

THE BROLGA BUGLE

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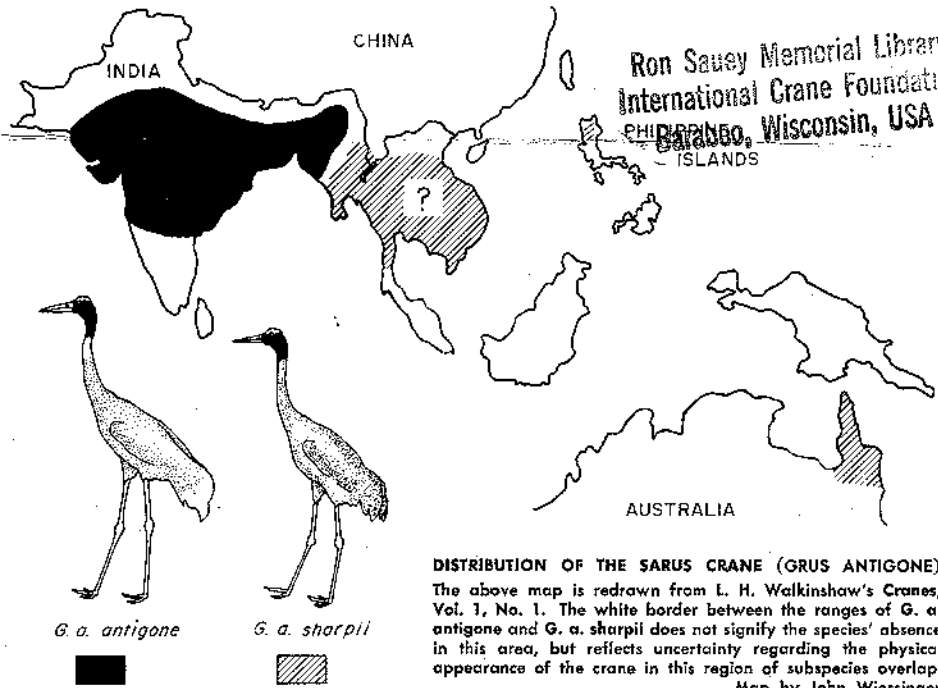
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Hooded Cranes Raise Chick at ICF

Normally the aviculture staff at ICF collects crane eggs as soon as they are laid and incubates them artificially. This technique encourages captive cranes to lay more than the usual two egg clutch found in the wild. This year, however, we decided to allow crane pairs which were positive for herpes antibodies (i.e. birds carrying antibodies against the herpes virus infection which struck ICF in the spring of 1978 and killed over twenty birds) to hatch and raise their own chicks. We did this to prevent possible viral contamination of the incubator with eggs from herpes-positive birds.

In May, a pair of herpes-positive Hooded Cranes on loan from Busch Gardens in Tampa built a nest and laid a clutch of two eggs. On June 7, the adults hatched a healthy chick and began scouring their pen looking for insects and earthworms to feed the young bird. We supplemented this "wild" food with red worms, meal worms and the usual chick pellets that we feed hand-reared chicks at ICF. As we go to press, the young Hooded Crane is completely feathered and in good health, a tribute to the excellent care given it by its parents. We believe that may be the first time a Hooded Crane has been hatched and reared by its parents in captivity.

Besides adding one more Hooded Crane to the world (the species is on IUCN's endangered species list), the hatching and raising of this young crane may have important consequences for the propagation program at ICF. The severity of the herpes virus outbreak at ICF raised many questions about the nature of the disease and the best methods to counteract it. We don't know, for

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Status of Eastern Sarus Cranes Uncertain

The world's tallest crane, and perhaps the tallest flying bird, is the tropical-Sarus Crane of India and southeast Asia. *Grus antigone* is over five feet in height with some males approaching six feet. The species is taxonomically divided into two well-marked subspecies: the Indian Sarus (*G. a. antigone*), which is larger with a white neck collar and light grey tertials; and the eastern or Sharpe's Sarus (*G. a. sharpii*) which is a bit smaller and uniformly gray. The Indian Sarus is considered a good luck symbol in India and is consequently protected by the populace. The bird has thrived despite man's great alteration of the Indian countryside and is commonly seen along the tanks and agricultural fields of northcentral India, occasionally nesting at the periphery of villages.

