

THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

The Demoiselle Cranes of Khichan

by R. G. Soni
Chief Conservator of Forests
Indira Gandhi Nahar Project

The Kurjan or Demoiselle Crane is our smallest migratory crane, coming regularly to India in very large numbers. In Rajasthan alone over 6,000 Demoiselles must be wintering at places like Khichan, Tal Chhappar, Kolayat, Gajner, Gukda, Bharatpur, Barmer, Kota, and Bundi. But Khichan is unique, perhaps in the whole world, since it is only here that hundreds of cranes can be seen every day without fail from September to March, feeding in an area densely inhabited by people.

Credit goes to Shri Ratan Lal Malu, who feeds the cranes twice a day, from donations received for this purpose, and also to the exemplary, disciplined behavior of all villagers, who love the birds. I am sure this place will attract many tourists interested in birds. I also hope it will receive its share of attention during implementation of the recently sanctioned tourist development project for Western Rajasthan.

Khichan is a small village in Phalodi Tehsil of Jodhpur district, 4 miles east of Phalodi on the Phalodi-Nagaur road. Tourists going from Bikaner to Jaisalmer or from Jodhpur to Jaisalmer via Osian might enjoy a brief stop at Khichan to see the large numbers of Demoiselle Cranes. They will have to time their visit, however, to reach Khichan in the morning between 6:30 and 9:00 a.m., or in the afternoon between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Tourists particularly interested in birds and cranes would do better to reach Khichan about half an hour before sunrise, to observe an extravaganza they will long remember—the arrival of the cranes at the feeding area.

I first saw this place two years ago. I reached the feeding place ("Chugga Ghar") about 45

minutes before sunrise. It was very quiet, pleasant, and tranquil, like most villages. The feeding place is a small enclosure, 200 feet on a side, fenced with barbed wire, and is situated at the very edge of the village. A small house stores the feed (wheat, jawar, etc.) for the cranes. About 20 minutes before sunrise, I heard their calls—"kurr, kurrj"—and also saw a dark skein in the distance, coming from the north. About 30 cranes landed just outside the fenced area in the sandy nalla bed to the west of the village.

Soon cranes started coming in wave after wave, 30-50 birds at a time, mostly from the north. Usually, most of these birds rest at a pond at the Village Bap about 20 miles north of Khichan. As the cranes arrive they call loudly, making the morning very lively. Some cranes circle over the village and call, as if informing Mr. Malu, who resides about 1,000

feet away, "The cranes have arrived, so come and give feed."

Malu's routine is also well set. Just a little after sunrise, he appears and scatters over 110 pounds of grain within the enclosure. Even while he is spreading the feed, some cranes have already come into the enclosure and others soon join, jumping and calling. Many times, more than 500 cranes crowd in and around the enclosure. In addition, a large number of Blue rock pigeons and peacocks gather. Mr. Malu goes home, but the cranes remain for about two hours to polish off the entire feed. After having their fill, they fly off to a pond half a mile to the east, or to other ponds in the area.

The cranes arrive again in the afternoon around 4:00 p.m., the time when Mr. Malu usually feeds them a second time. Mr. Malu

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For over a hundred years, Demoiselle Cranes have been coming to the desert town of Khichan (India) to spend the winter. The villagers love the cranes, and have recently formed a society to protect and feed them. Here we see the cranes massed in early light at the feeding area. Photo by M. Decler.

Aldo Leopold and the Endeavor Marsh

by Curt Meine
Crane Action Plan Coordinator

In July of 1934, Aldo Leopold and his brother Carl stopped at Endeavor Marsh while returning from a fishing trip. The famed American conservationist had received word that the marsh held a remnant band of breeding Sandhill Cranes. If so, they would be among the last in the state of Wisconsin, and perhaps in the entire upper midwestern United States.

Leopold had more than a layman's interest in the cranes. A year before, he had been appointed Professor of Wildlife Management (the nation's first) at the University of Wisconsin, and had published *Game Management*, the first textbook in the field. The profession that he was instrumental in creating was beginning to apply its principles not just to game animals, but to all forms of wildlife—and especially to those threatened by the mounting pressures of 20th century economic and technological change.

