

THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes



To Live With the Cranes

by Jim Harris, Education
Coordinator

The great marshes of Asia lie in lowlands, where the masses of people also live. Croplands, pastures, and villages have replaced vast wetland areas. The wetlands remaining, even within nature reserves, are closely bordered by human settlements.

Bian Shan, in China's Jiangxi Province, is one such village. Forty families work the land and nearby waters for their living. The terraced uplands yield rice, mustard oil, green onions, cabbages, and carrots. Nearby Dahu Chi, one of the small lakes within Poyang Lake Nature Reserve (PLNR), provides fish. Then as the waters recede through the winter dry season, the villagers harvest abundant grasses, and herders graze their water buffalo upon the flat lakebed.

With nightfall, the sounds so typical of countless villages across Asia — barking dogs, the cluck of chickens, laughter of the people — soon subside. But far into the night, voices continue from across the mud and water: restless geese, the deeper cries of White-naped Cranes, and the high-pitched bugling of the Siberian Cranes. For the villagers, these cranes are familiar day and night, close neighbors for the long months of winter. Only recently have the people learned that such flocks occur nowhere else on earth.



The local people have a crucial role in the future of wildlife at Poyang Lake Nature Reserve. The cranes share the reserve with sixty villages. ICF's Jim Harris, wearing eyeglasses, stands near the doorway. Photo by Liu Zhiyong.

Young and old they crowded around our telescopes for a better look at the birds.

After establishing the reserve, the Jiangxi Forestry Bureau took the first hard management step, when staff halted the hunting of cranes and other birds. But the day to day activities of the people — out in boats, or simply walking from one village to another — cannot be regulated. As the lake surfaces shrink in late winter, even low levels of human disturbance could force the birds to leave.

Education will therefore have primary importance. I worked with the refuge staff and four ICF members to begin education programs. We visited villages to observe the cranes and talk with the people, distributing written materials adapted and translated from school curriculum materials that ICF uses in Wisconsin. The villages closest to the crane flocks received color crane photographs donated by Danny Weaver of Agri-graphics, Limited of Cary, Illinois. Photographs and written sheets will also go to each of the 80 school classrooms in the reserve. I left behind a battery-operated slide projector and slides so that the refuge staff could continue the village talks. And Sture Karlsson will be sending copies of his slides to China.

But management policies for the reserve will become the most important education tools. Ultimately, the people will go out of their way to help the cranes only if they, like the cranes, benefit from the reserve. The Forestry Bureau plans to provide assistance so that farming and other local activities become more productive without conflicts with wildlife. Tourism to the new reserve will be developed so that local people share in the new revenues.

Jiangsu Province has new crane reserve

I also visited the coast of Jiangsu Province in eastern China north of Shanghai. The world's largest flock of Red-crowned Cranes, 400 to 500 birds, winters here. Scientists from the Jiangsu Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have made careful surveys of the crane habitats and then, a little over a year ago, established the Yancheng Nature Reserve (YNR). The reserve includes all the major crane areas, stretching along 400 kilometers of coastline.

YNR lies on the outside of the sea walls built to protect the people and their homes from the typhoons of late summer. Wetlands along the sea are flooded one or more times a year. As at PLNR, recurring high waters have hindered human activity,



From the sea wall, visitors look across Yancheng Nature Reserve. Vast reed beds, grasslands, and mud flats stretch eight kilometers to the Yellow Sea. Photos by Jim Harris.

To Live With Cranes

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The future of Asia's wetlands, and of their cranes and other wildlife, will depend on the local people. During January and February of 1986, I visited two recently established nature reserves in China, to assist with education and management programs. Up to now, it has been possible for people to live with the cranes. But as human populations and economic developments expand, so too will potential for conflicts with wildlife.

The people at Poyang Lake

PLNR has extraordinary importance for its wintering cranes and other waterbirds. But the 22,400-hectare reserve supports more people than cranes. About 17,000 Chinese live within the reserve borders.