The Eastern Sarus has not fared as well. This bird's original range included the wetlands of Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia. Ornithologists from the latter three countries report that the species is probably gone from their borders; the situation is undoubtedly no different in Cambodia and Vietnam where human pressure on the environment has been intense over the last three decades. The status of the crane in Burma is a mystery. The country may still harbor many of these birds, but a sizeable part of Burma is politically unstable and up-

to-date information is difficult to obtain. Strangely enough, the only area in which Eastern Sarus Cranes are commonly reported is Queensland, Australia where the birds are thought to be recent colonizers since there is little evidence that the cranes were there before the early 1960's.

Through a request from ICF, the Delaware Museum of Natural History is currently sponsoring a search for the Eastern Sarus on the island of Luzon by Mrs. Karen Madsen, a Peace Corps volunteer. Karen believes the cranes may survive in remote areas of the Cagayan Valley, a place few ornithologists have visited. On the Australian scene, two ICF researchers, Bill Gause of the University of Virginia and Kathy Lofdahl of the University of Chicago, are preparing to embark on a two year study of the Sarus in Queensland where a group of about 200 are known to occur and where George Archibald in 1972 observed hybrids between this species and the more common native crane, the Brolga. Bill and Kathy will closely observe the interactions between these two species to determine if they are in direct competition and if the hybrids ("Sarolgas") are fertile and constitute a "hybrid swarm," i. e. an actual break down in the biological mechanisms which separate the two species.

At its headquarters in Baraboo, ICF has one pair of Eastern Sarus, "Painless and Gloria," who arrived with four other Eastern Saruses (all four of which were males) in 1975. Last year, Gloria and Painless produced a single chick, "Tassaday." Tassaday appears to be a female and, if so, will be paired with an extra male, "Squirt."

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Adult Hooded Crane feeding 40 day-old chick.
Photo by Elizabeth Deakman



Willis G. Sullivan



Charles E. Nelson



Frederick L. Ott



Owen J. Gromme

MEET THE BOARD

In last May's issue of *The Brolga Bugle*, we introduced four of ICF's fourteen member Board of Directors. This issue continues the introductions with four additional biographical sketches of our new Board members.

Willis G. Sullivan

In spring, over the still frosty meadows of central Wisconsin, drifts of a sound which from a distance is reminiscent of a single low tone played on a large pipe organ. To the experienced ear, that drone means that one of nature's most wonderful pageants is again underway, the booming of the prairie chicken. People lucky enough to have seen these birds on their display grounds, dancing, fighting, and jerking open their bright orange air sacs, will never forget the spectacle and involuntarily shake their heads at the thought that prairie chickens almost disappeared from Wisconsin during this century.

That the prairie chicken still survives to perform its annual prehistoric ritual in Wisconsin is due to the foresight of a small group of dedicated people, one of whom is Willis "Bill" Sullivan. In 1961, Bill and a few acquaintances started what is surely one of the most unusually-named organizations: Society for *Timpanuchus Cupido Pinnatus*.

The Latin, of course, is the scientific name of the Greater Prairie Chicken. The fact that few people can pronounce the name is an indication of the nature of Bill Sullivan and his Society. While dedicated to the cause of prairie chicken conservation, they refuse to take themselves too seriously, and there perhaps lies the success of the organization. Over the last 19 years, the Society has saved over 8,000 acres of prairie chicken habitat in and around the Buena Vista Marsh near Plainfield, while, as Bill loves to say, having a hell of a lot of fun.

Bill Sullivan was born in Hurley, Wisconsin in 1903 at a time when logging was big business in the central and northern parts of the state. As large areas of land were cleared of trees, prairie chickens rapidly increased in numbers and hit their peak in the early decades of this century. Bill remembers his father hunting these as well as their close relative the Sharp-tailed Grouse. But Bill wasn't interested in birds back then and began pursuing more academic interests; in 1927 he obtained a law degree from the University of Wisconsin.

After graduation, Bill joined the law firm of Clicksman & Gold in Milwaukee and later, in 1935, opened his own practice. In 1949 he joined Krause Milling Company and became president in 1950. The company, which dry mills grain, has prospered and today is one of world's largest. While engaged in such enterprises, Bill also managed to raise a family, play tennis, and expand his knowledge of such diverse subjects as Indians, cooking, and history. He is also fond of travelling with his wife, Eleanor.

