



# THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

## The Cranes at Poyang Lake



Great flocks of cranes feed on the mudflats of Dahu Lake.



Siberian and White-naped Cranes fly toward their evening roost.

by George Archibald, ICF Director

Jiangxi Province, China. January 11, 1985 at 9:30 a.m. An army of cranes stood in the mist. We glimpsed their dim silhouettes across several miles of grasslands and mudflats that separated us from the remains of Dahu Lake. A closer look meant a two-mile hike along the base of the red sandstone bluffs that mark the summer shore of Poyang Lake's 3,000 square kilometers of water. Dahu is an autumn offspring of Poyang, gradually created each year as China's largest freshwater lake drops to a sixth of its summer area. Poyang Lake, as it shrinks, leaves vast mudflats and spawns smaller lakes in the shallow depressions.

ICF's eleven-person research team had traveled ten thousand miles to find and count Siberian Cranes. By early afternoon we were climbing the last bluff beyond which we hoped for a close view of the birds. We negotiated the final few yards

by crawling on our hands and knees to the edge of the overlook. With the sunshine flooding over our shoulders and the mist finally clearing, we beheld one of earth's greatest sights. Dozens of Hooded Cranes, dark with strikingly handsome white heads, foraged over the drier ground. Hundreds of White-naped Cranes probed the wet mud while beyond them glistened a throng of Siberian cranes, their numbers doubled by their white reflections on the shallow, blue water.

Forty of us crouched spellbound, Chinese and Americans joined in an effort to study and protect this winter haven for cranes. How many birds were there? Tripods opened, telescopes focused, and the long-awaited counts began.

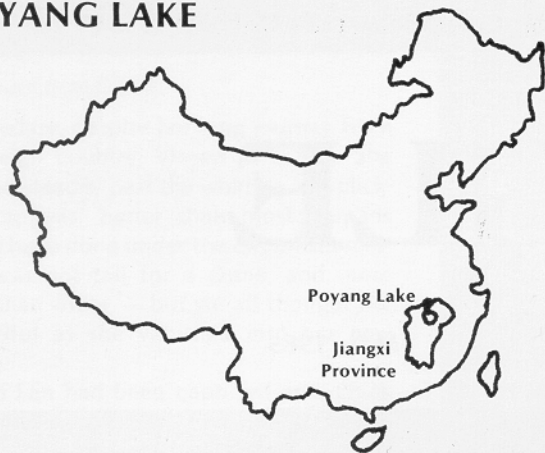
Within an hour, we had confirmed the existence of 1,350 Siberian Cranes, 1,165 White-naped Cranes, and 105 Hooded Cranes. Later counts by the Chinese pushed the Siberian Crane numbers to 1,482. The

flock included 8.8 percent young birds, suggesting adequate reproduction for the flock. We could only guess where they had come from. When the Chinese first discovered Siberian Cranes at Poyang Lake in 1981, they counted only 140. In 1983, they tallied 409, followed by 840 in 1984. Undoubtedly, cranes were congregating within the newly created 22,400-hectare nature reserve because of the local enforcement of the ban on hunting.

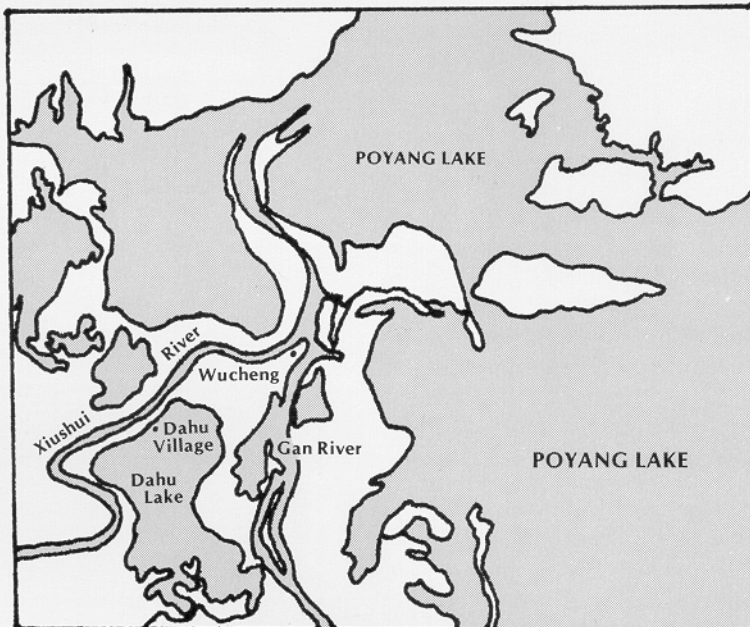
We were standing on the Wucheng Peninsula that juts out into the west side of Poyang Lake in winter, and that becomes an island in summer. The charming and traditional town of Wucheng marks the east tip of this peninsula-island, bordered by the Gan and Xiushui Rivers that meander along deep cuts through the mudflats. There are no motor vehicles in Wucheng, nor roads. People travel by boat or by foot. This was our home in January.



