

# THE BROLGA BUGLE

Editor, Ron Sauey; Asst. Katharine Green, Margaret Allen

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION  
City View Road  
Baraboo, WI 53913, USA

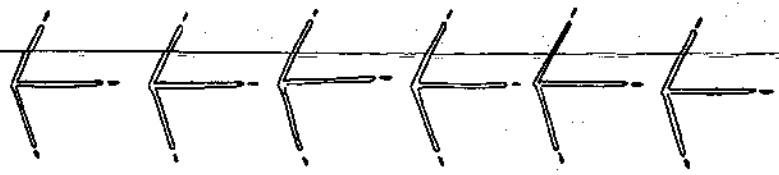
Nonprofit Organization  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 179  
Baraboo, WI 53913

Address Correction Requested

International Crane Foundation Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 3 — City View Road, Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913, U. S. A. — A Non-Profit Organization — Spring 1977

## MAKING TRACKS - news of the foundation



Terry Quale, ICF's Public Relations Coordinator, holds a basketful of crane eggs. As we go to press, we have hatched eight chicks, seven from endangered species.



Looking like a mound of unmelted snow, Tex, ICF's female Whooping Crane, sits on her nest in the corn field adjoining her pen at ICF.

## EASTER EGGS

### EASTER BRINGS ICF A BASKET OF RARE EGGS

Easter, April 10th, was not particularly early this year, but our Wisconsin spring was. Encouraged by the unseasonably balmy weather, ICF's two rarest females, Phyllis and Tex, both laid eggs before Easter Sunday. Phyllis, ICF's only female Siberian Crane, started our 1977 breeding season with a bang. On March 26, Phyllis laid her very first egg — after 24 years in captivity — and quickly followed the first with a second, third, and fourth in rapid succession. As we go to press, she is on number 10 with no sign of stopping. Considering that wild cranes lay only two eggs each year, Phyllis seems to be making up for lost time!

Tex, our only female Whooping Crane, laid her first egg — after nine years in captivity — the day before Easter. Naturally, the circumstances surrounding the laying of the egg were as peculiar as Tex herself. Members may remember that Tex is the hopelessly human-imprinted Whooper that believes that George Archibald is her mate (we're not sure what George believes). Shortly before she laid her egg, Tex became restless and began pacing the east side of her enclosure as if she desperately wanted to get out. When George opened the door of her pen, out Tex walked, made a beeline for the neighboring cornfield, and promptly built an untidy nest of corn stalks. Several times during the day, George tried to leave Tex and return to the office. Each time, Tex would get off the nest and follow him up the field. Finally, George brought a chair and sat next to Tex on her cornfield nest. After six hours of sitting, Tex laid her egg. The egg was quickly moved to an incubator and Tex walked peacefully back to her pen.

Only time will tell whether ICF gets Whooper and Siberian chicks this spring. But we are very gratified by this initial success, and with a little luck — and some cooperation with our male Whooper and Siberian — we should have chicks of these extremely rare cranes at some future date.

## EXTRA EXTRA ICF UNCOVERS THE

# Afghan Connection

by Ron Sauey

Through the heat waves the distant birds appeared like slowly whirling dervishes, their white bodies emerging and submerging at the shimmering interface between lake and sky. White egrets, I first thought, since through the telescope I could see a blurry form leap suddenly into the air without a trace of black on its wings. But our vision was so obscured by the wavering layers of hot air that we all piled back into our jeeps for a drive closer to the flock of white birds along the distant lake shore.

Our party, consisting of U. S. Ambassadors Theodore Eliot, Joel Scarborough of the Asia Foundation, Joseph Young of the Nebraska Project, Khushal Habibi and Ron Petocz of UNFAO, and John McGough and me of the International Crane Foundation, had spotted these birds soon after our arrival at the huge saline lake, Ab-e-Estada, in east central Afghanistan. We had left Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, seven hours earlier at dawn and had driven along spectacular highways lined with snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush. Roads in Afghanistan can be either very good or very bad. The good roads we traveled were courtesy of the U.S. whose continuing rivalry with the U.S.S.R. for Afghanistan's allegiance has brought modern airports and asphalt highways to a

land in which the camel and horse still play the major role in transportation. We had crossed bad roads also, dirt paths gutted with deep ravines where the drivers simply "gunned" their jeeps down the steep inclines and hoped for the best. But we had made it, in three separate jeeps full of two days' provisions of water and food, and a stockpile of telescopes, binoculars, and cameras. Our mission: to track down the rare Siberian White Crane and perhaps

(Continued on page 4)



# MILE-STONES

feature . . .