Bian Shan and the sixty other villages of PLNR all occupy high ground. No one lives in the low-lying areas that are inundated when the nearby Poyang Lake rises with the summer rains. The birds find refuge here because of the seasonal cycles of water.

Life is hard for the people. Floodwaters cut them off from roads and utility lines, so that they live without cars and rely on generators for electricity. They intensively farm the limited dry land available in summer. In winter, they use the lowland areas in whatever ways they can.

The human presence is visible everywhere. In mid February, for example, I

could hardly find a patch of uncut grass. Frequently, smoke rose in clouds from the lakebeds — the villagers burn the peat soils, and carry the ashes to their farm plots to enrich the precious topsoil.

As the days passed, I became increasingly impressed by the close proximity of people and birds. Despite the numbers of villagers who depend on the lakebed resources, the cranes still find what they need. The challenge at Poyang Lake is not how to move the people away — an unnecessary and very expensive dislocation — but how to manage the area for the good of both people and birds.

Co-existence here has an excellent foundation. Everywhere, people seemed to like the cranes and the international interest they have aroused. Such good will even caused problems for Sture Karlsson, the Swedish photographer who accompanied me. Sture hired a farmer at Bian Shan Village to construct a photographic blind. But the farmer would not place the blind near the Siberian Cranes. He didn't want to disturb the birds, and instead set the blind on the bluff close beside the village itself. Fine for the cranes, but no help to Sture.

We also visited the fishing village at the far side of this same lake. The 100 people here have little high ground for farming, but each winter drain this most important lake for the cranes and catch up to 300 tons of fish (see **ICF Bugle** Vol. 11, No. 2). Their lives could be transformed by the bird refuge. Yet they greeted us with enthusiasm, and shared news of their cranes.

so that birds have continued to find solitude.

The countryside behind the protection of the sea walls is heavily populated and farmed. Here, again as at PLNR, the people use all available resources, even pruning the roadside trees for firewood. Traditionally, the lands beyond the sea walls have also been exploited.

YNR represents an ingenious compromise between people and birds. One quarter of its area has been designated the central refuge, where about 200 cranes winter. The EPA manages the wetlands exclusively for the cranes and abundant waterfowl. Officials, for example, have recently discontinued reed cutting in the central refuge to reduce human disturbance.

Upon the secondary refuge, birds are protected from hunting and harassment. But many "compatible" activities continue: reed cutting, fishing in either natural waters or artificial impoundments, crabbing, and shrimp farming. The YNR staff cannot patrol all secondary refuge areas, and works closely with local governments. Regular police enforce game laws, and a network of volunteer observers report distribution of cranes and cases of disturbance to the EPA. The police and volunteers also informally promote wildlife conservation in the local communities.

The Red-crowned Cranes mean a great

deal to the Chinese. But the people of Jiangsu Province also worry about impacts of wildlife protection upon industry and commerce. They do not want the refuge to cut them off from the sea. Fortunately, extensive coastal areas remain available for development, outside both central and secondary refuges.

Education efforts at YNR have two main audiences. The many people living just within the sea wall use the secondary reserve lands. Their sensitivity to wildlife is extremely important. But the people of the province as a whole deserve to hear about their wildlife resources. As they learn to value YNR, the reserve's future will grow more secure.

None of the eight schools I visited had ever received a foreign visitor. My arrival had an almost embarrassing impact, as teachers and students alike turned out to greet me. They would have listened to anything I said. But my foreignness was an appropriate emphasis for the slide talks, as wildlife conservation cannot succeed without international friendship. Perhaps for many of the children, cranes are now a link with America and other countries where people love the cranes.

Already YNR is drawing visitors from all over the province. Crane watchers could become a problem for the cranes. As the staff develop plans for YNR, they are finding that management of the cranes and the people are intertwined.