Acting on a tip that cranes could be found near "the old Mitchell place," Leopold dropped in on W. J. Somerton [sic], a farmer who had lived near the marsh since 1874. Somerton told Leopold that 3-4 pairs had nested on his farm before the turn of the century, and that during migration his meadows were "black with cranes"—as many as a thousand at a time. By the early 1930s, however, migrant cranes were few, and just one breeding pair persisted. The pair, Somerton said, usually stayed near an oak opening at the edge of the marsh. He pointed to it, and invited his visitors to have a look.

Leopold had seen wild cranes in other parts of the country, but he had never seen breeding Sandhill Cranes in Wisconsin. By the 1930s, few of the state's once extensive wetlands had escaped alteration by ditching, drainage, conversion to agriculture, road-building, peat fires, sedimentation, pollution, or elimination of the adjacent prairies, savannahs, and forests. And as the marshes went, so went the cranes. But Endeavor Marsh, by virtue of its being almost level with nearby Buffalo Lake, presented an unusually difficult challenge for wetland drainers. It had escaped the drainage fervor of earlier decades, and yet held cranes for farmers to tell about, and for professors to chase after.

"We went over there," Leopold wrote in his field journal, "and were standing under the oaks, scanning the marsh with glasses, when with loud trumpeting the pair flushed from the edge of the woods not a gunshot away. It was a noble sight."

The encounter at Endeavor Marsh changed Leopold—and, through Leopold, helped to shape the course of conservation history. Be-

fore visiting the Somerton farm, Leopold had a casual interest in cranes; afterwards he became a student of cranes. Over the next few years Leopold communicated with other enthusiasts, including Owen Gromme and Lawrence Walkinshaw, in an effort to better understand the status of cranes. Leopold set his graduate students to the task, too, asking them to keep an eye open for cranes during their field work in the marshes of central Wisconsin. They surmised that there were perhaps twenty-five breeding pairs in the entire state, at only a few locations, including Endeavor Marsh.

Leopold continued to receive regular reports from interested citizens. During the spring of 1935 migration, Amanda Kimball of Briggsville, near the Endeavor Marsh, wrote to him: "My brother-in-law... asks me to report to you that there are now in the vicinity of Endeavor Marsh some (300) three hundred Sandhill Cranes."

Also in the spring of 1935, Aldo Leopold acquired an abandoned sand country farm just a few miles south of Endeavor Marsh. As he began to learn more about the local landscape, and to appreciate the role of cranes within it, he began to look upon both with new and deeper insight. Two years later, in 1937, he would pen his memorable essay "Marshland Elegy." It opens with a description of a morning flock of migrating Sandhill Cranes:

High horns, low horns, silence, and finally a pandemonium of trumpets, rattles, croaks, and cries that almost shakes the bog with its nearness, but without yet disclosing from

whence it comes. At last a glint of sun reveals the approach of a great echelon of birds. On motionless wings they emerge from the lifting mists, sweep a final arc of sky, and settle in clangorous descending spirals to their feeding grounds. A new day has begun on the crane marsh.

Leopold might well have been describing the Endeavor Marsh with these words, but in them he captured the essence of any one of a thousand Wisconsin marshes that had once hosted cranes.

In "Marshland Elegy," Leopold described the geological, ecological, and human history of the Wisconsin marshes. Set against that background, the crane took on a special significance in Leopold's science, writing, and thinking. "Our appreciation of the crane," he wrote, "grows with the slow unraveling of earthly history.... When we hear his call we hear no mere bird. He is the symbol of our untamable past, of that incredible sweep of millenia which underlies and conditions the daily affairs of birds and men."

But as the marshes shrank under the pressures of modern development, the Sandhill Crane—along with the diversity and wildness it symbolized—retreated. In unusually tart language, Leopold wrote that, for the cranes, "the song of the power shovel came near being an elegy. The high priests of progress knew nothing of cranes, and cared less. What is a species more or less among engineers? What good is an undrained marsh anyhow?"