# Our Cranes Return Every Spring

by Dr. Olof Swanberg

Editor's Note: Dr. Olof Swanberg, like his American counterpart Dr. Lawrence Walkinshaw, is a dentist turned crane scientist. Dr. Swanberg heads a continuing study of Common Cranes in Sweden and has added a great deal to our knowledge of this species' nesting and migratory behavior.

## CRANES VS. CONCRETE Mississippi Sandhills Win In Supreme Court



Mississippi Sandhill at its nest near Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Photo by Dr. L. H. Walkinshaw.

Are 40 Sandhill Cranes worth relocating a section of interstate highway? The U.S. Supreme Court thinks so. In a landmark first decision on the merits of a 1973 statute protecting endangered species, the Supreme Court last winter refused to review a lower court's ban on the construction of Interstate 10. The highway, which will eventually link Florida to southern California, was designed to pass close by the wetlands of Jackson County, Mississippi where the cranes make their home. The high court's decision left a 10 mile gap in the superhighway.

Why all this fuss about Sandhill Cranes? Well, these aren't your average run-of-the-marsh Sandhills; they are Mississippi Sandhill Cranes, *Grus canadensis pulla*, a subspecies which is somewhat darker than other Sandhills and a great deal rarer. At one time, Sandhills could be found nesting across the southern U. S. Today, only two populations remain, the Florida Sandhill and the Mississippi Sandhill. While both subspecies are considered rare and endangered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Mississippi Sandhill is by far the rarer; only 40 birds are known to exist along the wetlands of the Pascagoula River.

The Supreme Court's decision puts some teeth into the 1973 Endangered Species Act which declares that no federal agency will engage in projects that in any way threaten animals or plants that are on the Department of Interior's list of endangered species. In the case of the Mississippi Sandhill, the National Wildlife Federation used the law to sue the Department of Transportation, charging that the highway's location would lead to the destruction of the crane's habitat by encouraging commercial development in and around the wetlands.

ICF applauds the actions of the Supreme Court and the National Wildlife Federation. We hope that the Court will continue to rule in a similar fashion in future cases and that other nations will join the U.S. enacting legislation to preserve their dwindling wildlife.

## KOREANS SEND CRANES TO ICF

A Korean crane named "Won," is the latest addition to ICF's small but growing band of Japanese Cranes. Named after Korea's foremost ornithologist, Professor Won Pyong-oh, Won was found last February in a rice field north of Seoul where he had been accidentally poisoned by farmers protecting their crops from pheasant depredations. The Korean Council for Crane Preservation

Springtime to many people in Sweden is incomplete without a trip to Lake Hornborga in southcentral Sweden to see the annual return of thousands of cranes. Scientists know them as *Grus grus*, the Common Crane, a bird with a distribution from Norway and Sweden in the west, clear through central Asia and frigid Siberia in the east. To Swedes, they are simply "Our Cranes" and their appearance at Hornborga in early spring is cue for people all over Sweden to drop their business and make for the lake to see again the spectacle of thousands of large grey birds dancing on snowy fields. Indeed, the flood of people is so great that police have to inaugurate one way traffic for some of the roads in the area.

Being the resident crane expert, I get a lot of telephone calls. When do the cranes arrive? How many are they? Why don't they rest here in autumn, etc.? At first, I was not able to answer these questions because few studies had been made of the migratory habits of our cranes. We did know from earlier banding studies that these birds breed in the remote marshes of our country and winter in Spain and Morocco. But their migratory behavior was still incompletely known.