# POYANG LAKE



Poyang Lake is the only known wintering area for the Siberian Crane in China.



## Cranes of Poyang Lake

Continued from page 1

The Chinese Ministry of Forestry's Poyang Lake Nature Reserve includes the mudflats and shallow lakes around the Wucheng Peninsula. Now the authorities are faced with the challenge of striking a balance between conservation and the needs of the local people.

### The History

A Wucheng conservationist, Mr. He Xuguang, recalls countless numbers of migrating waterfowl on the seemingly unending expanses of grassland and wetland that bordered Poyang Lake during his youth in the 1940's. The people hunted some birds, but guns were few and losses minimal. The kill escalated during the next two decades, and so did the construction of dikes that reclaimed wetlands for agriculture. But deadly Schistosomiasis, a parasite transmitted by snails in the paddies, afflicted the farmers. In the 1970's, the Chinese applied chemicals to eliminate the snails. Most of the birds disappeared as well.

Today, 2,792 kilometers of dikes protect 5,590,000 mu (372,700 hectares) of farmland and 5,680,000 people on land recently used by cranes. By chance, the dikes had not yet strangled the eight winter lakes near Wucheng when Mr. Ding Wenning and Mr. Zhou Fuchang of Beijing's Institute of Zoology first found the Siberian Cranes in 1981. Their discovery came just two years after the chemical control of snails had been discontinued.

### The Cranes

They arrive in October as the smaller lakes take form and then leave in March

before the monsoon rains swell Poyang to its full expanse. The eight lakes near Wucheng have different sizes and depths. Some dry up completely by mid winter while others still have water when the cranes depart. The Siberian Cranes feed almost exclusively in the shallow water where they excavate the tubers of dormant aquatic plants. As the water levels in the lakes change, the cranes move in large flocks to areas that are appropriately covered by several inches of water.

During our 1984 study, the cranes congregated in Dahu Lake. The Xiushui River flanks the north side of this lake, and beside the river stands the small village of Dahu, cresting a high point of land.

### The People

One hundred and fifty people live in Dahu. In summer, their village is a small island several kilometers distant from Wucheng Island. At that season the fishing is poor in Poyang Lake. The villagers hatch hundreds of domestic ducks and wait for the lake to recede in autumn. Finally the borders of Dahu Lake appear along with the channel of the Xiushui River.

A deep cut runs from the center of Dahu Lake to the Xiushui River, a channel hand-excavated by the villagers. At Dahu village a sluice gate controls the flow of water from the lake into the river. From November through February, the villagers



The villagers of Dahu harvest the fish of Dahu Lake by drawing down the waters during winter. Their activity creates the mudflats on which the cranes depend.

draw down Dahu Lake and net the trapped fish. They sell the large fish in the markets, and dry the fingerlings for fertilizer and for feed for domestic animals.

The villagers of Dahu derive most of their income from fishing in winter. In January, the majority of earth's Siberian Cranes depend on these artificially created shallows of Dahu. Many of the local people think highly of the cranes, calling them "Lingji," that means "marvelous birds." The Siberian Cranes are known as the cranes with black sleeves.