While Bill was busy pursuing a career in Milwaukee, great changes were occurring in central and northern Wisconsin. Extensive farming and reforestation rapidly reversed the gains made earlier by prairie chickens. The species' status in the

state dropped from locally common to threatened with extinction. When Bill discovered the problem one December evening during a conversation with a friend, he was shocked. How could the birds he remembered in such great numbers as a youth now be endangered? It is to Bill Sullivan's credit and with the unending gratitude of the people of Wisconsin that he acted on his concern and founded the Society for *Timpanuchus Cupido Pinnatus*.

We are proud to have Bill on our Board and anticipate not only sage advice on conservation issues, but an occasional gentle warning when WE begin to take ourselves too seriously.

Charles E. Nelson

Charlie Nelson holds the distinction among ICF's new Board members of having seen a Brolga, the native Australian crane and mascot of this newsletter, before he had even heard of the International Crane Foundation. In 1973, he and his wife, Mary, spent 35 days in Australia and managed to see not only Brolgas, but the much rarer Eastern Sarus Crane (see the story on this bird in this issue). Soon after, Mary Nelson became a life member of ICF; Charlie followed suit a short while later. Cranes do that to people.

The Nelsons toured Australia mainly to see birds, an indication of the seriousness of their ornithological avocation (or better, "avi-cation"). They've gone other places on the trail of birds: twice to Africa, to Ecuador, the Galapagos, and most of the U. S. But Charlie is not content to be attached merely to one end of a binocular. He and Mary have been very active in organizations promoting conservation. Charlie served a term as president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and won their Silver Passenger Pigeon award for his efforts on behalf of the Society. He is also a life member of the Wisconsin chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

Charles Nelson was born in Waukesha in 1904. He attended elementary and secondary schools in Waukesha and Delafield and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1927 with a Ph. B. in Economics. During his sophomore year at college, he met Mary Haven and married her shortly after graduation. They have been inseparable companions ever since.

Soon after Charlie graduated from U. W., he began a very successful career in the motor industry. He started as a district representative for the Jessie A. Smith Auto Co. in Milwaukee in 1927 and soon after became assistant to the General Manager of the Waukesha Motor Company. Over the next thirty years, Charlie assumed jobs of increasing importance in the company and in 1960 became President and Director of Waukesha Motors. The company's main activity is the production of internal combustion engines for tractors, construction machinery and gas compressors. After serving for ten years as the chief executive officer of Waukesha Motors, and as a director of numerous corporations, Charlie retired from business in 1970.

The Nelsons today live on a large farm near Dousman, Wis. On one side of them is 100 acres of pristine woodland which they recently donated to The Nature Conservancy; the woods are cur-

rently used as a scientific area by the University of Wisconsin - Waukesha.

Although their two children, Sylvia and Spencer, have long since flown the nest, Charlie and Mary are still parenting a continual stream of various mammals and birds. They estimate that they feed over 1500 pounds of sunflower seeds and cracked corn during the winter. Their farm is also a "half-way house" for injured foxes and raccoons which a local veterinarian brings them.

ICF is glad to have Charlie "on board", particularly because his close partnership with Mary means that we have in effect an extra board member who has the background and experience to lend ICF excellent advice.

Frederick L. Ott

Fred "Freddie" Ott possesses a commodity shared with only a few Middle Eastern countries: a seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy. New acquaintances are left breathless merely shaking hands with him. Before the new friend can retrieve his hand, Fred will have asked about the individual's family, education, business, and whether or not he has recently contributed to one of Fred's favorite charities. Amazingly enough, such direct tactics seldom annoy people. Perhaps it's Fred's wide brushy smile and genuine warmth that disarms even the most distrustful and has made Fred Ott one of Milwaukee's best civic fund raisers.