In order to better understand our cranes and their habits, I and a few local people in the Skovde Bird Club decided to begin a study of the cranes and their comings and goings on Lake Hornborga. We started planning our procedures in the winter of 1965-66. That spring we counted both the daily number of cranes as well as the total number visiting Hornborga during the whole season. The daily count was easier, because the cranes roost together in one open area in the southern part of the lake (Hornborga is so shallow that it is actually more of a marsh than a lake). At dawn the birds gradually leave the roost in well divided groups to visit surrounding fields.

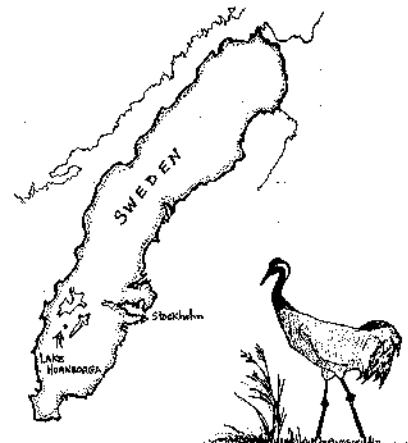
(KCCP) caught the weakened bird and sent it to ICF. Won arrived in Baraboo on April 28 after spending a month in quarantine in Hawaii, and he will soon be paired with a young female Japanese Crane that ICF raised last summer.

Won's presence at ICF is a glowing tribute to the concern and generosity of many different individuals and organizations. Dr. Won and KCCP caught and treated the crane, and alerted ICF. The Government of the Republic of Korea approved loan of the bird to ICF, and Korean Airlines provided free passage for Won to Honolulu. At extremely short notice, the U.S. Departments of Interior and Agriculture issued permits to allow the crane, an endangered species, into the U.S. We express our deepest thanks to everyone involved in Won's importation. Won's future mate extends her thanks as well.

In other developments in Korea, KCCP established two new feeding stations for cranes, one at Incheon, west of Seoul, and another at Im Jin Gak, just south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). 40 Japanese Cranes were seen in south Korea this winter and Dr. Won suggests that the very severe winter was responsible for this unusually large number of birds. The Purina Company of Korea gave a welcome boost to the crane feeding effort by donating a ton and a half of grain to KCCP.

On a less up-beat note, North Korean soldiers were seen shooting at least four Japanese Cranes during the winter. One bird, shot on the 25th of February, managed to fly to the southern side of the DMZ where it was caught by Dr. Won and his assistants. The bird had both feet severely damaged and died six days later of gangrene. KCCP has written letters of protest to several international conservation organizations.

We commend KCCP, our sister organization in Korea, for their latest achievements in promoting the conservation of rare cranes throughout the Korean peninsula.



Map showing Lake Hornborga in southcentral Sweden.

Six to ten watchers stationed themselves every morning at the southern part of the marsh and counted all passing cranes. Walkie-talkies kept all the observers in constant communication to avoid counting the same birds twice.

Arriving at an estimate for the total number of cranes visiting Hornborga was more difficult. Every crane leaving the feeding fields or the lake for the north had to be registered. Likewise, cranes returning from the north because of unfavorable weather had to be noted in order to avoid inaccuracies in the final census. The behavior of cranes departing the area is very characteristic. Normally they begin as separate pairs, the couples swinging up rapidly into the air until they meet and join other pairs. These flocks then soar up and up into the thermals, forming columns of birds that within eight to ten minutes reach a height of 700-1000 meters (2300-3200 feet). At this height, their flight straightens and they glide off to the north, almost all of them on exactly the same compass course.

Recording the arrival of our cranes from the south was also an important part of our study. And by far the most difficult part. Cranes may arrive at unexpected times from morning until late in the evening. One year we got assistance from radar observers who called us whenever they detected cranes along the southern coast of Sweden. By comparing figures for morning counts at Lake Hornborga with counts of departing (Continued on page 3)



A large flock of Common Cranes takes flight from a field in Sweden. Photo by Sture Karlsson

(Continued from page 2)

cranes, we were able to detect birds whose arrival in our area had been missed.

The outcome of our census was extremely encouraging. Thanks to the numbers and enthusiasm of our volunteer observers, we obtained what appeared to be very reliable figures. We decided to repeat this large scale census every five years and so monitor changes in the population size of our cranes.