### The Challenge

China's Ministry of Forestry in Jiangxi Province, under the apt leadership of Mr. Xie Xiexian is devoted to helping the cranes. In 1983, for example, wildlife warden and researcher Mr. Liu Xianzhong apprehended several hunters that had killed an estimated 1,000 birds by shooting shrapnel from cannons mounted on their boats. The offenders were each fined a year's pay and jailed for sentences ranging from three to six months. Since then, the cannons have been silent.

The government is equally concerned about the protection of the wetlands. Some critical habitats have been bought from villagers. In other areas such as Dahu Lake, a balance is sought between human use and crane use of the aquatic resources.

Public education is vital. This September under the auspices of the Frances R. Dewing Foundation, four members of the Jiangxi Ministry of Forestry hope to study with the education department at ICF. They will be developing educational materials and activities for school children and other groups regarding cranes and wetlands. In December of this year, ICF and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service hope to cohost a delegation of Jiangxi Province officials on a tour of Whooping Crane refuges in the United States. And for January and February of 1986, ICF's Education Coordinator, Jim Harris, plans to work with his colleagues in China.

ICF's research team left Wucheng on an overcast day. As our boat fought the current of the Gan, the nearby banks of mud blocked our view of the shallow lakes and the remarkable ecosystems they support. But our minds were filled with vivid memories of the great ornithological marvels we had witnessed: the whistle of tundra swans overhead, the clouds of gray geese, the storks and pelicans soaring in midday thermals, and the cranes — thousands of them, peacefully digging in the mud. We have high hopes for the future of these birds in China.

## The Black-necked Cranes Arrive at ICF

A crowd of us shivered and waited by the quarantine pens at the old site. The March wind came in gusts, threatening rain. We were an unusual assortment. The three television crews and various newspaper reporters make the trip out to Baraboo several times a year. But this day they were joined by Mary Wickhem, President of ICF's Board, several other ICF Directors, the Mayor of Baraboo, and our State Senator. Fully half of our staff waited, just as eagerly as the others.

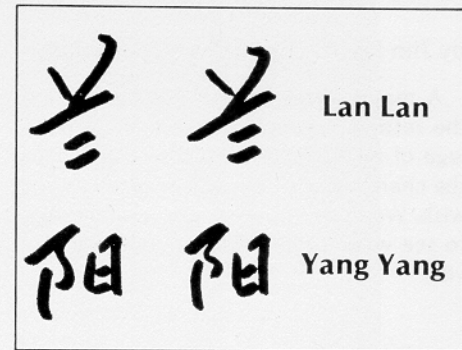
ICF had been waiting over ten years for this event. Almost from the day we began as an organization, ICF has attempted to obtain the Black-necked Crane, the least known of all cranes and one of the rarest. We've worked with all of the other fourteen crane species, but never this one. Today the Black-neckeds would at last arrive.

This species, like the panda, is uniquely Chinese. It nests in remote, high altitude wetlands of Tibet, entirely within China except for a few pairs just across the border in India. While from time to time a few Black-necked Cranes have been kept in captivity, they have never bred. Only once have captive Black-necked Cranes been sent outside their native range, early in this century.

Like the pandas, the Black-necked Cranes were coming to the United States as a gesture of goodwill by the People's Republic of China. Their arrival would culminate — and symbolize — years of close cooperation between ICF and Chinese scientists, working toward the preservation of China's eight crane species. And just as we completed arrangements to receive our pair of Black-necked Cranes, we began to assist the Chinese in developing two major crane research and education centers, in Jiangxi and Jiangsu Provinces. These would be in addition to Zha Long Nature Reserve in Heilongjiang Province, where ICF has worked cooperatively since 1982.

### Naming the Cranes

The planning for this shipment of birds had begun months earlier. While many of the details were tedious, both the Chinese and ICF's George Archibald took delight in naming these two special birds. Such a decision is important, for a crane's individual name helps personify the bird. It facilitates record-keeping and fosters a closer bond between keeper and crane, a bond that is vital to the welfare of a crane in captivity. The naming occurred at a banquet given for ICF by the China Minis-



"Lan Lan" and "Yang Yang", the names for the two Black-necked Cranes arriving at ICF, mean "flower" and "sun" in Chinese.

try of Forestry in Beijing on January 30, 1985.

