



# THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

## Meeting Coordinates Help for Siberian Cranes

by George Archibald, Director

Saving an endangered species is like plugging a leaky bucket that's already nearly empty. You have to fix all the holes as soon as possible, before the water is gone.

In this case, we're talking about the two western populations of the Siberian Crane, both critically endangered. Although 3,000 birds remain in the eastern population that winters in China, that population may be adversely affected by the Three Gorges Dam now under construction.

The western Sibes breed in northern Russia and migrate across the continent to spend the winter in India and Iran. There are probably two discrete flocks. The India flock has declined from about 200 birds three decades ago to perhaps fewer than 10 individuals. During the past two winters, not a single wild Sibe has appeared at the traditional wintering grounds, Keoladeo National Park in India. The breeding ground for the Iran flock has not been discovered, and only seven were observed last winter on their wintering grounds in the Caspian lowlands of Iran.

While nesting Sibes are protected by the remoteness of their breeding grounds, they are at risk during their long migrations across many Asian nations, some of them torn by war. As in our bucket analogy, there are many places where action must be taken to reduce risk from hunting and other dangers during migration, and on their wintering grounds.

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, signed in Bonn in 1979, provides an international structure under which nations that share the range of the Siberian Crane (the "range states") can cooperate. There are nine range states for the two western populations; while most of these countries have expressed concern for the Sibe's predicament and some have undertaken vigorous conservation programs, never before

have most of the nations (eight) met to discuss cooperative plans for conservation and recovery of the species.

The first meeting of the Range States to address problems facing the western Sibes was called for May 15-18. Twenty delegates from nine nations assembled for two days at the Gorbachev Center in Moscow, then travelled by bus to the Oka Nature Reserve where a captive flock of Siberian Cranes produces eggs and birds for release programs. During formal meetings in Moscow, and informal discussions on the bus, plans were laid to help the Sibes.

The Russians are advanced in crane research. Dr. Alexander Sorokin is their leader in surveys to locate and then protect wild cranes, and in efforts to bolster their numbers by releasing captive-reared Siberian Cranes with wild cranes on the nesting grounds of the population believed to winter in India.

At the other end of the 3,000 mile migration route, Indian colleagues are maintaining

excellent habitat for the Sibes at Keoladeo National Park. They hope to investigate ways that Eurasian Cranes, a common winter visitor to India from Russia, might be used to help bring Siberian Cranes back to India. Surveys of Eurasian Crane flocks east of Keoladeo and studies of their migration routes will be undertaken to find a flock that migrates through safe areas and that winters near potential Siberian Crane habitat. Perhaps these Eurasian Cranes can lead captive-reared Sibes on a new and safer route to India. In the meantime, both Oka Reserve and ICF have provided several Siberian Cranes for public education at Keoladeo.

The migration route to India crosses the Hindu Kush mountains of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Crane hunting for food and for sport along this part of the route is believed responsible for the decline of the flock, especially since this population is strictly protected on both the breeding and wintering grounds.

*Continued on page 4*



This historic meeting in Moscow was the first to include most nations sharing the range of the western flocks of Siberian Cranes. Seated from l to r: Abeeullah Jan (Pakistan), Arvinder Brar (India), Vladimir Flint (Russia), Dan Westbrook (US-Chief of Amoco Operations in Russia), Douglas Hykle (Canada-Secretariat of Bonn Convention), and Jim Beckstrom (US-Amoco).



# Your Voice Needed in Endangered Species Debate!

by Rob Nelson  
Education Program Assistant

June 1, 1995

Dear Madam or Sir,

*I am a fourth grade American Citizen, future voter and caretaker of my country. Some day I might be a parent and I want my children to have a safe, clean environment. You share the responsibility of my future as well as my children's future.*

*I share this responsibility as well. Let me tell you what I've done to make a difference in my world. My class of 2003 worked very hard on an Endangered Species Project by involving two communities to participate in a raffle and auction which raised \$5,164.10...!*

*Since I am not old enough to vote, would you do something for me? Will you help in any way you can to pass the Endangered Species Act and not let it be altered so it becomes weaker?*

*Environmentally yours,*

*Joey Ness*

Letters like this one (printed with original spelling) are often received at ICF. It's refreshing to realize how many youngsters have a keen knowledge of the threats facing cranes and other wildlife. As adults, it's our responsibility to share that awareness and seize opportunities for action.