Besides obtaining an accurate figure of the number of cranes at Lake Hornborga, we also reached the following conclusions for the birds' stop-over:

1. Between their wintering area in Spain and Lake Hornborga in Sweden, our cranes apparently stop only once, along the German coast of the Baltic Sea. Here they rest for favorable migrating weather. From the German coast to Hornborga is 450 kilometers (270 miles). This appears to be a good distance for a one day flight, if migration weather is acceptable.

2. Hornborga, with an area of 25 square kilometers and yet with a very shallow depth of water, is an ideal place for cranes to roost.

3. Two big estates southwest of the marsh have extensive fields of potatoes. Here the cranes find ample numbers of frozen potatoes that were missed in the previous fall's harvest.

In 1970, we crane researchers learned to our dismay that the big estates would soon stop planting potatoes. These estates were owned by the government and the potatoes were produced to make alcohol. The government decided to concentrate all distillery into one factory in southern Sweden, and consequently would no longer plant potatoes at Hornborga.

While we were not worried about the cranes themselves since these tough birds always seem to get along, we knew that the cranes would no longer concentrate in large numbers at Hornborga and this would greatly affect our census and study. Our appeals to the National Nature Conservancy Department and to the state distillery to continue potato plantings were to no avail. Today very little potato growing exists around Hornborga and each year the numbers of cranes grows less. Ten year ago the normal number was about 6000 birds. In 1975, the figure had dropped to 3200. Our cranes had indeed been dependent on a spirit distillery!

Despite the setback, the censusing still goes on and we are still collecting interesting information on our cranes. We know now that the timetable for migration is regulated by a combination of inner programming and favorable weather. If migration weather is favorable even as the cranes arrive they may stay only a single night and depart the next day. If, however they meet hard, wintery conditions, they may stay for weeks waiting for favorable air currents.

Migrating cranes almost always start on the trip north between 8 o'clock and 12 o'clock in the morning. Any later start, and the day will be too short; cranes don't seem to enjoy migrating at night over Sweden.

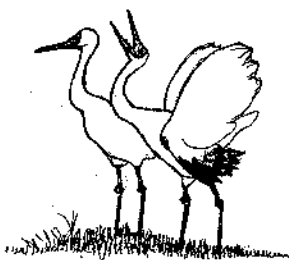
My work at Lake Hornborga lead to another equally satisfying experience. During the winter of 1973-74, the International Crane Foundation contacted me asking if I would collect six eggs of our cranes for export to their Baraboo headquarters. From our own study of four crane families, we knew that cranes do not often raise more than one young, though they normally lay two eggs. We therefore collected six eggs, one egg apiece from six nests, and flew them in a specially insulated box to ICF. The eggs arrived safely, all hatched, and all six chicks later grow to fine adult cranes.

When I reported this to the Swedish National Nature Conservancy, I received their reply: We are happy that the eggs all hatched out properly since we will probably never give permission to collect the eggs of our cranes again.

I hope our cranes will render useful information to ICF. Perhaps they will become good breeders and one day give us fine progeny for further work in research and conservation.



Map of India and Afghanistan, showing Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary where Siberian Cranes spend most of the winter months, and Ab-Estada, a salt lake in eastern Afghanistan where these same birds stop on their way to and from Siberia.



## Japan's 'Mr. Zoo' and His Dream

# DR. TADAMICHI KOGA

by Ken Kawata

# PROFILE

**Editor's Note:** With this issue, we are inaugurating a new section in the Bugle called "Profile" which will periodically introduce noteworthy personalities in the "crane world" to our readers. The first "profile" is written by Ken Kawata, a noteworthy personality in his own right. Ken is currently Curator of the Tulsa Zoo in Oklahoma and is famous among zoo people for his hilarious one-liners, always delivered with a perfectly straight face.

Tadamichi Koga was my boyhood idol. As a young student in elementary school, I would send him much fan mail because I was passionately interested in zoos and animals, and he was the famous director of the Ueno Zoo (pronounced WAY-no) in Tokyo. I'll never forget the day I received a post card from him. I was the happiest boy in the world. Dr. Koga is a large man. When I first met him in the summer of 1959, I felt like a small farm boy looking up at John Wayne!