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The lure of big profits spurred muck farmers to gamble on converting wetlands to fields. This photo shows a lettuce harvest at the Chickering-Jacobson farm on Endeavor Marsh, July, 1955. The workers, mostly children, were divided into five teams: cutters & trimmers, box assemblers, packers, box closers, and loaders. The work started before 5 a.m. and ended by noon, to avoid heat that could spoil the crop. Standing in center: Sylvester Chickering, II (left), and K. Jacobson. Photo by The Portage Daily Register.

The Death of Endeavor Marsh

by David Chickering, ICF Volunteer

I grew up on a 500-acre farm among Michigan lowlands, where my family grew onions and other vegetable crops.

In 1953, my father and his business partner, Kelly Jacobson, bought about 2,000 acres of pristine marshland near Endeavor, Wisconsin. There, our family turned marsh into productive muckland for an intense and very wrenching ten years.

We moved from Michigan to Wisconsin when I was fifteen years old. The first time that I saw the Endeavor marsh, I was overwhelmed by the vast sweep of its untouched, primeval wildness. Ten thousand years old, the marsh was large and deep, the remains of a shallow lake left by the retreating ice sheet. Before we cleared the land, it contained areas of tamarack swamp, thick brush, clumpy grass mounds interspersed by soupy muck, and floating mats of tall grass that undulated and quaked with every step.

We tamed the land where the craggy, handsome Paddy Chapman had trapped for decades. He told of traversing the treacherous floating bogs on marsh skis, seeing mink and mallards in the wild areas, and catching immense snapping turtles. Open water deep in the marsh attracted reclusive waterfowl. Old-time residents like the Summertons told of families of Sandhill Cranes, whose plaintive cries exalted the vast marsh. We also heard of poachers who shot Sandhills for trophies or food.

Few people ventured into the marshland guarded by poison sumac, or struggled through the tangle of tamarack roots, clouds of insects, or treacherous mud. But I clambered through the swamp, often barefoot, leaping from tussock to tussock across widening areas of "loon-goop." Deep in the swamp, I found dead tamaracks topped with massive nests, occupied by herons gazing eerily down at me.

My dad faced the challenge of developing the 2,000 acre marsh into a productive vegetable farm. This entailed digging miles of ditches, while constructing levees, dikes, roads and pumping stations. We plowed the land with immense plows that could bury a stand of 30-foot poplars in furrows four feet deep. Yet, we might encounter tamarack roots that had laid buried for 1,000 years, formidably tangled and able to defeat almost any plow.

Newly-developed marshes could produce prodigious amounts of onions, carrots, and head lettuce, yielding more than 1,000 jumbo cases of sweet head lettuce, or over 30 tons of carrots per acre. But unlike normal upland farming, farming muckland was a high-investment venture, because we were fighting nature. To attain the high yields, we had to add



The Endeavor Marsh in May, 1985, looking east. The Chickering-Jacobson farm was located in the far east of this view. The Nature Conservancy now manages a 428-acre sanctuary named Summerton Bog (lower left), home to the pickerel frog (once listed as threatened in Wis.) and up to nine species of orchid, including the threatened small white and showy white lady slippers. The sanctuary covers just a fraction of the former wetland area. Photo courtesy of The Nature Conservancy.

tons of mineral fertilizer per acre. Without fertilizer, the land remained sterile and incapable of supporting any commercial crop.

The drained land was prone to many disasters. Buffalo Lake waited to flood the croplands through rain-weakened dikes, sometimes damaged by burrowing muskrats or malevolent beavers. Once the water table was lowered, mucklands oxidized, disappearing into thin air as carbon dioxide. As the peat oxidized, the fields sank again below the water table. In response, we had to deepen ditches, and increase our already expensive pumping. The soil became sticky when wet and prone to wind erosion when dry. The blowing soil cut whole fields of tender seedlings off at the surface.

Aging muckland also faced the intrusion of troublesome weeds. We had to extensively hand-cultivate, or apply high levels of herbicides.

Occasionally, an acrid smell would guide us to a patch of smoldering peat as big as a house, caused by a discarded cigarette. We dared not walk where ashes lay white on the surface, for fear of falling through into an underground furnace. These fires could burn relentlessly for years if not stopped.