In Washington, D.C. and in state legislatures across the country, environmental safeguards are increasingly under attack. In particular jeopardy is the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Established in 1973, the ESA currently protects approximately 950 U.S. plants and animals, ranging from charismatic eagles, alligators, and bears to inconspicuous asters and mussels. The law prohibits the harming of endangered and threatened species and prevents federal agencies from damaging critical habitat.

## ESA helps Whooper recovery

Among the original species "listed" under the ESA was the Whooping Crane. Since listing, the Whooper population has grown from 68 birds to nearly 300 today.

"There have been some noteworthy gains from recovery activities," explains Jim Lewis, Whooping Crane Coordinator for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Additional funding from the ESA allowed the captive Whooping Crane population to be split in 1989, with 22 Whoopers arriving at ICF. Establishment of a third Whooping Crane breeding center at the Calgary Zoo, as well as ongoing experimental reintroductions of subadults into Florida, are also the result of ESA support.

In addition, ESA provisions have protected the Whoopers' winter home along the coastal wetlands of Texas and slowed habitat degradation along the Platte River, a critical stop-over point during migration.

"It hasn't been perfect," says Lewis, but "things would be a lot worse [on the Platte] in the absence of the Act."

Like the Whooping Crane, nearly 40 percent of the species protected under the ESA are "stable or improving," according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—whose annual endangered species budget costs taxpayers less than the construction of three miles of urban highway. Included among the success stories are the bald eagle, gray wolf, least tern, peregrine falcon, and Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly.

Although it has been labelled as economically burdensome, the ESA has stalled only a handful of development projects. A General Accounting Office audit showed only 23 projects were stopped out of 18,211 federal agency "consultations," between 1987 and 1992.

Still, threats to the ESA concern Lewis. "We don't know if the Act is going to survive at all," he warns. Even if the ESA passes in name, changes in funding and staffing could cripple its work.

## Make a difference!

While the ESA represents the "broadest and most powerful law to protect endangered species and their habitats," it is "only one part of a comprehensive set of tools," according to the National Research Council. Like the ESA, many other items in the toolbox are also under attack.

Amendments to the Clean Water Act could remove protection for many wetland areas, while new laws limiting the scope of govern-

ment regulations and expanding the compensation for "taking" of private property are also moving through Congress.

Individuals can have an impact on federal and state policies by keeping abreast of pending legislation and sharing views with their representatives. Many measures currently under consideration could have extraordinary impact, so the time to be heard is now.

Keeping up-to-date on pending measures is critical. Newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, and *Wall Street Journal* include daily coverage of Congress, while the *Congressional Quarterly* offers more comprehensive weekly reports.

Legislators and their staff welcome letters, phone calls, faxes, even e-mail messages from their constituents. A direct connection to congressional offices can be made through the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. ■

Joey Ness' letter included a breakdown of how 4th graders at the Roland-Story Elementary School (Story City, IA) intend to spend the \$5,164 they raised for endangered species.

The students will:

- Spend up to \$400 to join conservation organizations;
- Purchase "Trumpeting the Cause of Wetlands" T-shirts;
- Help fund fencing and aeration projects at a site which will host a nesting pair of swans in 1996;
- Donate \$500 as seed money for next year's class; and
- Invest in a mutual fund to be spent by the senior class of 2003 to help endangered species.



Great herds of elephant, Cape buffalo, and waterbuck once covered this floodplain. Efforts are underway to restore flooding to the people and wildlife of the Zambezi Delta. Photo by Rich Beilfuss.



# Wattled Cranes in the Great Zambezi Delta

by Rich Beilfuss  
Wetland Ecologist

Few places evoke a sense of wildness like the great Zambezi River of Africa. When we imagine the explorations of Dr. Livingstone, the plunge of Victoria Falls, or the unparalleled wildlife of Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Zambia, we are charting a course along this powerful river and its tributaries. Some of the most astounding wetland wilderness in Africa—the Okavango Delta, the Kafue Flats, the Zambezi Delta—are fed by the Zambezi system.

The fate of the Wattled Crane (see photo, page 8) also depends on the Zambezi. The Wattled Crane's need for vast expanses of undeveloped floodplain, and a nesting cycle that is carefully timed to begin with annual peak flooding, usually make the birds highly susceptible to wetland degradation.