It was my pleasure and honor to work for Dr. Koga, first as a student keeper, and later as editor of *Animals and Zoos*. To him, I owe my present career in the zoo world.

Tadamichi Koga was born in 1903. After graduating from the University of Tokyo College of Veterinary Medicine in 1928, he took a position at the Ueno Zoo and became Director in 1932. He served in that capacity until 1962. Later he became an honorary member of the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens. Now in his seventies, he is considered Japan's "Mr. Zoo", the father of modernization of Japanese zoos, a leading conservationist and author, and a TV personality as well.

One of Dr. Koga's remarkable achievements is the restoration of a waterfowl sanctuary in the midst of Tokyo. Shinobazu, a pond in Ueno Zoo, once was a part of Tokyo Bay, a paradise for wildlife. At the end of World War II, with Tokyo in ashes and ruins, all of the birds had disappeared.

Determined to prove that man and wildlife can peacefully coexist in an urban environment, Dr. Koga released domestic ducks and geese to attract their wild cousins. Years passed before a flock of wild ducks found this pond a safe place, but now Tokyoites can enjoy various species of ducks by the thousands, along with herons and cormorants, as they winter in Shinobazu Pond.

His study on penguins has also proved rewarding. The mortality rate of Antarctic penguins in captivity was formerly very high because of aspergillosis, a killer disease. Dr. Koga enabled zoos to reduce the mortality rate drastically when he

developed a new treatment using the antibiotic Aureomycin.

However, Dr. Koga's most significant work is undoubtedly the propagation of cranes in captivity.

Japan once ruled vast areas of northeastern Asia, the home of several rare crane species. Japanese would capture these beautiful birds by the dozen to exhibit in their zoos and parks, but this practice ceased with World War II.

At the end of the war, Ueno Zoo had two pair of Japanese Cranes and two female White-Naped Cranes. Later, one of the Japanese Cranes was lost in a freak accident, leaving the zoo with only one breeding pair of cranes until 1952, when a White-Naped male was acquired. There seemed to be an urgent need to propagate them in the zoo before the species died out.

Usually these species lay only one clutch of two eggs each year. If eggs should be removed from the nest, the hen lays a second clutch after ten to twenty days. In zoos, the first clutch often turns out to be infertile. Even if the chicks hatch, they are apt to die of coccidiosis within two months. Needless to say, the reproductive rate of cranes in Tokyo seemed hopelessly low.

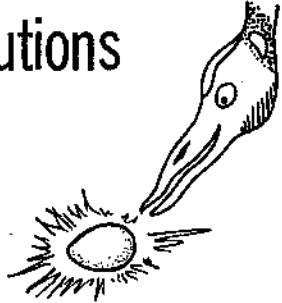
Dr. Koga decided to remove all eggs from the nests and hatch them in an incubator for the following reasons: First, to stimulate fertility, as he had discovered that later clutches had a better chance to hatch; second, the artificially hatched and raised young can be protected from coccidiosis with veterinary care; and thirdly, the number of offspring can literally be multiplied by this artificial method, which was especially important as those crane species were endangered in the wild.

Later Dr. Koga added another species, the Sarus Crane, to his experiment. After years of removing eggs from crane nests, he arrived at a record of sixteen eggs from a White-Naped Crane, eight eggs from a Japanese Crane and seven from a Sarus Crane in one season. He thus became the world's pioneer in this field.

Dr. Koga showed great foresight. Long before other Japanese were aware of it, he talked of the

(Continued on page 4)

# Contributions



## MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

Linda Aononsen, Dr. & Mrs. Robert S. Alexander, Cindy Alread, Mr. & Mrs. Don Anderson, Mr. & Mrs. Donald Archibald, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Ashman, E. A. Atkinson, John Baldwin, William W. Baum, Cynthia Becker, Dr. & Mrs. George Becker, Doris K. Belknap, Mrs. Alice Bischel, Andria Blattner, Thomas Bliffert, Liz Blomquist Bill Bodden, Jr., Gretel Bolles, James Bond, Cecilia Bosman, Marlin Bowles, Eleanor H. Bowman, Althea M. Brach, Dorothy Braun, Genevieve C. Brock, Ann Brodie, Helen Brown, Roy & Eleanor Brown, James Bruskevitz, Todd & Kim Bryan, Scott & Barbara Burkhardt, George T. Burrell, Elaine Bursstatter;