During the same decade, other farmers arrived from Michigan. By rapidly bringing large areas of central Wisconsin marshland into production, these farmers overproduced, unwittingly driving down the price of their crops far below costs. Vegetable crops couldn't be stored until prices improved. Success in clearing marshland had brought chaotic markets and economic disaster.

My family had only one good year on the muck farm. In the end, floods, late frosts and virus infestations prevailed, melting whole fields of crisp lettuce into slimy detritus. Increased use of pesticides failed to stop infestations of the insect vectors. Then we started to see the same oxidation, erosion, and fires that had driven Michigan farmers to Wisconsin.

Our land produced bountiful crops when all factors could be controlled. However, the cultivated marshland was both expensive to create and unpredictable to maintain. Economics drove the use of chemicals by the ton—these toxins still contaminate the local food chains. Those years were stressful for my family because we battled nature and lost. But farmers are always battling nature. What really killed us was the chaotic market for our crops.

Farmers converted the wetland because of the potentially huge profits, but there were also many intangible rewards. My father would go out with my mother after a long day's toil, and stand at the edge of the field, watching the sun go down over a ripening crop. Fine food for thousands of people. That was his payback for all the stress and frustrations.

Today, I see something different—an area of total desolation. In some abandoned muck farms, fields are so full of toxins that nothing can grow. My most vivid memories of the dying wetland are of plowing a large tract of mature trees into flat muckland, and of driving a ditch-digger across a 10,000-year-old spring, which seemed to gush its essential water like a living creature suddenly ripped open. ■

Demoiselle Cranes

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spreads more than 220 pounds of feed every day, as he has done for more than 15 years. He gets donations for the feed from various people all over the country—mostly marwaris engaged in business. It is a treat to see so many cranes feeding without fear of people. Even an occasional autorickshaw going along the road just outside the fence does not cause much disturbance, though some birds do take off, only to land again after a few minutes. It is a lovely sight to see cranes resting on high sand dunes to the west of the village.

Demoiselle Cranes begin arriving on their winter migration during the last week of August or the first week of September, and leave for their breeding grounds around the middle of March. Mr. Prakash Chandra Jain of Khichan has been maintaining records of their arrivals, departures, and numbers.

The Demoiselle Crane breeds in southeastern Europe and Central Asia during May and July. Like all cranes, they have graceful courtship displays—leaping, bowing, jumping, and dancing. The nest is an untidy heap of grass and reeds in a swampy area, where two greenish or yellowish-grey eggs are laid. Incubation is shared by both sexes. The chicks leave the nest upon hatching. When the young are about one and a half months old, they are already capable of long migratory flights.

Cranes have loud, trumpet-like calls produced by a long and coiled wind pipe. In some parts of India, both the Demoiselle and Eurasian cranes are found together. They feed on the young shoots of crops—wheat, gram, and paddy, but they also devour a lot of insects harmful to crops.

I have great admiration for the people of Khichan, who show so much affection towards these lovely birds, and do not disturb them in any way. The Demoiselle Cranes are locally called "Koonj" or "Kuraj," names that sound like their calls. They have made a place for themselves in our culture. There are folk songs about cranes which are sung by local artists and played by police bands. Perhaps due to its migratory behavior, this bird has been described as a messenger, particularly of a young lady tormented by separation from her husband, who is engaged in business far away. Here is a translation of one of the songs, entitled "Oh crane, arrange a meeting with my beloved."

*On seeing a pond cranes happily shriek,
But a separated couple suffers terrible grief.
Cranes land with a lot of clamor.
Whenever awakened I am alone,
I would have killed a foe but can't kill a crane.
I had a dream while fast asleep.
My beloved was asleep in a colorful palace.
Crane, my sister, convey my message.
Oh cranes, help me meet my beloved.*

The Crane Feeding Station at Khichan

by Prakash Jain, Secretary
Society for Crane Protection & Care

About four hundred years ago, the village of Khichan was established. When I was ten years old (in 1948), my grandfather told me that Demoiselle Cranes had been coming here when he was a child, so the cranes have been visiting Khichan for at least 115 years.