Out of respect for China's beloved leader Zhou Enlai and his wife, Deng Yingchao, George suggested the Black-neckeds become Zhou and Deng. Amidst a gale of laughter, George's colleagues informed him that in China animals are not named after people, especially not revered people.

George didn't think Yin or Yang or Ping or Pong were appropriate, although familiar to Western ears. What about Cao and Hai, after Cao Hai, the Sea of Grass? Here 300 Black-necked Cranes winter, in western China. No, that didn't please the Chinese. The names needed both meaning and poetry.

The Chinese felt that since the female originated from Gansu Province where the city of Lanzhou is the capital, she should be named Lan Lan. Likewise, the male should be Yang Yang, after Guiyang the capital of Guizhou Province, the region from which the male originated. Appropriately, Lan means flower, and Yang means the sun.

Despite the flowerless, sunless landscape on that day in March, we at ICF waited eagerly and affectionately for the arrival of Lan Lan and Yang Yang. The names already were having their effect.

### The Pair Arrives

At last we spotted the dark van cresting the hill overlooking ICF's breeding pens. Our little crowd parted to let the vehicle pull up before the quarantine pens. As a routine precaution, the two Black-necked Cranes would spend their first weeks isolated in these pens, so that we could detect any disease before exposing the rest of our flock to the newcomers.

The aviculture staff carefully lowered the plain, solid crate to the ground. We all stood politely back as Lan Lan's door was opened. Lan Lan emerged unruffled

Continued on page 8



# As Spring Comes to Baraboo

by Jim Harris, Education Coordinator

A major fringe benefit for our staff is the setting in which we work. As a privilege of membership in ICF, you too have the chance to visit our site as often as you wish. We hope you will come many times, to see what cannot be noticed on a first visit.

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Spring has returned. At ICF there are many signs of the season, both indoors and out. The entire staff works harder than ever: it's planting time, school tour time, even membership drive time. The cranes are breeding, and all the aviculturists hurry from one task to another, after chicks or eggs or semen.

The land knows spring better than we do. For many weeks, the flowers have been popping out from under last year's dead grasses. We have seen it happen here before, for we are getting to know our land and look for the first pasque flowers, the prairie smoke and pussy toes, then the shooting stars in just the right locations. Spring here becomes all the more beautiful because it is familiar.

Yet no year duplicates another. This spring, the pasque flowers went to seed 2½ weeks ahead of last year. The tree leaves unfurled overhead in late April, not mid May. The meltwaters of winter swelled our two kettle wetlands higher than we had ever seen them, and a muskrat moved in. Then weeks without rain drew the water down: the muskrat may abandon its shrinking home any day now.

All this has disrupted the staff. We time our tasks by the season, and the clock has leaped ahead of us. The prairie burn is a good example of the difficulties of too much good weather too soon.

Prairies need to be burned to keep out weeds and shrubs. The timing is critical, after the weeds have begun to grow in spring but before the prairie plants emerge from the ground. Normally we burn in early May. Konrad Liegel, our Site Manager, arranged for a May 5 burn, with May 6 and 10 as alternates in case of rain or of winds from the wrong direction. This burn would be our biggest ever, over the entire twenty-five acre west kettle restoration. Konrad painstakingly lined up an experienced crew of 15 to control and safeguard the event.



Summer tours at ICF pass through wide fields of prairie flowers on the way to the Sam and Gene Johnson Exhibit Pod.

Spring upset Konrad's hours of preparation. He realized that by the planned date, the land would be so green the burn would not take. Konrad abandoned his schedule and spent a whole weekend recruiting a new crew for a new date at the end of April.

The old grasses flamed and smoked splendidly, leaving a carpet of blackened turf. Now we watch the prairie plants bury that darkness under fresh shoots.

"It's getting better every year," Konrad tells us as we walk the prairie that matures and returns under our feet, on a site worn by years of farming. He reminds us that no two years can be the same here, now that ICF has joined with a hundred plant species in reclaiming the land.

Our work with both prairies and cranes has been an experiment in recreating rather than disrupting natural cycles. But reintroducing a crane to a marsh, or restoring





a prairie, requires the deepest sensitivity to the wild. Konrad can point to almost any flower along our trails and tell us the year we planted its seed. The aviculturists' success at breeding cranes depends on their knowing precisely when each female will lay. They turn on the floodlights at the right time to stimulate the Siberian Cranes, and activate the shower heads to create an artificial monsoon for the Brol-

gas' breeding.