Ian Cameron, Even Carnes, Mr. & Mrs. Charles G. Chase, Mr. & Mrs. M. F. Chipman, Harold Christoff, David Christie, Norma G. & Wallace Clavatscher, John Colby, S. W. Coleman, Dr. Harold Coolidge, David Creek, Mrs. George Croft, Dr. R. S. Cran, Mr. & Mrs. James H. Cullen, Greg Curless, Alan J. Dale, Women's Auxiliary to the Dana County Medical Society, David Dawson, Rebecca Deal, Jill Weber Dean, Mrs. D. F. Dunlop, Wendy Eliot, Harold Engel, Mrs. R. Erickson, Mary Filion, Dennis L. Fisher, Robert E. Fisher, Wayne Fisher, Fisheries & Environment Canada, Dennis G. Folczyk, Janis Foll, Robert W. Freckmann;

Donna M. Gleisner, Glenville Birthday Club, Dr. & Mrs. B. H. Glover, Grede Foundation Inc., Dorothy Haines, Dr. Neil A. Harriman, Jessie Harrison, Robert Heckman, Helen Hendrickson, Dr. John Hickey, Paul W. Hoffman, Ronald & Joan Hoffman, Honey Creek Badgerettes, Honolulu Zoo, Baynard Hooper, Robert Hooper, Thomas Howard, Mrs. Victor Hren, Shirley Hunsaker, LuCindy Hutterli, Indianapolis Zoological Society, Ann F. Jacobs, John Jaeschke, Ralph & Ann James, Deborah Jansen, Patricia J. Jensen, Elizabeth W. John, Douglas & Judith Johnson, Mable Jankel;

Mrs. T. C. Kammholz, Mary Kaye Kingsbury, Shirley Klapperich, Judith Lindsay Knight, Janet Knodel, Gary K. Korb, Mary H. Kraemer, Earl & Catherine Krueger, Nancy & Gil Krueger, James H. Kuehn, Paul J. Kurtin, Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Leenhouts, Lillian & Willis Leenhouts, Paul Leibson, Jay Lempert, Emil Lemcke, Mrs. Emma F. Lewis, Eric Liljequist, James Luebke, John A. Lynch, George & Sharon McArthur, Mrs. K. L. McFerrer, William McVaugh, Jr., Christopher MacRae, Jan M. Mallatt, Eugene I. Majerawicz, Tom Mangelsen, Mrs. Harold E. Manhart, William Mareneck, Sally Martin, Howard Mead, Mr. & Mrs. William Merchant, William C. Messinger, Woodrow & Jane Miller, Minnesota Zoological Garden Library, Jim Mulhern, H. W. Mossman, Doug Murphy, Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Murphy, Mr. & Mrs. William Offenkranz, P. J. Olney, Mr. & Mrs. Norman C. Olson, James C. O'Neill, Oshkosh Bird Club, Robert E. Otis;

Eleanor F. Parson, Bertha I. Pearson, Jan Pennington, Michael B. Petrovich, Diane Pierce, Charles & June Pilling, Doris H. Platt, Robert W. & C. Amy Painter, Mr. & Mrs. Frederick C. Pullman, Mr. & Mrs. E. A. Purcell, Jr., Laura Quale, Patte Quigley, Baton Rouge Recreation & Park Commission, Kathleen Rice, Marion M. Rice, Connie Richard, Russel A. Rill, Dr. Robert W. Ringer, Catherine Rivard, Oral M. Robbins, Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Roberts, William Robichaud, Greg E. Roley, Erna C. Rolleson, David Rorick, Jr., Mr. & Mrs. William Sachse, Sauk County Farmers Union Co-op Supply Co., Joel Scarborough, Scherschel Camera Shop, Rosemary Schindler, M. E. Schiagheck, J. M. Scholl, Arlo Schultz, Larne Scott, Mr. & Mrs. W. L. Schultz, Skip Schwartz, Bruce Sedloff, Mary Ellen Shepard, Sue Simon, Stan Skutek, Scott Sneed, Clara Sodke, Mark Saloway, Mr. & Mrs. Richard Stanley, Doree Stein, Lynn N. Stone, Dr. Elizabeth Swab, Milo K. Swanton;