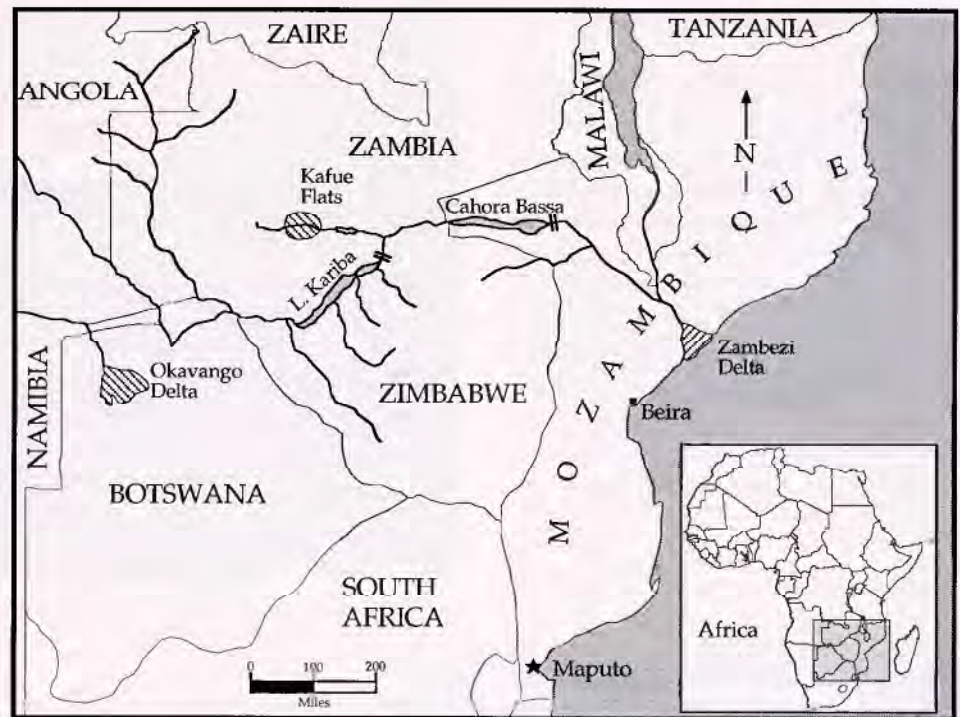
In Mozambique, however, Wattled Cranes seem to be more tenacious. Since 1990, colleagues from South Africa and Mozambique have observed more than 2500 Wattled Cranes, including scores of breeding pairs, in the Zambezi Delta.

These observations are unexpected because the Zambezi Delta is one of the most disturbed wetlands in Africa. Four-hundred-foot-high walls of two of the world's largest dams, the Kariba and Cabora Bassa, plug the mighty Zambezi upstream. Biologically-rich floodwaters no longer fan across the 75-mile wide delta. Uncontrolled fires rage across the now-parched landscape.

Mozambique has only recently emerged from a brutal 15-year civil war that left it one of the poorest and most ransacked countries in the world. And so fishermen of the Zambezi floodplain, having lost their livelihood to dams and war, now rely on wildlife for survival. Buffalo, hippos, and elephant are being extirpated from the delta.

In the face of such devastation, we marvel at the Wattled Cranes' persistence. But for how long? With support from the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation in Milwaukee and the Mava Foundation in Geneva, I traveled to Mozambique this past spring to work with Mozambican and South African conservationists. I hoped to learn how ICF could help revitalize the Zambezi Delta. Our team included David Allan (a top ornithologist from South Africa), Ilidio Covane and Salgado Khomo (two spirited Mozambican natural resource officers), and Vincent Parker of the Mozambique Bird Atlas Project.

After visits with conservation officials in the capital, Maputo, we set off on an adventurous 1000 mile journey through Mozambique in



The Zambezi River of Southern Africa flows from headwaters in Zambia and Angola to its delta in coastal Mozambique. The Zambezi basin supports most of world's population of Wattled Cranes. Maps by Milford Muskett.

an old Land Rover. We saw a country struggling to resume normalcy after a generation of war. Children huddled around a teacher and blackboard outside the bombed remains of a school. Minesweeps cleared a roadway to forgotten villages.

Eventually, we reached the central port of Beira, 130 miles south of the delta. We had planned to continue our trip by Land Rover, but villagers warned us that recent rains had washed landmines onto the road. Our journey by land was over.

Fortunately, South African pilot Howard Walker descended from the clouds to meet us at the Beira Airport. Howard, a private businessman and crane enthusiast, had volunteered his Cessna aircraft and piloting skills for a survey of the delta. Lindy Rodwell of the Southern African Crane Foundation, who helped organize the trip, also joined our team.