We have reset the natural clock, back toward a primal rhythm mingled with echoes of our own internal pulse. A tour at ICF showcases our progress at breeding the cranes. But cranes cannot survive without healthy habitats. The prairie reveals our progress at caring for the land.

Soon this summer, for example, we

expect a gaudy show of black-eyed susan, bergamot, and yellow coneflower along the walk to the Johnson Pod. But last summer's photograph cannot duplicate this summer's bloom. New species will be old enough to flower for the first time. We hope you will join us in watching a summer more beautiful than any since the settlers broke the land, a summer full of promise for cranes and their wild homes.



# Are You My Mother?

by Claire Miranda, Curator of Birds

This crane chick seems determined to stay close to its "mother." Although the costume is a poor imitation of a real crane this chick was successfully imprinted on it as part of a serious research program at ICF. Through the use of crane parent models, we hope to imprint hand-reared cranes on their own species. These techniques will improve our breeding program and help us to raise cranes suitable for reintroduction into the wild.

Through years of effort, ICF has developed highly successful hand-rearing practices for crane chicks. We now can raise to maturity about 85 percent of the chicks we hatch. There are many advantages to normal hand-rearing methods, including the ability to raise more than one or two chicks from each pair of cranes, close daily monitoring of health and behavior, close supervision of socialization, a healthy exercise program, and excellent opportunities for the public to see chick rearing firsthand.

Unfortunately, these methods also have their problems. We try to imprint the young cranes on their own species through use of mirrors and through allowing them to interact with other young cranes. But a few birds, particularly female Eastern Sarus Cranes, still imprint on their human keepers. One group of one-year-old female Eastern Sarus Cranes runs to the fence of their enclosure and starts to dance when we arrive to feed them. Affectionately, we call them the "chorus line." But imprinting on humans can affect mate preference when the birds reach breeding age.

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**Co-Founders: George Archibald  
Ron Sauey**

**Editor: Jim Harris**

**ICF offers memberships at the following annual rates:**

<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$15</b>	<b>Foreign</b>	<b>\$20</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$25</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Associate</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>



This costumed figure, an ICF intern dressed up like a crane, raised this Sandhill Crane chick in 1984. For 1985, we've made some necessary improvements in our crane disguise and will expand our isolation-rearing program. Photo by Abby Marshall.

In the future, we also plan to release offspring of some of our endangered species to the wild. Cranes hand-reared by our current methods are too tame to survive reintroduction. Cross-fostering of endangered species into the nests of other, more common cranes in the wild may allow these birds to survive and breed. These techniques are still being tested with Whooping Cranes by American and Canadian researchers. But for some endangered species, no common species of crane exists within the appropriate regions to serve as foster parents.

Therefore, ICF is developing alternative hand-rearing techniques so that we can reduce imprinting and raise cranes better prepared for reintroduction. We feel that hand-reared birds have three main obstacles to survival in the wild. First, they may not imprint on their own species and therefore have difficulty socializing with wild birds. Second, they may not be able to feed themselves adequately on wild foods. Third, they may not fear predators and fall victim to wild animals or humans.

## Two Crane Models

Last year, as a preliminary attempt at solving these problems, ICF raised a chick in a pen where a model of a crane fed and brooded it. This chick did not see people. The results were encouraging. This year we have organized a major research program on "isolation rearing" techniques. We have permits to collect ten Greater Sandhill Crane eggs from the wild to hatch and rear at ICF. We will house these chicks in special pens behind one-way mirrors. In order to imprint these chicks on their own species, two crane "parent" models will take charge.

"Mama" crane is a stuffed crane body sitting with its wings out in a brooding position. A tape recorder hidden inside the body plays crane calls to the chick. A long sleeve with a movable bill extends from each model. The sleeve resembles a Sandhill Crane head and allows us to feed the chicks without them seeing or hearing people.