Fred Ott's life is a kaleidoscope of adventure and misadventure. He was born in Milwaukee in 1921 into a family whose interest in animals was well-known in the city. Like the family of another of ICF's new board members, Jim Kuehn, the Otts were strong supporters of the Milwaukee Zoo and instrumental in its formation. Fred, consequently, learned to love animals at an early age and while still in knickers (yes, he actually wore them!) began to frequent the Milwaukee Museum where he became, in his own words, Owen Gromme's biggest pest. Gromme at that time was Curator of Birds and Mammals and busy painting the plates which eventually became *Birds of Wisconsin*. Gromme gradually learned to tolerate the young man and even allowed Fred to watch him painting. Fred reciprocated many years later by starting Friends of the Museum, an organization which eventually raised over \$200,000 to publish Gromme's famous book.

In 1938, Fred left the U. S. for Switzerland and spent his junior and senior years of high school at the Landerziehungsheim Schloss Clarisegg bei Steckborn am Untersee Thurgau Schweiz ("You should have seen that on my school t-shirt," Fred quips). Fred's biggest thrill in Switzerland was falling 3500 feet off a mountain while skiing one snowy day and breaking his back. Characteristically, Fred quickly mended and was back on the slopes in short order.

As war approached, Fred, with his usual sense of timing, travelled into Germany and got bombed by both the French and English. He still carries scars from a fence he encountered while running for cover. He managed to leave Germany soon after this experience and returned to the U. S. He began college at Kenyon in Ohio and graduated

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Shirley Russman and friend, a Whitenaped Crane, attach a used Christmas tree as a windbreak on a brisk April day. Photo by John Wiessinger

ICF Is Grue-some Experience for Students

One can always tell when spring arrives at ICF: the cranes are even noisier than usual and there are a half dozen unfamiliar faces walking about the property asking for barometers, movie cameras, and cheap places to lodge. Every year since 1973, ICF has hosted a small number of students who work on short-term research projects and help the staff with the increased spring and summer work loads. With few exceptions, the experience has been positive for both students and staff, each learning more about cranes, biology, and themselves during the few months they interact.

This spring ICF was home for four students, three from Lake Forest College near Chicago and one from Kalamazoo College in Michigan. Becky Frange, Shirley Russman, and Taisa Halibey, all seniors from Lake Forest, spent three months as aviculture interns and also completed independent study projects for degree requirements. Becky was "up a tree" most of the time. Her research centered on the incubation behavior of a pair of wild Sandhills which nested near Briggsville, Wisconsin, home of ICF director Owen J. Gromme. From her blind in a large oak at the edge of Gromme's cattail marsh, Becky spent twelve hours at a time watching cranes incubate their eggs. Her main interest was knowing how much time cranes spend on and off their nest. Such data could have application to the artificial incubation techniques used at ICF. Becky's dedication and stamina while collecting data were matched only by the incubating cranes themselves.

Taisa Halibey studied daily food consumption in captive cranes. She weighed their feed daily to determine just how much is consumed by cranes per day, and kept a record of when they fed and what variables increased or decreased food consumption. Besides her food study, Taisa helped the aviculture staff feed, water, and care for the whole collection.

Shirley "Curley" Russman worked on an artificial insemination project and helped the staff develop new techniques, including semen freezing. A. I. is an important tool at ICF because cranes often fight, particularly in the breeding season and occasionally male and female must be kept separated. It is also necessary sometimes to use one male to inseminate several females, a tactic which must involve A. I. since male cranes will not mate with more than one female naturally. Shirley was a great help in keeping semen samples, slides, and

records straight when the rest of the A. I. crew got sidetracked (which happened often).

Steve Latta from Kalamazoo worked in the herpes isolation area. While working with these birds, Steve became interested in European Cranes and spent many hours in a small blind recording the breeding behavior of one pair. Later in the summer, he also worked as a "chick papa" with newly hatched cranes.

We are very grateful to Becky, Tai, Shirley, and Steve for their conscientious work and we hope they enjoyed their stay at ICF as much as we did.

Aviculture Report: A. I. at ICF

by Chris LaRue, Aviculturist

This spring ICF participated in two cooperative efforts involving artificial insemination. The first of these endeavors consisted of receiving frozen Whooping Crane semen from Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, MD. The frozen semen was shipped and stored in liquid nitrogen at -196°C until it was needed for insemination. As the breeding season progressed and Tex, our female Whooping Crane, appeared to be ready to lay, we began inseminations with thawed semen whenever our male failed to produce good semen. We had high hopes this would result in fertile eggs from Tex. After weeks of tense anticipation she finally layed an egg which was unfortunately soft-shelled, broken, and her only egg of the year. With this project, however, we did establish the feasibility of shipping and inseminating frozen/thawed crane semen from other institutions.