Space for people and birds

Wildlife reserves in China perhaps will never replicate reserves in North America or Europe, where people are excluded. China lacks the funds to attempt large-scale relocation of the people or of traditional resource use. But it doesn't seem necessary to empty the refuges of people.

Poyang Lake, Yancheng, and many other wetland reserves face the same challenges. Officials must accommodate human needs while retaining at least some ability to control water levels, vegetation, and disturbance, all of vital importance for wildlife. YNR's central and secondary refuges may provide an important model for other areas. And PLNR's commitment to research, an essential basis for management, should inspire similar efforts elsewhere. The reserves have much to learn from each other.

The cutting of grasses and reeds is a good example of current management issues. The plants are economically important for fuel and paper production. Yet at YNR, widespread reed cutting in winter has deprived summer birds of nest cover. At PLNR, bitterns and certain other birds were noticeably scarce, apparently because little grass cover remained near water. A selective harvest in the marshlands, leaving extensive areas uncut, would probably benefit numerous birds. Reserve managers may need to help local residents develop alternative sources of income.

The new reserves are rapidly changing, in part because of conditions in the surrounding regions. At PLNR, for example, Siberian Crane numbers at Dahu Chi have increased from 140 in 1981, when the flock was discovered, to over 1400 in 1986. The cranes have been attracted by the special protection they receive in the reserve. But habitats elsewhere around Poyang Lake continue to deteriorate because of disturbance and land reclamation. As birds concentrate at PLNR, the balance between people and birds becomes more delicate.

Perhaps some of the lessons China learns in managing its nature reserves can be applied to the vast wetland areas that will never receive reserve status. In China, I had a glimpse of how people *can* share the wetlands with birds, if they wish. Co-existence is the only hope for cranes in Asia, and elsewhere in the world as well, as human populations continue to grow. If public awareness of wildlife likewise grows, there can be more room for wildlife, rather than less. Education is a priceless opportunity, enabling living cranes to enrich the lives of people.



At Poyang Lake, people and their livestock intensively use the highlands. The lake beds provide ample space for four wintering species of cranes.

Habitat Efforts Evolve at ICF

by Stuart Utley, ICF Ecologist

Gardens, like friends and clothing, are intensely personal, reflecting one's soul and character. A garden's composition, color scheme, and layout can be varied endlessly and the final form says volumes about the gardener. To inherit someone else's garden, consequently, is a decidedly mixed blessing, especially when the previous owner had a passionate love for his patch of ground and a dogged determination to make it a very special place.

Last year, I faced such a challenge when I adopted someone's "garden" — the 65-acre restoration area at the International Crane Foundation. The previous "gardener," Konrad Liegel, had labored lovingly for six years to turn sandy, worn-out, weed-infested fields and woodlots into one of nature's most glorious spectacles, the North American Prairie.

Of course, Konrad didn't plant every seed and uproot every black locust himself: he had a veritable army of volunteers over the years to assist him. But the vision

remained his. The seed compositions were his own special formulas. And Konrad alone decided what trees remained and what trees warmed next winter's hearths.

Last summer, Konrad passed on his hoes, axes, and a wheelbarrow full of responsibilities when he left ICF to begin law school at Cornell University. Fortunately, my job as ICF Ecologist is not simply to maintain what Konrad has already created. Although some of ICF's restored areas such as Federation Fields and the Owen Gromme Marsh are now well established, there are many opportunities ahead. This spring, for instance, we planted the John C. Stedman Prairie in the broad kettlehole depression on the east side of the property.

A new pathway leads from the Johnson Exhibit Pod to the just constructed Restoration Area Overlook. This shelter tops a ridge offering a panoramic view of ICF's restored wetlands, savanna, prairie and oak woodland and, someday soon, a complex of crane breeding pens we call Crane City. In June, we will also construct a colorful display near the overlook that graphically illustrates the numerous steps involved in the restoration process.