During the following week, we conducted the first comprehensive waterbird survey of the Zambezi Delta by air. Flying back and forth along closely spaced transects that covered key floodplain areas, we counted the waterbird and mammal species we could identify from the plane. We also recorded data to help assess the overall state of the delta, including village locations, land-use practices, flooding patterns, and fire scarring.

As the floodplain landscape rolled by my cockpit window—as I took in the vast grasslands, palm savannas, oxbow lakes, papyrus swamps, and mangrove forests—I was at once thrilled and saddened by the realization that this was perhaps the most important wetland

on the east coast of Africa. We were excited to observe at least 58 pairs and several large flocks of Wattled Cranes across the sedge-carpeted floodplains—one of the largest known populations of this endangered bird. Substantial populations of Openbilled and Saddlebilled Storks were also encouraging.

But we were also dismayed by the obvious degradation of the delta and its wildlife. More than 55,000 buffalo once blackened the floodplain, but we observed less than 1,000. One small herd of elephant, hidden in a small patch of forest, was all that remained of the hundreds that used to roam the delta. Aggressive weeds choked the old waterways, once kept open by hippos, and displaced important native species.

A key to restoring the Zambezi Delta lies in the return of the flood. ICF will work with Mozambican and South African experts to develop a feasibility plan for reflooding the Zambezi Delta. A prescribed release of floodwater from the Cabora Bassa dam, timed with the normal flooding season, will be designed to mimic the natural flooding times and patterns of the delta. Similar efforts have been undertaken in the Senegal River Basin in Senegal and Pongolo River in South Africa.

Of course, flooding cannot solve all the problems facing the impoverished delta. But, in conjunction with a major project sponsored by the African Development Bank which will remove mines, reduce poaching, and rebuild the infrastructure, flooding offers new hope for the Zambezi—and the people, cranes, and wildlife that depend on it. ■



Although crane hunting has been outlawed in most regions of Pakistan, there are still tribal areas that follow their own rules. Pakistani colleagues attending the workshop indicated their desire to convene a training program for crane hunters, with the hope that the hunters might eventually become conservationists. In many nations, hunters strongly support conservation.

The location of the breeding area of the Iran flock remains unknown. This mystery is being tackled by both Iran and Russia. Efforts will be made in Iran next winter to attach tiny radios (tracked by a satellite) to the legs of two wild cranes. The satellite will map the crane's migration route north to the nesting grounds. At the same time, the Russians will send questionnaires to teachers and hunters across arctic regions of western Russia, asking if anyone has seen the Sibes.

Public education throughout the range of the Sibes is vital, so ICF will produce a 30 minute video about these special birds and their problems. The video will be narrated in nine languages and distributed to each of the range states.

Conservation of migratory species has to be regional to be effective. You have to plug all the "leaks." This historic meeting was the first to bring together most of the countries sharing the western populations of the Siberian Crane. In a part of the world that has a long history of friction between nations, this was a wonderful opportunity to strengthen already existing cooperative programs, and to welcome new nations into the cooperative network. Economic times are hard for some of these nations, but our common love for the cranes offers an incentive for all to work together, despite difficulties.

It was a glorious experience to share five

days with old and new friends who are committed to helping the Sibes. I remember in particular the words of Mr. Azizi of the Embassy of Afghanistan: "Now that peace has come to my country, it's time to rebuild. Please come and help." Consequently, in March of 1996, I hope to join Pakistani conservationist Ashiq Ahmad in an expedition to Afghanistan—to learn and, we hope, to help.

*Editor's Note: The meeting was organized by Douglas Hykle, Secretariat of the Bonn Convention, with help from the Russian Institute for Nature Conservation and ICF. The workshop was an enormous success, thanks to financial support from the United Nations Environment Program, Lufthansa German Airlines, and Amoco Corporation. ■*

## My Life with the Cranes

by Sueharu Matano

Today, cranes are found in only three places in Japan. On Japan's northern island, Hokkaido, 607 Red-crowned Cranes are breeding. On the island of Honshu, 27 Hooded Cranes spend the winter. And on the southern island of Kyushu near Izumi City, 8,000 Hooded Cranes, 2,000 White-naped Cranes, and usually a few Eurasian, Sandhill, Demoiselle, and Siberian Cranes spend the winter.