"Papa" crane is actually a person in a crane costume. He too played a key role last year with the chick we raised with a brooding model. The chick had stayed close to the model and reacted strongly to the brood calls and head movements. One day we briefly locked the chick out of its pen and replaced this model with a person in a crane costume. We used the same head for both models. Rob Horwich, who is "heading" this study, sat in the costume on the floor where the model had been. We let the chick back into the pen. Slowly Rob began to move around while he played the tape of crane calls. This obviously surprised the chick, but soon it was following the model closely.

Talking about his experience later, Rob said he felt like Pinocchio in reverse. In Pinocchio, the old man Geppetto wished his puppet could become his real live son and he did. Rob felt that in this study, the chick no doubt wished his stuffed parent could become a real live bird — and it did!

When baby "Horwich" (as we named this chick) finally saw people, he gave an alarm call, ran, and hid behind his "parent" in the crane costume.

This year we will greatly expand our study of imprinting through the response of Sandhill chicks to these models and vocalizations. Then when the chicks are eight weeks old we will move them to pens

at a release site where several volunteers will tend them, always dressed in a crane costume. The "crane" will lead them around daily so that they can discover natural foods. Gradually we'll remove their food pellets to encourage natural foraging. Cathy Owen, who is the first joint intern between Site Management and Aviculture, will study the development of feeding behavior in these chicks. In her costume, she will teach them to find and eat a variety of natural foods.

We will also scare them with both people and dogs, to make sure they learn fear of potential enemies. The parent model will defend them or play alarm calls and lead them away.

#### After Release to the Wild

For the next phase of the project, Dr. Ray Anderson and his Master's student John Wood of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point will study the interaction of these chicks with the wild cranes. When our chicks start to fly at about 100 days of age, we will mark them with radio-telemetry units and gradually release them to the wild. Their enclosure will be one-quarter to one-half mile from a staging area for wild cranes to make it easier for them to find and join the wild birds.

Anderson and Wood will monitor the success of these chicks in the wild. Through

the use of the radio tags they will attempt to locate the birds at Jasper Pulaski Wildlife Area in northwestern Indiana, a major fall staging area for all Wisconsin cranes.

Weeks later, these researchers will fly a plane back and forth across Florida to find out if the young cranes successfully migrated to their species' wintering grounds. They will also try to locate the birds the following spring in Wisconsin and examine their behavior relative to wild cranes.

This project is a major undertaking for ICF. If successful, our techniques will be applied to endangered species in their own habitats. We wish to thank the Wildlife Preservation Trust International for funding the equipment necessary for this project, and all of the researchers involved, especially those working as volunteers. We're very excited about this effort and will keep you updated on our progress!

Save September 7, 1985

ICF's  
Annual Meeting

See your next newsletter  
for more information.

## The Bottom Line

by Bob Hallam, Development  
Coordinator

As ICF opens for the 1985 tour season, we thought you might be interested in the results of last year's first full season on our new site. A total of 14,621 people visited ICF, including 4,000 school children. Sales and tour income surpassed \$57,000 and represented 14 percent of our operational income. In 1982, prior to our move, sales and tour income was \$16,000 or approximately 5 percent of our operational income. For 1985, we anticipate a 15 percent growth in sales and tours.

Increased visitation helped ICF in another way. About 200 of our 1984 visitors took out memberships, for an increase in our total membership of six percent.

ICF also did a marketing survey last year with the assistance of Jack Gray of the Recreation Resources Center of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison. Some of the major highlights of the survey surprised us. Of the 14,000 visitors, 89 percent visited ICF for the first time

and only 14 percent were members. Seventy percent decided to visit ICF in the two weeks prior to their tour — with 62 percent making the decision just one week in advance. Sixty-eight percent came to ICF because of their interest in nature and 16 percent because of recommendations. Sixty percent stayed in the area overnight; they were equally split between motels and campgrounds.

We asked a few questions about our education program but one result stood out above all others. Seventy-nine percent rated our visitor program as excellent and 19 percent rated it good. Hats off to ICF's Education, Site Restoration, and Aviculture Departments!

As a result of the marketing survey, we have redirected some of our advertising this year. Most noticeable is a new beautiful four-color brochure designed by Ms. Louy Danube of Merrimac, Wisconsin. Fifty thousand of the brochures will be distributed throughout the summer in the Baraboo-Wisconsin Dells area and in Wisconsin State Visitor Centers.

