 colts and 104 adults dropping down like avian paragliders trying to avoid entanglement with the beginner fliers. With good weather at the evening counts, craniacs enjoyed the magic of cranes flying through a rainbow against a mountain backdrop and small flocks spotlighted in radiant evening sunlight. Some of Homer's Sandhill Cranes departed on September 5th, sometime after

Regional Reports *continued*

mid-day when several flocks of 100s came across Cook Inlet from the Alaska Peninsula. The Inspiration Ridge Preserve flock took off about then and joined a bigger group heading off on migration. They know when it is time to leave, but the cranes' departure seems to always leave a big hole in our hearts as they head to the Sacramento Valley and surrounding areas in Central California.

Short-necked Colts — In 2019, a short-necked colt was reported at two different locations in Homer. In September of that year, Kachemak Crane Watch filmed the colt at the location where it was regularly seen. Its thigh feathers and under the body appeared unpreened. The colt mostly knelt to eat, possibly because it was sickly or because eating while standing was difficult and tiring. The last sighting of the colt and its parents was September 21, 2019.

This year, the pair that raised the 2019 colt returned to the same location and had a long-necked colt. The human neighbors believe it is the same pair that had the short-necked crane in 2019. In a nearby neighborhood, another pair had a short-necked colt this year. This is the other location the 2019 pair had frequented. The neighbors with the long-necked colt firmly believe their pair is the 2019 pair. So, is the 2022 pair with the short-necked crane genetically related to the 2019 pair, possibly an offspring, or is there something in the environment causing this deformity? Kachemak Crane Watch will continue to monitor this area for future problems. The short-necked colt and parents were last reported in Homer on September 15, 2022. If sighted this winter, please report the sighting to Kachemak Crane Watch. Watch the 2022 short-necked crane colt video: <https://youtu.be/twclifniEus>

Nina's report also included an update on habitat conditions in California's Central Valley, a winter destination for Homer's Lesser Sandhills as well as other western populations of Sandhill Cranes. Like many parts of the West, California and Oregon are experiencing severe drought conditions. – Editor

Report from the Wintering Grounds in Central California, by Bart McDermott, Refuge Manager, Stone Lakes NWR, Elk Grove, CA

The local Delta wetland managers from the Cosumnes River Preserve, Staten Island, Yolo Bypass, Woodbridge Crane Reserve, and the Bufferlands all met at Stone Lakes NWR on August 18, 2022 to discuss fall flood up plans. Most already had a few wetlands flooded for the shorebird return and planned to be 100% flooded by mid-November. The outlook on how much habitat there will be for the rest of the Central Valley and Northern California is uncertain. Due to the extremely low level of Lake Shasta and other reservoirs around the region, many of the farmers and wetland managers will not get their full allocations of water.

The situation in the Klamath Basin in Oregon is even more dire. For the first time in history, all 3 refuges in the Klamath NWR Complex are dry. This means there will be very little wetland habitat for birds to use as a stopover as they migrate south into the Central Valley.

The northern portion of the Central Valley is not doing much better. Typically, there are around 500,000 acres of rice fields in the northern Central Valley that birds use to forage in when they arrive in the fall. Due to reductions in water supply, only half of the rice was in production this summer, leaving over 250,000 acres fallow. Other state and federal wetland units in the Central Valley are only receiving a portion of their water allocations. Unless there is another early winter with several rainstorms, most birds will be forced to pack into the few wetlands they find or be left high and dry. This could further exacerbate the botulism and cholera outbreaks seen across the West the past few years.

Fortunately, Stone Lakes NWR in Elk Grove (near Sacramento) still has the water to fill all Refuge wetlands, and the three lakes are full despite an endless layer of aquatic weeds. Flooding up the first set of wetlands on the Refuge started September 13, 2022. By the second day, some resident ducks, geese, and shorebirds were using it. Sandhill Cranes were spotted foraging in a recently harvested freshly flooded up wetlands in mid-September 2022.

Later in September, flooding will ramp up. The Refuge is planning for a typical schedule with 81% of seasonal and permanent wetlands flooded by the end of October. Depending on rainfall and water supply, the remaining wetland acres will be flooded over the course of the winter. Coordinated Sandhill Crane roost surveys with the other wetland managers in California are planned. In November, the Refuge visitor services manager will lead a tour for the Sandhill Crane Festival. Over the course of the winter, other guided tours will be offered.

George F. Gee



Dr. George Francis Gee, 85, passed away at his home on September 22nd after battling Parkinson's disease for many years. George was born in Milton, Massachusetts on April 15, 1937, son of Francis and Winnie Gee. He attended local schools in Stoughton, Mass. through the eighth grade and received his secondary education at Norfolk County Agricultural School of Walpole, Massachusetts. He obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts and his master's degree from the University of Maine. He completed his doctoral studies at the University of Georgia where he majored in environmental and reproductive physiology. After three years of teaching and research in the Manned Orbiting Laboratory (as an officer in the USAF), Dr. Gee joined the Endangered Wildlife Research Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as an Animal Physiologist. He was a member of Whooping Crane, Mississippi Sandhill Crane, and Masked Bobwhite recovery teams, consultant to Aleutian Canada Goose, Florida Everglades Snail Kite, Dusky Seaside Sparrow, Bali Mynah and Bald Eagle recovery teams. After retiring he became an Emeritus Wildlife Biologist, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and a Trustee of the Whooping Crane Conservation Association. In his Emeritus position he taught and consulted within the Fish and Wildlife Service and with scientists at zoos and universities.

While attending the University of Maine, he met the love of his life, Mae O. Smith, and they were married on August 31, 1963 in Woodland. While in the Air Force, they were moved to Georgia and then to Texas, where they had two children, Valerie and George. They moved to Maryland when George joined the Endangered Wildlife Research Program. After retiring, George and Mae built their retirement home on Crawford Lake, Maine. George was active in the PTA, in county athletics (coach, manager, and league president), and in many church activities. His hobbies included bird watching, fishing, and gardening.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/baltimoresun/name/george-gee-obituary?id=36609990>

You are invited to join the North American Crane Working Group

Membership is based on a calendar year.

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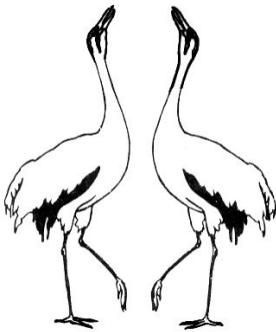
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The Unison Call is published semiannually by NACWG; Daryl S. Henderson, *Editor*