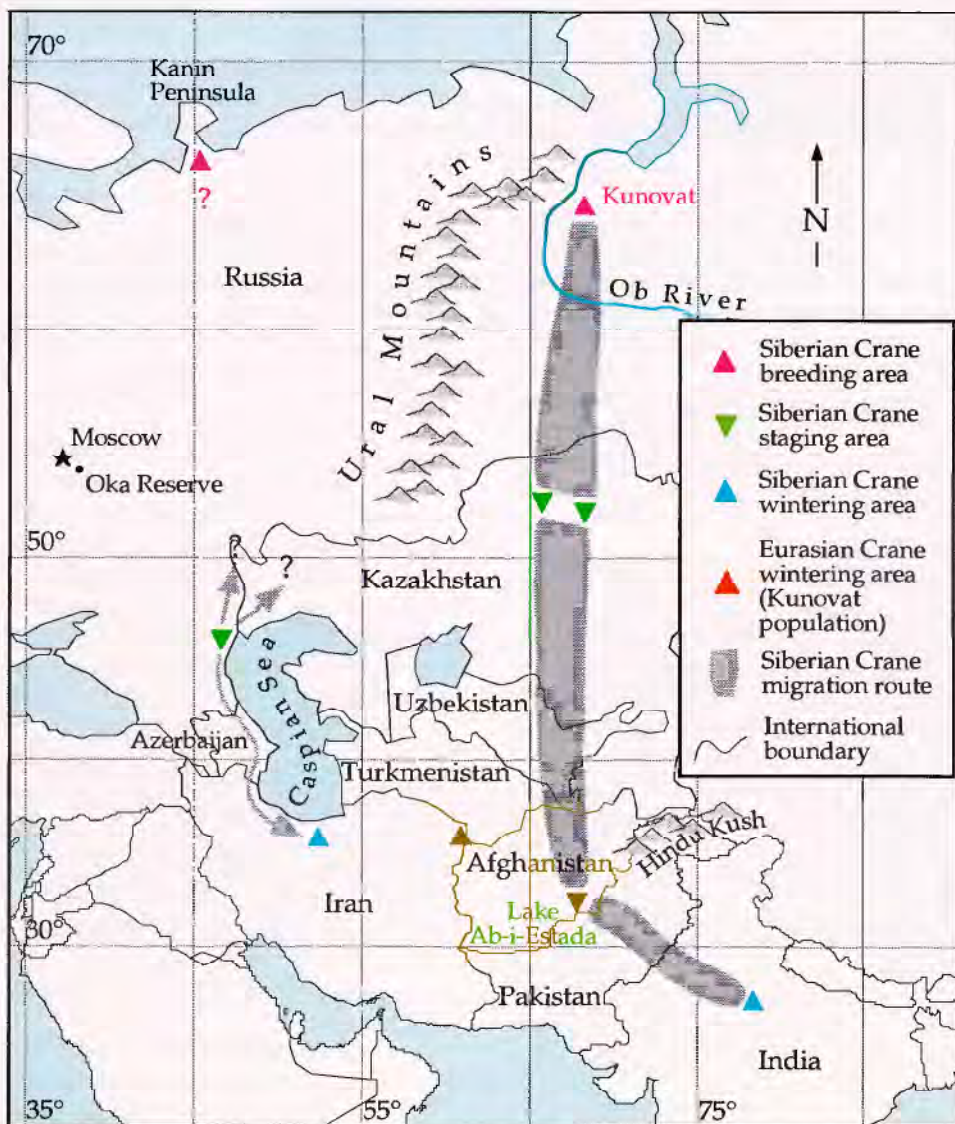
### Crane season begins

The cranes arrive at Arasaki, near Izumi City, in October. The size of the protected area is about 125 acres. The cranes go to sleep at 8:00 p.m., roosting in 7.5 acres of rice fields where natural wells gush water. The cranes are so quiet one can hardly imagine that nearly 10,000 cranes are near.

At 6:00 a.m., family groups of three or four birds leave the roost. At this time, we make a quick count of the cranes. Every morning from October to March, we scatter 1300 pounds of wheat over 125 acres of rice fields, feeding about 9,000 cranes.

During the day, the cranes visit other nearby rice fields, eating grass roots, worms and insects in the soil. As they search for food, the cranes dig holes on the paths between rice fields, picking up stones and throwing them onto the rice fields. Repairing this damage to the fields costs millions of yen every year. We are looking for ways to avoid such damage.

Early in February, in addition to the wheat, we feed the cranes fresh sardines to develop their strength for the long flight to their breeding sites. Then, on a fine, cloudless morning in mid-February, a male White-naped Crane of one family begins to cry "Croo, croo." Soon he and his family launch into the sky, then circle many times. Other families also take wing, one after another. Now the cranes form a long line, like a snake in the sky, heading gracefully to the northwest. The crane season is over.