Along the new pathway, we are planting intensive displays of prairie plants. This will provide visitors a close look at the intricate beauty of many prairie blossoms. The path

will be paved, allowing wheelchair access. Up until now, only a small portion of our restoration has been visible from the paved paths that give access to all other public areas.

Already completed is a kiosk that stands by the trailhead to our main restoration area. This structure displays a changing selection of photographs of wildflowers currently in bloom. A large map shows trail locations and the various plant communities at ICF, along with the dates that these areas were planted. By comparing restorations of different ages, visitors can see how the plantings mature and change over the years.

Education expands

More visitors than ever are going out into our restored area, in part because of the "crane walk" program we initiated last year. This spring, the education staff will again hand-raise two young Sandhill Cranes, and each day take them for a walk through the prairie. Visitors are invited to come along. It's a great way to see and photograph cranes in a natural setting.

Pathway, overlook, displays, crane walks: all reflect ICF's growing commitment to teaching about habitats. Visitors now receive an enriched sense of how cranes and other wildlife depend on the land. For our foreign fellows and interns studying conservation efforts at ICF, habitat protection and education are the most important messages they can carry home.

Less visible than the on-site additions, but equally important, are the new and revised audio-visual and written materials. A brochure, "Restoring the Land," is now available to visitors, as well as ICF's prairie slide show with cassette narration (the rental fee is \$10). School curriculum packets have also been updated. Each packet includes material on habitat conservation. Finally, this summer we will complete a new curriculum, "The Prairie Project," in which high school students participate in a restoration effort — it will now be possible for schools to help directly in ICF's on-site restoration program.

Unlike static, human-made gardens, the restored prairie and other ecosystems at ICF will continually change over the years, providing new delights and surprises for the alert and sensitive visitor — and challenges for the staff ecologist. I hope our members will share the satisfaction of seeing ICF's land develop by visiting our restored areas often in the years ahead.



The new Restoration Overlook reveals a varied expanse of savanna, wetland, and prairie. We will build "Crane City" on the level field in the far distance. Photo by Jim Harris.



ICF's daily crane walks introduce visitors to young Sandhill Cranes and to the prairie in full bloom. Photo by Jim Harris.



Konrad Liegel brought the native prairie back to ICF's land. These showy sunflowers grew from seed Konrad planted in 1982.

ICF Dedicates Prairie

The Federation Fields, initially planted five years ago, are now beginning to look like true prairie. The area will be formally dedicated in ceremonies to be held July 18 and 19, when the prairie bloom is at its peak. Members and guests are invited to attend four special events:

- **Habitat Protection at ICF and Abroad: the Key to Saving Cranes.** Public Talk by George Archibald, ICF Director. July 18, 7:30 p.m. To be held at the Robert Brown Theatre, University of Wisconsin Center, Baraboo. Take Highway 33 into Baraboo, turn north on Connie Road, then turn east into the campus.
- **Restoring the Land at ICF.** Public talk by Stuart Utley, ICF Ecologist. July 19, 8:45 a.m. at Cudahy Visitor Center, International Crane Foundation.
- **Prairie and Wetland Walk.** Tour of restoration area led by Stuart Utley. July 19, 9:30 a.m. starting from the Restoration Area Overlook.
- **Public Dedication Ceremonies.** July 19, 10:30 a.m. on the Federation Fields Prairie.