As a child, I was very fond of feeding the cranes with my grandfather. He told me that the King of Jodhpur State had banned the hunting of Demoiselles more than 150 years ago.

The people of Khichan have fed the Demoiselles for several reasons. An ancient astrologer of this village believed that feeding the cranes maintains peace of mind by controlling the evil planet Rahu (Dugons). The people here also have a strong belief in charity, particularly for birds and animals. More than 30 years ago, the village was full of people belonging to the Jain Philosophy—and the basis for Jain Philosophy is non-violence and charity.

The people of Khichan have always liked the cranes because the crane family structure resembles that of Ancient Indian families. The cranes follow their head or chief, and there are no remarriages. The cranes also know how to live with scarcity, in a region where famine among the human inhabitants is common. When the people observed the cranes feeding on small stones, they took sympathy on the cranes. This is one of the most important

reasons why people have been feeding the cranes. Fortunately, the cranes do not harm the farms, because cranes are easily scared away.

For the last ten years, people of the village have been feeding the cranes at a special place. The area is fenced so that other animals cannot harm the cranes. In 1993, the Society for Crane Protection and Care was founded to organize our crane work. In addition to feeding the cranes, we keep injured cranes that are unable to fly at a separate place. But since we have no medical facilities, not all these birds survive. We feed about 220 pounds of grain a day. Since the number of birds and grain needed is increasing every year, we have to write letters for donations to our friends and relatives.

Due to publicity from two television programs on Khichan, and to a booklet on the "Birds of Rajasthan," the numbers of Indian as well as foreign visitors and bird-watchers are increasing. Some of them give donations for feeding the cranes.

But there are obstacles to our work. Villagers have houses on two sides of the feeding area. Since there is a road on the third side, there is only one direction that we can expand the feeding area. And since donors give money only for purchasing grain, we have no money for increasing the feeding area. Funds are also needed for development programs in the village. In addition, some visitors disturb the cranes, so we need to build a gallery and tower for visitors. We must also work to remove the electric poles and wires from the sides of the feeding area.



At the edge of a village, the feeding area is hemmed in by buildings on two sides, with a road on a third. But the cranes are quite tame. Their loud calls resound throughout the village. With their numbers increasing, the cranes are starting to attract tourists. Photo by M. Decler.



The cranes rest during the day at several nearby ponds, where they share the water with cattle, camels, and villagers. J. Philippona wrote: "Following some narrow streets, we arrived at the edge of Khichan. Walking through a passage in a dike, I was surprised by a brilliant spectacle—several hundreds of cranes were standing or walking around the shores of two small lakes in an almost barren landscape." Photo by Harsh Vardhan.

The number of cranes visiting Khichan is increasing. Before 1984, nearly 200 cranes used to come. But after 1984, the number grew, until in 1994, there were nearly 6,000. So it is essential to arrange more funds to meet our future feeding requirements.

Editor's note: Habitat destruction, and to a lesser extent crane feeding, are two factors contributing to an increasing concentration of

*cranes in many parts of the world. Spectacular numbers of cranes can be seen at a few favored sites such as Khichan, Izumi (Japan), and the Platte River (USA). While the great flocks draw public attention, thus improving awareness of conservation, there can be negative consequences of increasing crane concentrations, such as the danger of disease outbreaks. We hope to discuss these issues in a future **Bugle** article. ■*



Many inhabitants of Khichan belong to the Jain religion, which strongly encourages charity and respect for life. A hundred years ago, many men had to work far from the village. The women, pining for their absent husbands, imagined that the cranes would carry messages to their loved ones. Photo by M. Decler.

Improved Survival for Florida Whoopers

During winter, 1992-93, the first Whooping Crane chicks reared by ICF and the Patuxent Environmental Sciences Center were released on Kissimmee Prairie in central Florida. They were the vanguard for a reintroduction effort to establish a second wild flock of Whooping Cranes. In **The ICF Bugle** (August, 1994), we reported that mortality from the first two winters of release had been 56%, all due to bobcat predation.