This map shows the range of the two western flocks of Siberian Cranes. Between the wilderness of western Siberia and the Hindu Kush mountains of Afghanistan, the Siberian Cranes migrate across three new nations—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Uzbek and Turkmen delegates reported that Siberian Cranes were seldom seen, even when crane populations were higher, suggesting that the cranes move rapidly between wetland staging areas of northwest Kazakhstan and Lake Ab-i-Estada, where the cranes are more regularly observed.





The cranes of Izumi are known worldwide because of their large populations, the variety of species, and the ease of access to visitors. The cranes can easily be seen in rice fields, only 20 minutes by bus from a railway station. Photo by Sture Traneving.

### History of cranes at Izumi

Long ago, before the Meiji Restoration of 1867, there were many cranes all over Japan because hunting was strictly prohibited, except by the heads of clans. The late Iino wrote the following historical account of cranes at Izumi: "It is certain that in the Edo Era (before The Meiji Restoration), every winter cranes visited the Arasaki rice fields, where there was a wetland before the head of the Satsuma Clan drained it. This was probably 150 years ago. When the Kagoshima Railway Line was opened in March of 1921, the government designated the Arasaki area of Izumi as a special natural monument and game preserve. Soon people became aware of the importance of Arasaki as a wintering ground for cranes, and of the large number of cranes. But on the other hand, as the population of cranes increased, the damage to farmland also increased. The farmers were proud of the cranes, but at the same time they worried about their rice fields. Finally they complained about it to the government."

### Childhood memories of cranes

In 1926 when I was in the first grade, the two thousand cranes wintering at Izumi were crowded and lively. In the town of Arasaki, there was a theater named "Tsurumiza," meaning "crane watching theater." The cranes then were scattered, not concentrated in one place as they are today.

I used to walk to the seashore along an unpaved road. The exposed roots of pines made it bumpy, and reeds hung over my head. But it was enjoyable to walk, and sometimes I stopped walking and just sat down on the road. I would see flocks of cranes flying home to roost, and I would call out to them.

Along the shore, pines formed a windbreak. My parents would ask me to gather pine

needles for starting fires. In October, cold winds blew when the cranes started to arrive. The land where the cranes came was reclaimed from the sea—probably former wetlands. Natural foods for the cranes were plentiful—mud snails, small fish, wild plants and so on.

Before the war, my father planted a winter crop of wheat and rape seed. The cranes liked to eat the sprouting plants, so we took turns guarding crops from the cranes. Once, when I returned from school, my father shouted at me, "Cranes are in the field! Drive them away immediately!" I fought to get rid of them, but it was no use. The cranes flew a short distance, but soon they returned. I was exhausted and sat down.

When war in China broke out, I was sent to China as a soldier. In 1940, north of Shanghai, I saw about fifty cranes. They reminded

me of the cranes in my hometown. How I wished to return home, even if it meant hanging on a crane's legs as the bird flew all the way from China!

In 1945, I came back to Japan from Thailand, and saw how the miseries of war had also affected the cranes of Izumi. The population, once numbering 2,000, had declined to only 200.

But I didn't have much time to think of the cranes, because we were suffering from a food shortage. I was given 0.7 acres of rice by my father and worked very hard to produce food.

### Crane feeding begins

In 1952, I began to feed cranes as a conservation measure, with the late Mr. Magoichi Okada. In 1959, when a rare Siberian Crane arrived, the late Shinji Takano and Tadashi Yoshii of the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology visited Izumi to observe the bird. Suddenly Izumi City became famous for its wintering cranes. A "Crane Conservation Club" was organized and the Mayor, Mr. Shibuya, became president. Mr. Okada and I visited many farmers to persuade them to protect the cranes. As a result, the number of cranes that came in the winter of 1963 reached 1,000.

But the White-naped Cranes wouldn't eat the food we offered. Instead, they damaged crops, and farmers began to complain bitterly about the damage. We tried again and again to feed the White-naped Cranes, but without success. We sprinkled more food over a wider area, but instead, a large flock of ducks ate everything.

Then I noticed the paths between the rice paddies, and had an idea. I tried spreading wheat on the graveled paths, where it might be difficult for the ducks to reach the food. Sure enough, a family of four White-naped Cranes came to eat the food on the pathways—

*Continued on page 6*



Mr. Matano, manager of the Izumi Crane Reserve, on a recent visit to Kinghanski Nature Reserve in Russia. Mr. Matano is one of the world's leading crane conservationists. His dedicated efforts in establishing and continuing winter feeding stations over almost four decades have benefited most of the world's Hooded and White-naped Cranes. Photo by Naoyoshi Yoshio.