We hope to see you this year. Bring

## Contributions

Received January - March, 1985

**Grants and Awards:** George Archibald, Bolz Family Foundation, Chapman Foundation, Citizens Natural Resources Association, Clairson International, Mr. and Mrs. Willard Clark, Patrick and Anna M. Cudahy Fund, John and Judy Day, Day Foundation, Demmer Foundation, Donnelly Foundation, Ellinger Foundation, Evjue Foundation, Griggs-Burke Foundation, Paul Johnsgard, Johnson Company Limited of Japan, Johnson's Wax Fund, Kohler Foundation, James Kuehn, Jay Last, McCormick Foundation, Milwaukee Audubon Society, Modine Manufacturing Company, Neenah Foundry Foundation, Lucile Palmaro, Francis Seebe Charitable Trust, Norman Sauey, Tides Foundation, Wetlands for Wildlife, Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society, and Irvin R. Young Foundation.

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your friends and encourage others to visit ICF's magnificent new site. There's no better way to build our membership, or to build support for our work with the cranes.



## The Black-necked Cranes Arrive

Continued from page 3

and sedate, despite her long journey from a foreign country, closed in a box. She walked steadily past the whirring and clicking cameras, better than most humans could have done under the circumstances. She was not tall for a crane, and more gray than white — but we all thought her beautiful as she vanished into her new home.

Lan Lan had been captured as a chick and hand reared. But Yang Yang had been wild caught, and remained afraid of people. Before Yang Yang emerged, most of the onlookers climbed the hill to ICF's old headquarters for coffee and shelter from the wind.

ICF was especially honored by two other guests from abroad, representing their countries' interests in the Black-necked Cranes. Mr. Wu Yikang, Counsellor for Science and Technology with the Chinese Embassy, flew in from Washington, D.C. to welcome the birds. Mr. Prakash Gole of India had also joined us for the arrival. For years, he has studied India's last Black-necked Cranes in Ladakh, working for their protection.

### The Death of Lan Lan

Lan Lan and Yang Yang took well to their new quarters. Both seemed to have weathered their journey in good health.

Then suddenly on the twenty-ninth day after the cranes' arrival, the aviculturists noticed a raspiness in Lan Lan's breathing. ICF's Curator of Birds, Claire Mirande, promptly contacted avian veterinarians for advice. We then tested and treated for a respiratory parasite, the most likely cause of the problem.

We kept a close eye on Lan Lan. Then abruptly the next evening her breathing worsened, so severely that we dared not move her to a veterinary facility. By morn-



Lan Lan, a Black-necked Crane, arrives at ICF. She is welcomed by Prakash Gole, a researcher from India; George Archibald and Ron Sauey, ICF Co-Founders, and Wu Yikang, Counsellor for Science and Technology from the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C. Photo by Keith Robert Wessel.

ing she seemed a little better, and Claire prepared to take her to the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary Medicine laboratory for expert treatment. But when Claire returned to Lan Lan's pen, the bird lay dead.

It has been a shock to all of us. The necropsy report indicated that Lan Lan generally was in good health. But at the first major bend in the trachea, a mucous plug had formed on a lesion in the tracheal wall. Lan Lan had suffocated. We will never know how or when the lesion first formed. At least Lan Lan had suffered from no disease that could threaten Yang Yang or other birds in our flock. Nor did Lan Lan's death appear to result from our care or facilities.

We have thought hard about what we

might have done differently. Probably nothing. Because of the nature of the problem, a veterinarian could not have effectively treated Lan Lan at ICF, nor did we have sufficient warning to take her in for care. Occasional deaths do occur, despite the best precautions. Such losses are part of working with the cranes.

Because of the rarity of this species, it may be years again before we can assemble a breeding pair at ICF. But fortunes seem to be improving for the wild Black-necked Cranes in China. Already the Chinese have preserved certain critical habitats. We have lost Lan Lan, a symbol of friendship and joint effort between ICF and China. But the friendship itself prospers. The loss of Lan Lan has strengthened our commitment to her species.

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## International Crane Foundation

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