A variety of approaches have been tried to reduce predation. At ICF, we modified rearing procedures, teaching the chicks to roost (stand) in open water where they would be less vulnerable to the cats at night. The release area at Kissimmee Prairie was moved six miles from Lake Marion to the Overstreet Ranch, where large areas of open water and grazed land give the cats less cover for stalking the cranes. Happily, agricultural uses of the land are compatible with cranes, and the program is an excellent example of cooperation between private landowners and conservationists.

The Whooper chicks are following the movements of local Sandhill Cranes, benefitting from their wariness and experience. Though some of the Whoopers have wandered up to 70 miles in any direction, they appear to know where home is, and usually return to the release area. Most residents of the area welcome the big white cranes, which are also beginning to attract tourists.

By the end of last winter, 52 chicks had been released, with 21 surviving (as of Oct. 12, 1995), a 40% survival rate. But the survival of birds released last winter has been higher—12 of 19 have survived (63% survival). Even more encouraging, as many as four pairs may be forming. Two of the pairs have shown territorial defense, nestbuilding, or copulation. Next spring, we may see full breeding behavior in some pairs.

Steve Nesbitt, of the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, coordinates the reintroduction effort. He said: "We're encouraged by these results. We're improving our techniques, and survival is going up. The big emphasis is reducing mortality in the first month. We hope eventually to achieve 70% first-year survival."

During the winter of 1995-96, ICF will ship another 13 birds to Florida for the reintroduction effort. Aviculturist Marianne Wellington is busy preparing the chicks for their new life away from "home." The chicks that have been raised by costume-reared humans are now being habituated to a costume covered dummy. After the chicks are released in Florida, the dummy will be used to attract the chicks to areas where it's safe for them to be. ■

What's Happening in ICF's Departments

Education Department

Gordon Dietzman, Education Coordinator, reports visitation to ICF of over 30,000 by mid-October. The new Whooping Crane exhibit is a must for all members—relax in the amphitheater and enjoy the Whoopers close-up in a natural setting. Two staff reporters from Voice of America toured ICF in October with plans for VOA's "Traveling America" program to include segments on international crane work. VOA is heard by 100 million per week, with broadcasts in 47 languages. The National Audubon Society is producing a video program about cranes, with ICF cooperation.

Species Survival Department

- Coordinated funding and logistics with 8 zoos, sending 6 Red-crowned and 8 White-naped eggs to Khinganski Nature Reserve for release
- Raising 2 Waddled, 2 Black-necked, 4 Siberian (2 for India release), and 11 Whooping Crane (Florida release) chicks
- Researched satellite transmitter design on captive Siberian Cranes
- Gave tour to Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt
- New staff: Nancy Businga, Vet. Tech.; Jeff Gerencser, Aviculturist; Kelly Drengler, Bird Keeper.

Field Ecology Department

The Conservation Technology Support Program awarded ICF a computerized Geographic Information System (GIS). This will allow us to visualize at a single glance and analyze information from a variety of sources, such as maps, satellite images, and aerial photos. The GIS will assist projects such as assessing Waddled Crane habitat in the Zambezi Delta of Mozambique, or analyzing soil erosion problems around Cao Hai Nature Reserve in China. ■

The **ICF Bugle** is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Articles review ICF programs as well as crane research around the world.

Co-Founders: George Archibald
Ron Sauey

Editor: David Thompson

ICF offers memberships at the following annual rates:

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

Field Trips to the Platte River

According to Paul Johnsgard in Crane Music, "The Platte Valley and the adjoining shallow marshes of the 'Rainwater Basin'... host... one of the most spectacular concentrations of migratory birds to be found anywhere in the world." Esther Caporelli said of her ICF field trip: "It was an incredible experience to be in a blind at dusk to hear and see an estimated 30,000 cranes come in to their roosting site, and also to realize that this phenomenon happens no where else on earth... It was awesome!"

This is a special trip for people who want to experience the cranes and observe other birds in surrounding areas in a relaxed atmosphere. The trip includes two dawn/dusk visits to the best blind in the Rowe Sanctuary, one seldom available to the public. Between visits to the blind, you can go birding at your own pace, using background materials and maps we supply.