William & Charlotte Taylor, Jack Teasdale, Paul Tebbel, Leonard L. Thomas, John Tokoruk, Peg & Bill Unger, Neil Van Dreser, Joyce & John Vande Bunt, Arnold VanDerBerg, Joseph & Beverly VanDyke, Harry F. Vogts, Dr. M. R. Vrtilek, L. H. Walkinshaw, Margaret Ward, Washington High School, Wautoma Garden Club, Danny Weaver, Gertrude S. Weaver, David J. Wanner, Jr., J. T. Whitman, Jean & Gwen Williams, Mr. & Mrs. Nash Williams, Robert & Mary Willson von Neumann, Gene Wilson, Eugene & Marlene Woehler, Sandy Wolens, Greg Wolf, Den & Carol Worel, Daniel Worsham, Y. Crane Wright, Sheldon & Ann Wyckel, Val & Phyllis Yachik, Jo Ann Yoshimoto, J. O. Young, Edward Zieve.

## JAPANESE CONTRIBUTORS

Eizo Inada (Tsuru-ya Yoshinobu Co.), Yazo Kawahito (Kawa-tsuru Brewing Co.), Yoshiki Kawamura, Keizo Kimura (Kamo-tsuru Brewing Co.), Miroyuki Masatomi, Katsushiro Murata, Sawano-tsuru Brewing Co., Yoriko Tanaka.

## LIFE MEMBERS

Mrs. Jackson Burke, Owen & Anne Gromme, New York Zoological Society, Charles W. Wright Foundation, Stiemke Foundation.

## MEMORIALS

Joyce & John Vande Bunt for Harry Nohr.

## LABOR AND MATERIALS

Harold & Margaret Allen, Elizabeth Anderson, Baraboo Chamber of Commerce, Harold Bessac, Jim Bruskevitz, Sally Buell, Judy Chalker, Flambeau Products, Bill Geuse, Bob Hooper, Janice Jensen, Jana Juliar, Barbara Katz, Steve Kerr, Charles Killian, Lu F. Loeders, Charles Luthin, Dorothy Mudd, Werner Nartel, Eleanor Parson, Portage Industries, Glenn & Marilyn Quale, Gerald & Gladys Scott, Bruce Sedloff, Lucille Thompson, Katie & Frank Wenban, Dr. Westertfeldt, Richard Wilson, Forrest Zantow.

## Afghan Connection . . .

(Continued from page 1)

settle an old but important question once and for all.

As our jeeps approached the flock, we could see that it consisted of both small and large white birds strung out along the shallow edges of the salt lake. We stopped the jeeps and set up our scopes: the smaller birds were definitely egrets, the larger — Siberian Cranes! We had found them — within an hour after our arrival at the lake! For the next few minutes we stared quietly at the birds, stunned by our incredible good fortune. Ab-e-Estada is a huge lake, and its northern borders are criss-crossed with springs that make even jeep travel impossible. We could have spent days searching for these birds along the lake's miles of shoreline; yet there they were, standing and feeding serenely at the lake's most accessible point.

To John McGough and me, finding these birds had a greater, more personal significance. It was a reunion. We knew these birds — we had spent months observing and recording every facet of their daily lives. We knew their likes and dislikes; we understood the meaning of many of their melodious, clarinet-like calls; we had even named many of them. Standing now at the edge of this remote lake in Afghanistan, we found it difficult to resist calling out their names in greeting.