## My Life with the Cranes

Continued from page 5

and the ducks stayed away! It was now November of 1961, a year after Mr. Okada had passed away. I went to the cemetery and told the good news to Mr. Okada in front of his grave.

I always appreciated the farmers who cooperated to save the cranes. Mr. Okada and I worked hard, managing to increase the cranes to the same populations as before the war. Nevertheless, because of the rapid increase in cranes, some people are now saying there are too many. But I disagree. This complaint is only from the human point of view. Many cranes breeding in Asia depend on Arasaki, and fly here every year over long distances. I want to continue to watch them, appreciate them, and help even more. ■

## Contributions

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**Lufthansa**

ICF's Official Airline

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

**Editor:** David Thompson

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<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$20</b>	<b>Foreign</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$30</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Associate</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>



## ICF Endowments Provide Stability

by George Archibald, Director

ICF's operational income is derived from grants (44%), memberships (25%), tours and sales (21%), and investment income (6%). Usually grants are awarded annually from the government, foundations, and corporations. Because grants are competitive and uncertain, they are referred to as "soft funds."

In contrast, income from membership, tours, sales, and investments is more predictable, so these monies are referred to as "hard funds." You can't decide whether or not to pay the phone bill depending on whether a grant comes in, so ICF has to have a dependable source of funding for day-to-day operational expenses. ICF's objective is to eventually secure most of its operational needs from "hard funds." We hope to increase "hard funds" through strengthened marketing efforts.

ICF will continue to depend on "soft funds" for special projects such as construction of new buildings or exhibits, and for overseas initiatives. These projects are not included in ICF's annual operational budget, but instead are undertaken only if the grants are secured.

Since the untimely loss in 1987 of ICF co-founder Ronald Sauey, and ICF Trustees Owen Gromme in 1991 and Abigail Avery in 1993, three endowment funds have been established in their names, funds that in June of 1995 totaled \$775,000. These endowment funds will generate \$45,000 of income to support ICF operations this year.

The Ron Sauey Conservation fund helps support the Ron Sauey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation. The Owen and Anne Gromme Endowment supports ICF's day-to-day operational needs. The Stuart and Abigail Avery Fund for Conservation Education helps support our Education Department and its outreach to the general public.

We are hopeful that people who believe in our work will assure its continuation by supporting ICF's endowments—one of the three funds listed above. You can provide support either by contributing to one of the funds, by willing assets, or by establishing a new fund in a new name. For additional information on ICF's endowment program, please contact Bob Hallam at ICF. ■

## Send Your New Address

If you move, please notify Barb Charais at ICF of your new address. Such simple favors can save ICF about \$500 a year—money that could otherwise be spent on the cranes!

When we don't have your new address, we keep sending the *Bugle* to your old address. The mailman sends it back, and charges us for the postage and address correction. Usually the *Bugle* is damaged in the process, so we have to send a new one, with more postage at full first class rates. So please help by sending ICF your new address. ■

## Volunteers Needed for Work Trip to China

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is organizing an expedition to Cao Hai Nature Reserve, Feb. 20-Mar. 9, 1996. Volunteers will assist with Black-necked Crane observations, conduct a waterfowl survey, and give slide talks at local schools. At Cao Hai, cranes are more approachable than anywhere else in China. The survival of cranes there depends upon the integration of conservation with farming and other economic activities.

Although experience with waterfowl identification is helpful, no prior research experience is necessary. A willingness to learn is essential. Cost for the trip is \$2,450 (a tax-deductible contribution), plus air fare. For more information, contact Jeb Barzen at ICF. ■