Your guide will be ICF volunteer Jim Rogers, veteran of six seasons on the Platte. Jim has also assisted ICF on field trips to China and Tibet, where he studied the rare Black-necked Crane. Jim serves as your guide to the blinds and leads an orientation session, introducing a first-rate packet of maps and background materials.

The trip fee includes two visits to the blind with Jim Rogers, lodging (with hot breakfast included) at the best motel close to the cranes, briefings by Rogers on road conditions and current hot-spots, a packet of background materials and maps, and a tax-deductible donation to ICF. The fee does not include transportation to/from the Platte River, transportation within the Platte area, or other

meals. This plan provides maximum flexibility for each person. Take advantage of this trip now—it may not be offered in 1997.

March 29-31, 1996 (2 nights, weekend): Orientation, evening of the 29th. Visit blinds at dawn and dusk on the 30th, with birding on your own in between. Return home on the 31st. \$300 (\$50 surcharge for single occupancy).

April 1-4, 1996 (3 nights, weekdays): Avoid the crowds at birding spots and have more time for birding on your own. Orientation, evening of the 1st. Visit the blind at dawn on the 2nd and at dusk on the 3rd. Nearly two full days for birding on your own in between. Return home on the 4th. \$365 (\$70 surcharge for single occupancy).

For more information, or to reserve your place with a \$75 non-refundable deposit, contact Rose at (608) 356-9462. ■

North American Crane Workshop

The Seventh North American Crane Workshop is scheduled for January 10-13, 1996, in Biloxi, Mississippi. There will be technical sessions, workshops, field trips and an awards banquet. Contact Scott Hereford at MS Sandhill Crane NWR, 7200 Crane Lane, Gautier, MS 39553. (601) 497-6322. ■

Trip to Far East of Russia

ICF Trustee Tom Hoffmann will lead three bird-watching trips to the Amur River region of Russia from Seattle: May 27-June 13, July 1-18, and Sept. 16-Oct. 3. For more information, call Elena Smirenski at ICF or Tom Hoffmann at (312) 663-1800. ■



Tanya Konovalova (left—Druzhina for Nature Conservation, Russia) and Li Feng (Northeast Forestry University in Harbin, China) track radiotagged cranes near Briggsville, Wisconsin. Both are participating in an ICF project led by Li Ying Harris to study the impacts of cranes on agriculture (and vice versa) in Wisconsin. The effects of cranes and agriculture on one another are one of the key issues for crane conservation in many parts of the world. Photo by Li Ying Harris.

Bird-A-Thon Results

by Bob Hallam,
Development Coordinator

ICF's seventh annual Bird-a-thon raised over \$20,000 for the Ron Sauvey Conservation Fund and ICF operations. Income from the Sauvey Fund supports the Ron Sauvey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation. Over the past seven years, a total of over \$113,000 has been raised. We wish to thank all who participated this year.

First place and grand prize went to Cathryn Steuer. Cathryn won a trip for two to Texas to visit the King Ranch and Whooping Cranes near Rockport next spring. The tour includes double occupancy for four nights, all food, ground transportation, and guide services. We wish to thank Victor Emanuel of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours for donating this generous grand prize.

Second place went to Al Schmidt, with Judy Bautch taking third. All top three finishers received a Bushnell spotting scope.

The other top-scoring teams were Viola White (4th), Lark Paulson (5th), Michael John Jaeger (6th), Steve Brick (7th), Mary Fitzgerald (8th), David & Geri Vander Leest (9th), and Jodi Provost (10th). Each team received a signed limited print by Owen Gromme entitled "Goldfinch in Summer." All who counted birds and raised money also received a print by Owen Gromme entitled "Nesting Killdeer."

Once again we wish to thank ICF Trustee Mark Lefebvre and Stanton & Lee of Madison, Wisconsin, for donating the prints, and we also thank Victor Emanuel for donating the grand prize. ■



Special Gift Envelope

Over the past several years, the "special gift" envelope has allowed each member a chance to donate to a particular ICF program of his or her personal interest. By providing extra monies beyond each department's normal budget, your donation will allow ICF's staff greater flexibility in meeting unforeseen opportunities in 1996.