Crane City: Primary Goal for ICF's Fund Drive

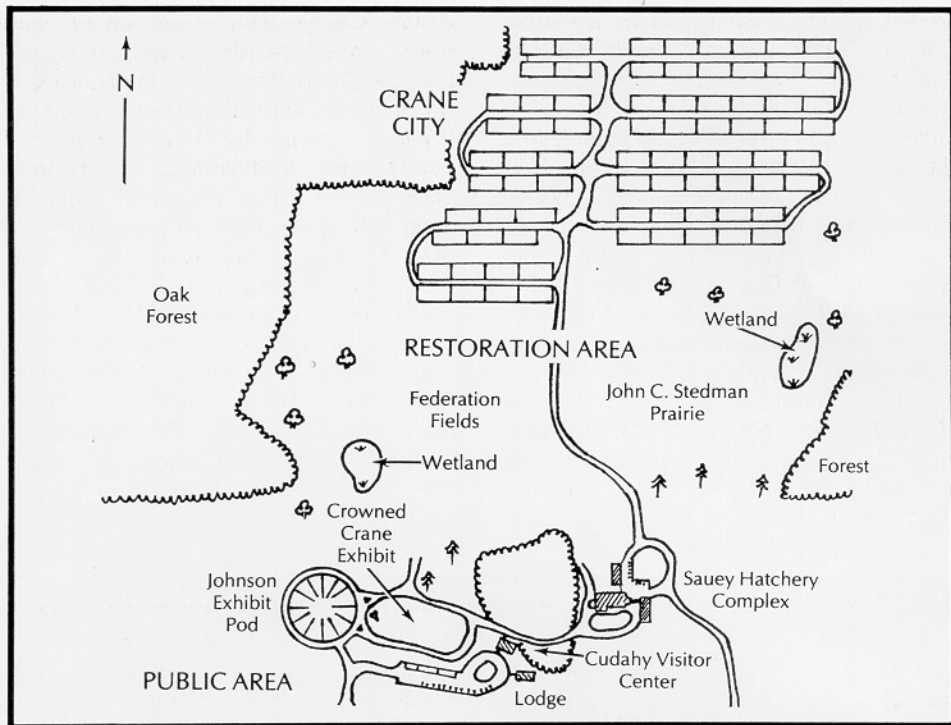
by Ron Sauey and Bob Hallam

Back in 1972, a local building contractor received a call about a job on the Sauey horse ranch just north of Baraboo. Could he spare a few men to build nine bird houses? "Sure," replied the unsuspecting contractor, "I'll send a couple men over this afternoon."

But a couple of men working for one afternoon was hardly sufficient to complete the project. As the two carpenters discovered to their amusement, the "bird houses" were not for wrens or bluebirds, but for cranes and each measured 15 by 30 feet complete with skylights and cement floors. It took nearly two months and a crew of six workmen to complete the nine bird houses.

Fourteen years later, these same houses are still being used for cranes. But the rest of ICF has long since moved — lock, stock, and incubator — to our new location on Shady Lane Road. We haven't moved all our birds for the simple reason that we still lack the necessary "bird houses." We must still use our old outdated pens and service two locations five miles apart.

The solution to the problem? Simple. We call it "Crane City." Like our old pens, Crane City will be a system of fences and shelters. But we've learned a few things



"Crane City" will occupy the rear portion of our land, where breeding cranes will be far from unnecessary disturbance. Member support of ICF's capital fund drive, "A Gift to the World," will allow construction to begin. Drawing by Robert Filmer.

since 1972 and our new Crane City will be the "state of the art" in crane propagation.

For instance, Crane City will consist of a series of "duplexes" that will allow us to rotate each pair of birds between two outdoor enclosures. This will prevent a build-up of parasites, viruses, and bacteria in the soil.

Many of the indoor enclosures will have heated floors. Each pair of cranes will also have a cement pool that can be filled with water during warm weather.

Crane City will be far larger than our first series of pens. ICF's crane population has grown in the last decade and we estimate that initially we'll need at least 50 breeding pens and 26 enclosures for young birds. That's where ICF members can become involved.

Members asked to contribute

ICF's "Gift to the World" development program has now reached its first planned plateau. Over the last eight months we've received gifts and pledges totalling almost \$500,000. This represents about a third of the capital portion of our fund drive. To build Crane City and to complete our move to our new facilities, we must raise the next one million dollars.

That goal will require the full support of ALL our members. If you continue to feel

pride and satisfaction in your involvement with the crane cause, we ask you to pledge generously. Stapled in your *Bugle* is an envelope for our "Gift to the World" campaign. Help us reunite ICF's separated flock!