Our second cooperative effort involved the shipping of fresh Wattled Crane semen from Baraboo to Baltimore. Fred Beale, Curator of Birds at the Baltimore Zoo, visited ICF for two days to learn the techniques of artificial insemination. In his return flight he carried a sample of Wattled Crane semen to be distributed to their two egg laying females. The semen was kept cool in a thermos of ice water and survived the eight hour delay between collection from our male and insemination with their females. Two days later we sent a second semen sample to Baltimore by air cargo. Two days after the first insemination one of the Baltimore females laid an egg. We had high hopes that this egg would be fertile, but we recently heard from the zoo that the egg was "clear" (no embryo) and that no other eggs were laid.

Despite these disappointments, the development of A. I. techniques is crucial for improving our captive propagation abilities. It is extremely important for ICF to continue implementing new and more effective techniques.



Hair, Flesh, and Feathers — Crane Husbandry at ICF. Shirley Russman and Chris LaRue collect semen from a Red-crowned Crane. Photo by Elizabeth Deakman

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in two years. During his first summer back in the U. S., he and a close friend walked 1400 miles through the Rockies, traversing some virtually unexplored regions in the process, and getting lost practically every other day (Fred estimates they crossed the continental divide at least six times by mistake).

In January of 1942, Fred enlisted in the army, became a drill instructor and finally obtained a truck driver's license, enabling him to be transferred to England, and finally to Normandy three days after D-day. With Fred aboard, the trucking unit became famous for fearlessness. Three of the unit's trucks, for example, drove in triumph into Paris before the Germans had departed. They eventually discovered their mistake and managed to get back to base intact.

After the war, Fred started his business career in lumber, first working in logging camps in northern Wisconsin and later selling paper products for several companies. It was during a call on one of his customers that he met his future wife, "Jolly" Needham. Fred never did know that Jolly's given name was Elizabeth Anne until he turned to ask her while standing in line to get their wedding license. He also had to ask her for the \$2.00 fee.

Today, Fred and Jolly divide their time between their two homes, a winter home in Milwaukee and a summer place on Pine Lake near Hartland. Their three children, Fredricka "Rikki," Bradford, and Lisa, are in college or seeking their fortune. Fred by his reckoning spends 70% of his time on business and 30% raising money for worthwhile causes. His successes are impressive: he is the founder and first president of Friends of the Museum; he is a director of the Milwaukee County Zoo; he is a founder and past president of the Citizens Natural Resources Association (he raised thousands of dollars for CNRA's successful fight against the use of D.D.T. in this country), and he was instrumental in the organization of the Riveredge Nature Center.

Fred's wit, concern for the environment, and genius for fund raising, will all be important contributions to ICF. Welcome aboard, Fred, but watch your step on the gangplank!

Owen J. Gromme

Insurance companies have discovered that people engaged in career occupations normally make their greatest contributions at a specific age. Physicists, for example, usually make important discoveries during their mid-thirties, while biologists are more likely to win a name for themselves after the age of sixty. If Owen Gromme is any indication, the age at which wildlife artists score their big successes is well after seventy-five. Often called the "Dean of American Wildlife Artists" (a title he scoffs at) 83 year-old Owen Gromme is

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one of the best-known and most loved of America's wildlife artists, and most of this fame is relatively recent.

Owen Gromme was born in Fond du Lac in 1896. His earliest memories involve the meadows, wetlands, and woods around his home town where he often hunted and fished. At the age of 13 he learned taxidermy from his friend John Stierle, a hobby which later became a means of livelihood.

After serving two years as an ambulance operator in World War I in France, Owen returned to the U. S. to start a career. He worked at a succession of jobs including the sale of undertaker supplies ("underground novelties," Owen calls them), but none of these really suited him. He was in the process of taking a position selling candy when he stopped at the Milwaukee Museum to call on his friend, ecologist Herbert Stoddard. Stoddard was delighted to see him and in fact had just written Owen offering him a job in the museum as a taxidermist. Owen immediately accepted: it was the start of a 43-year association with the Milwaukee Museum.