Ab-e-Estada was actually the tail-end of a study which had begun five months earlier and seven hundred miles south at the Ghana Bird Sanctuary in India. There, under the joint sponsorship of the World Wildlife Fund and the International Crane Foundation, we had continued a three year ICF study of the Siberian Crane, the third rarest crane in the world, and perhaps the most endangered. These birds, believed to number less than 360 individuals, are found as two separate populations, a western population which breeds in an unknown area of northwestern Siberia, and winters in India; and an eastern population which breeds in the Siberian tundra just south of the New Siberian Island and winters somewhere in southern China. Though little is known of the past numbers and distribution of this species, it was apparently much more widespread and common in previous centuries. Our study, part of ICF's overall plan for research on endangered species of cranes, is an attempt to determine why Siberian Cranes are now so rare, and what steps can be taken to prevent their imminent extinction.

One of the questions we were eager to clear up concerns the present distribution of this species in India. Any modern work on Indian birds will show the Siberian Crane wintering along a broad stretch of Indian territory from the Vale of Kashmir in the northwest, through the immense Gangetic Plain, to the northeastern state of Bihar. Yet, despite three years of interviews with ornithologists, game wardens, and government officials, and our own attempts to locate birds within this area, we could find no evidence that Siberian Cranes winter anywhere but at the Ghana Bird

The International Crane Foundation is a registered, publicly-supported, non-profit organization which is dedicated to the study and conservation of cranes throughout the world. Saving cranes, saves earth's vanishing wetlands.

Sanctuary near Bharatpur, Rajasthan. This meant that the 57 cranes that John and I repeatedly counted at their nightly roost within the sanctuary were probably the last Siberian Cranes in western Asia.

Still, a small matter needed clarification. Scattered reports in ornithological journals told of Siberian Cranes at Ab-e-Estada in Afghanistan. Most of the sightings were in the fall or spring, and it seemed reasonable that the cranes were using this lake as a stop-over spot on their way to and from their nesting grounds in Siberia. But were these cranes actually the Ghana Siberian Cranes, or were they, perhaps, another unknown population which had somehow escaped the attention of ornithologists? Admittedly, the latter possibility was remote, and yet tracking the cranes to Afghanistan seemed a good idea. Migratory cranes often use an area like Ab-e-Estada as a staging grounds; cranes from many different regions will congregate at this place in large numbers before their final push north or south. If Ab-e-Estada was a staging grounds, the presence of more than 57 cranes at the lake would mean that other areas in India or perhaps Pakistan harbored these rare birds.

All of these things flashed through our minds the afternoon of March 17 when we spotted the cranes at Ab-e-Estada. Over and over we counted the flock wading in the shallow waters of the salty lake. Each time we arrived at the number, 56. Not only had we not gained cranes, we had somehow, somewhere lost one of the precious few in this population. We could only hope that this bird had temporarily lost its way and would soon rejoin its fellows for the trip back to the Siberian arctic. As we were leaving Ab-e-Estada for the ride back to Kabul, I looked back at the tiny band of white cranes standing at the water's edge, totally dwarfed by the immensity of the lake and the distant mountains. Never before had the plight and tragedy of the Siberian Crane struck me with such force; never had these birds looked so fragile, their hold on existence so tenuous.

## 'Mr. Zoo' Dr. Koga . . .

(Continued from page 3)

importance of propagating rare and endangered wildlife species in captivity to save them from extinction.

In the summer of 1960, while we were chatting in his office, he told me of a dream project, an "international crane center". It would be something like a park, where a collection of the world's cranes would be kept for research and propagation. He thought the ideal location would be at Kushiro in Hokkaido, the northernmost mainland, in the midst of the habitat of the Japanese Crane. He had even suggested to local officials in Hokkaido the possibility of building a crane center there.

However, looking out at the smog-laden sky over downtown Tokyo, I had to ask myself whether those local politicians and bureaucrats could ever understand and share Dr. Koga's views and values. His dream never came true in his own country.

In 1975, six years after I left Tokyo, Dr. Koga and I had a reunion in Chicago and then drove to Baraboo to attend the first International Crane Workshop at the International Crane Foundation.

The trip stirred up many memories, and as we toured ICF I wondered what was going through Dr. Koga's mind. His dream had finally come true in Wisconsin, home of the Sandhill Crane, and thousands of miles from Kushiro, across the Pacific Ocean.

But I said to myself, "After all, what difference does the place make as long as the dream comes true?"