## ANNOUNCING:

# ICF's 21st Annual Meeting

## Saturday, September 16, 1995

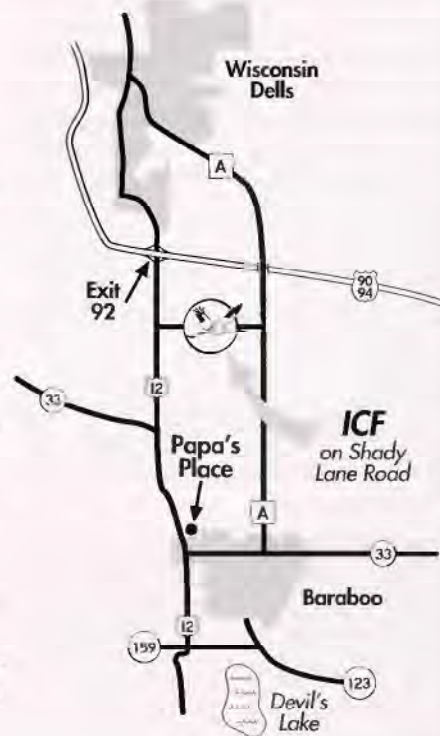
ICF members and their guests are invited to attend the annual meeting and dinner. Reservations are required, so please use the form provided below. Be sure to respond by September 8, since space is limited.

## SCHEDULE

10:00, 1:00 & 3:00 Regular tours.  
11:45 a.m. Flight Demonstration.

### SPECIAL EVENTS for members & guests:

- 1:00–4:30 p.m.: **Exhibition of Paintings** by Russian wildlife artist Victor Bakhtin. Lower level of Sauey Library.
- 1:30 p.m.: **Crane City Tour**—a rare opportunity to see ICF's breeding facility. Or, **Restoration Tour**—see ICF's prairie, oak savanna, and wetland restorations.
- 3:30 p.m.: George Archibald introduces the new **Amoco Whooping Crane Exhibit**.
- 5:30 p.m.: **Hospitality Hour** (cash bar) at Papa's Place.
- 6:30 p.m.: **Annual Meeting Program** at Papa's Place starts with dinner, followed by a slide presentation by George Archibald, focusing on highlights of 1995, including ICF's work in Cuba, Mozambique, and construction of the new Whooping Crane Exhibit.



Please clip or copy, and mail to: ICF, P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913-0447.  
Reservation deadline—September 8

- \_\_\_\_\_ Please make dinner/program reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ people.  
My check for \$17.00 each is enclosed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ This will be my first time attending an ICF annual meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I cannot attend the meeting, but please send me a copy of the Annual Report.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



# Wattled Cranes in South Africa

by Dr. Warwick Tarboton, Ornithologist  
Transvaal Nature Conservation Division

The Wattled Crane, *Grus carunculatus*, is one of South Africa's five endangered bird species and much has been written about its threatened status. From a range that once extended as far west as the Cape Flats, the bird is now virtually confined in South Africa to the uplands of KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Transvaal. The Wattled Crane nests in large, undisturbed wetlands and it is the disappearance or loss of this habitat that is thought to have been primarily responsible for the species' reduction in range and numbers and for its present precarious situation.

The KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Transvaal populations, which together number about 100 breeding pairs, have been monitored by the respective conservation authorities in these provinces for more than a decade. In the late 1980s a number of Wattled Crane chicks in these populations were caught and marked with color rings in order to establish where such birds moved once they became independent of their parents. In all, about 20 such chicks were marked by staff from Natal Parks Board and the Transvaal's Chief Directorate of Nature and Environmental Conservation. But, disappointingly, no resightings of these birds were made once they had left their parents' breeding areas, and the project was discontinued.

In September 1994 the Wattled Crane pair shown in the accompanying photograph was discovered nesting in a remote marsh north-east of Wakkerstroom in the south-eastern Transvaal. The assumed male (on the right) wore an orange/green color ring combination,




The resighting of this pair of Wattled Cranes, banded seven years earlier, proves that two populations of the crane in South Africa are not genetically isolated. Since the article below was written, two more of the 20 banded chicks have been sighted, one 254 miles south of its banding site. Photo by Warwick Tarboton.

revealing that it had been ringed as a chick seven years previously (in September 1987) by Nature Conservator Rob Filmer at a breeding site 12 miles west of the present nest.

The assumed female (orange/blue color combination on right leg, blue ring on the left leg) was ringed as a chick by Nature Conservator Greg Laws near Underberg, Natal, in the same month and year as the male. This bird had moved about 217 miles from its natal area to the present nest site. In Wattled Cranes the sexes are visually indistinguishable and in this instance their respective sexes were inferred by the assumed male being the larger and more dominant bird. The pair were incubating a single egg.

This resighting is of special interest as it indicates that the KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Transvaal populations are not genetically isolated (as had been previously thought); also that the female dispersed over a much greater distance from the natal area than the male. It was also pleasing to discover that at least two of the cohort of chicks ringed in 1987 had survived into adulthood and had paired up to breed. Of even more interest, though, will be to follow this pair's progress in the years to come. ■

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