In 1928, Owen set off on one of the biggest adventures of his life. That year, two prominent Milwaukee families, the Cudshys and the Massees, helped finance a nine-month collecting expedition to Africa for the Museum. Although Owen had originally been hired as a taxidermist, his talents as a painter had been recognized by the Museum's director, Dr. Barrett, and Owen was asked to go as the expedition's artist. The trip was a wonderful success; a number of fine specimens were obtained for the Museum, many of which can still be seen on exhibit, and Owen began to appreciate his own abilities as a painter.

After he returned from Africa, Owen started a more settled existence with his new wife, Anne Nielsen, whom he had married shortly before the African trip. He continued his work at the Museum and soon became chief taxidermist and later, in 1936, Curator of Birds and Mammals.

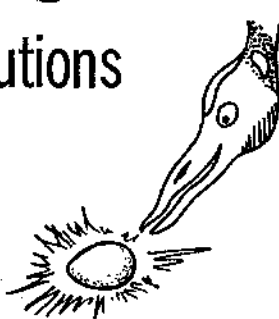
During the 1930s, Owen began a series of paintings of all the birds known to occur within Wisconsin which he hoped to publish as a book. For more than twenty-five years Owen worked on the paintings in his spare time, and in 1963 they finally appeared as *Birds of Wisconsin*. The book has since been reprinted four times and is one of the University of Wisconsin Press' best sellers.

In 1965 Owen retired from the Museum as Emeritus Curator of Birds and Mammals. Shortly after, he and Anne moved to a second home in Briggsville where they expected to live out their lives in the peace and tranquility of that sleepy little town -- with occasional visits from their two children, Anne Marie and Roy, and their families.

Their retirement was shortlived. In 1967, Owen was hired by the M & I Bank in Milwaukee to paint a series of wildlife scenes for their new executive offices. Three years later, Owen presented the bank with 43 spectacularly beautiful wildlife paintings, a tour de force perhaps unmatched in the history of wildlife art. His fate was sealed. After his paintings went on permanent display on the sixth floor of the bank, he was deluged with orders for more paintings. One of the orders came from Bill Webster of Wild Wings which led to the publication of over 76 of his paintings in the last nine years. Owen was chosen as Artist of the Year by Ducks Unlimited in 1978 and in that same year he was chosen to paint Wisconsin's first Duck Stamp.

In the winter of 1972, two young men visited the Grommes in Briggsville with an unusual idea: what would they think of an organization dedicated to the preservation of cranes--those magnificent, loud-voiced denizens of the world's marshes? Owen and Anne were enthusiastic and supportive. Owen picked up brush and palette and painted "Salute to the Dawn", the largest canvas he has ever produced. This wonderful painting depicts two Whooping Cranes at their nest in Wood Buffalo Park. The canvas hangs today at ICF. It is the symbol of ICF's beginning. It is a symbol of Owen Gromme's love of wildlife and his deep and continuing concern for its conservation.

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Eastern Sarus Cranes . . .

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Eventually we hope to build a small nucleus of Eastern Sarus Cranes in captivity which can be used to restock the species into areas of southeast Asia, local conditions permitting. Already, authorities in the Philippines have shown interest in a reintroduction project; if Karen Madsen's search for the Sarus in Luzon fails, that country would be a prime candidate for a first attempt at restocking these great birds to their former homes.

Hooded Cranes . . .

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instance, whether birds that are positive for virus antibodies actually carry the disease itself, nor do we know the manner in which the disease is spread. Though the sample size is admittedly small, these questions may be partially answered by examining a young bird raised by herpes-positive parents in an environment possibly contaminated by the virus.

At least one fact has been clearly established: herpes-positive birds can hatch and raise a normal, healthy-looking chick.



Cranes are often used symbolically in Asian art. Sarus Cranes in India are symbols of fidelity and true love (see article on page one), a cultural trait which has endeared these birds to Indians. In this painting from the Ragamala (early nineteenth century), a young man caresses a pair of Sarus Cranes. The man is apparently sad at being separated from his love, and the cranes share his grief, because they, as the legend goes, will pine to death if they become separated from each other.

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.