Gifts and pledges

We wish to thank all of our members and friends who have already supported the campaign (through March, 1986):

Shirley Abrahamson; Helen Murray Albrecht; Abigail Avery; Badger Meter Foundation; Ineva R. Baldwin; Rex Bates; John S. Best; Raymond R. Brown; Eleanor Briggs & Mark Sokol; Mr. & Mrs. Thomas J. Burns; Curtis & Myrtle Busse; Colin Case; William M. Chester, Jr.; Dr. John Constable; Patrick & Anna M. Cudahy Fund; John & Judy Day; Gerda Debelak; Edward Demmer Foundation; Alma Doten Trust; Thomas E. Donnelly II Foundation; Douglas Dynamics Foundation; Mr. & Mrs. Richard Durrell; Mrs. Jane Easthan; Ellinger Foundation; Evjue Foundation; Dr. James Ferwerda; Thomas Fifield; Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Findley; Bernice Ross Flaningam; Robert F. Foote; David & Joan Fordham; Wood & Elizabeth Foster; Chappie & Sophie Fox; James Gallagher; James Goodwin; Mary Livingston Griggs & Mary Griggs Burke Foundation; Nina B. Griswold; Owen & Anne Gromme; Groote-maat Foundation; D.W. & M.L. Haag;

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

Editor: Jim Harris

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



Robert & Victoria Hallam; Harry & Marion Hill; Frederick & Grace Haub; Carlotta Hutchinson; Dr. & Mrs. Robert Jackson; Thomas H. Jacob Foundation; Mrs. Kenneth Jacobs; Johnson Controls Foundation; Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Jung; Warren B. King; Mr. & Mrs. Donald Koskinen; Charles A. Krause Foundation; James Kuehn; Linda Noe Laine; Frank Larkin; Arthur J. Laskin; Philip Lerman & Sarah Dean; Gwen Levine; J. DeNavarre & Marjorie Macomb; Marquette Electronic Foundation; Dorothea Mayer; McCormick Foundation; Betty Meyer; David G. Morton; Werner Nartel; Charles & Mary Nelson; Mr. & Mrs. M.E. Nevins; Charlotte Oglesby; Fred Ott; Dorothy Pain; Dr. Judith Patrick; Lt. Col. Mary Patterson; Audrey Pertl; Peters Foundation; RTE Foun-

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ICF Members Invited to Study in China

ICF members and their guests will have two opportunities for crane watching in China in 1987. You will find no better way to learn about some of the rarest and most beautiful cranes, and to become involved in ICF's international efforts.

Poyang Lake Nature Reserve: ICF needs help counting the cranes wintering at Poyang Lake in southeastern China. A team of six to ten people will leave in early January of 1987, for about eighteen days. They will continue surveys initiated in 1985 and 1986: of Siberian, White-naped, Hooded, and Common Cranes as well as a host of other water birds.

No scientific background is necessary, only a willingness to work and learn. We also have a special need for photographers and for persons interested in visiting schools and villages to discuss crane conservation. All costs for this work-expedition will be tax-deductible.

International Crane Workshop: in early May of 1987, the International Crane Workshop will convene in Qiqihar, near the Zhalong Nature Reserve in northeastern China. A limited number of spaces are available for interested members. Four days will be devoted to research reports and conservation meetings, while two days will feature trips to Zhalong, probably China's most important wetland for nesting cranes. You'll have a chance to see four or more

crane species, and meet crane enthusiasts from forty nations. Following the workshop, participants can take a special tour to additional nature reserves in northeastern China.

Please write Joan Fordham at ICF if you would like to get on the mailing list for either the Poyang Trip or the International Crane Workshop. More information will be available this summer.

Photo Excursion to Japan

Plans are being made for a 19-day photo/natural history tour of Japan in February, 1987. The trip will feature opportunities to photograph Red-crowned, White-naped, and Hooded Cranes, as well as Whooper Swans and Japanese Snow Monkeys in hot springs. The trip will include time to explore Tokyo and Kyoto, the Sapporo ice-carving festival, and a visit with the vanishing aboriginal Ainu people whose dances mimic the graceful courtship of the sacred cranes.

ICF is helping Wild Horizons, Incorporated plan this tour. Wild Horizons specializes in photographic expeditions. Their guides are professional nature photographers prepared to help you capture images on film that anyone would be proud to take home.

We would appreciate knowing how many of you find the idea exciting, before we finalize arrangements. Prices are not yet available. If you are seriously interested, write or call Joan Fordham at ICF (608-356-9462) before June 30.

Save Saturday, September 27, 1986:

ICF's Annual Meeting

See your next newsletter for more information.

Beidaihe: Forty Years Later

by Martin Williams,
Leader, Cambridge Ornithological
Expedition to China, 1985

We arrived on the 15th of March, 1985 at Beidaihe, a seaside resort in north China about 280 kilometers east of Beijing. The trees were bare, the grass yellowed by the dry cold, ice was strewn along the tideline. But we had crossed Eurasia from England in hopes of finding cranes and other migrant birds, and were now on our first tour of the town. The seafront was quiet. But as we walked back toward our hotel, we were elated to see 47 Common and 13 Red-crowned Cranes heading north, low over the fields — the latter, ghost white in the gray afternoon light.

It is forty years since cranes were last recorded at Beidaihe, which lies on a flyway used by vast numbers of birds that winter in China. Before liberation, Beidaihe drew foreign tourists. The spreading turmoil of World War II prevented a Danish scientist, Axel Hemmingsen, from leaving Beidaihe. From 1942-45, he kept extremely thorough records of the bird migration.

The site had also attracted earlier observers, and in 1919 a stone plinth was erected. Its inscription testifies to the enduring nature of this flyway, in its allusion to dynasties that rise and fall while the wind continues to sing in the forest and the cranes are still heard in the mountains.

On 16 March we began our daily counts of passing birds. Few migrants appeared until 21 March, on what proved to be a "wave day." The morning belonged to the

Bean Geese. But from around noon three species of cranes passed in a succession of flocks against a background of blue sky or distant mountains. The day produced 631 Common, 128 Red-crowned, and 122 Siberian Cranes.

Migration at Beidaihe has a wave-like nature, due to the periodicity of weather in the area. We found that wave days correlated with falling air pressure, and that there were gaps of five to six days between such conditions. Cranes appear particularly responsive to this periodicity: 5,2667, 72% of our total, passed on just four days.

Our records, together with those of earlier observers, show the Red-crowned Cranes to be early migrants. Numbers peak by March 21. Most Siberian Cranes pass from 21 to 26 March, while Hooded Cranes move through in late March and early April. The Common Cranes' passage is relatively protracted, presumably a re-

flection of their abundance. But most Commons pass toward the end of March.

In April our attention began to shift toward songbirds. We left Beidaihe on 2 June, after recording 285 bird species.

Our totals of 309 Hooded, 244 Red-crowned, and 4,409 Common Cranes exceeded Hemmingsen's spring counts and thus gave no indication of a population decrease. Our 652 Siberians were similar to Hemmingsen's spring count in 1945, and may suggest a decline. Our five-man team provided much more intensive coverage than Hemmingsen's solitary effort.

The migration at Beidaihe is a precious opportunity to compare changes in bird numbers for eastern Asia over a forty-year period. Our study suggests, for example, that Great Bustards have heavily declined since Hemmingsen's day. We plan to return to Beidaihe for autumn of 1986 to study the southward migration.



The Lotus Hills near Beidaihe overlook a corridor of lowlands between the mountains and the Bohai Sea. Thousands of cranes migrate through here each spring and autumn.

International Crane Foundation

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