For example, gifts to the Crane Conservation Department were used to help incubate and raise Siberian Cranes for release in Russia. The Field Ecology Department used special gifts to purchase fire equipment for prescribed burns, and the Sauvey Library added subscriptions and journals to its collection. Gifts to the Education Department will allow printing more educational materials for school children.

The staff wishes to thank all our members for their continued support, and we hope you will renew your "special gift to the cranes." ■

VCRs, TVs Needed

Several used (or new!) VCR playback machines and video monitors are needed in the Library and Training Center for previewing videos, training, and presentations to staff. We can make your lonely old machine happy. ■



Work Trip to China

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. 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. ■

Contributions

Received July through September, 1995



Lufthansa
ICF's Official Airline

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Aldo Leopold and Endeavor Marsh

Continued from page 2

These words revealed the ongoing shift in Leopold's conservation philosophy. No longer concerned with just game species, he as a wildlife ecologist and manager began to consider the entire gamut of native plant and animal life, and the ecological communities within which they exist — what we now term "biodiversity." In particular, he began to argue that greater attention needed to be paid to the needs of rare and threatened species. And in his prose, he began to portray the natural beauty of a place or organism as a function not merely of its outward appearance or human utility, but of its evolutionary history and destiny. For the upcoming generation of conservationists, this was a new and profoundly challenging message.

And so they live and have their being—these cranes—not in the constricted present, but in the wider reaches of evolutionary time. Their annual return is the ticking of the geologic clock. Upon the place of their return they confer a peculiar distinction. Amid the endless mediocrity of the commonplace, a crane marsh holds a paleontological patent of nobility, won in the march of aeons, and revocable only by shotgun. The sadness discernible in some marshes arises, perhaps, from their once having harbored cranes. Now they stand humbled, adrift in history.

Endeavor Marsh is now a different place, with some of the sadness that Leopold perceived in marshes that had lost their cranes. But cranes are now found in abundance in the vicinity. The marsh still lies at the core of the state's recovered population of Greater Sandhill Cranes, now numbering about 20,000. Descendants of the remnant band have dispersed from that core and now breed, after an absence of a century or more, in portions of Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. And just a few miles from both Endeavor Marsh and the Leopold farm, ICF bears witness to "the good" to be found in an undrained marsh. ■



This painting by Victor Bakhtin, entitled "Last Hope," appears in a 1996 calendar available from ICF. It shows nesting Siberian Cranes at Kunovat in western Siberia. In 1987, this breeding area contained 10 nests, but during the summer of 1995, Russian colleagues could find only one nest.

1996 Wildlife Art Calendar Available


The beautiful scene shown above is one of 13 large paintings and several small ones on a 1996 calendar, illustrated by ICF's Artist in Residence, Victor Bakhtin. The 14 page calendar measures 23.5 X 16 inches. To order, send a check for \$8 in US funds (payable to ICF—\$11 for overseas and Canadian orders) to Terry Brooks at ICF. The cost includes shipping—please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

This is the first time that Victor's wildlife art has been published in his native Russia. The calendar is being printed by a manufacturer of refrigerators and other consumer items in the city of Krasnoyarsk. Formerly a secret defense plant, the company has converted to making consumer goods, and wants to improve their image by producing a calendar.

We welcome this new face of Russia!

The calendar contains brief writings by Victor in Russian and English about the paintings. He writes about the above illustration: "In 1976, the Russian-American program "Sterkh" began. I call this painting "Last Hope," because I hope and believe in people who are doing their best to save the white cranes. As with so much of the world's endangered wildlife, the fate of the sterkh rests in the hands of those who care."

Here are some of the subjects of the paintings reproduced in the calendar: deer, red-crowned cranes, Stellar's sea eagle, badger, mountain quail, kestrel, sandhill cranes on the Platte River, golden eagle hunting a fox, reindeer, and coyote. ■

 Printed on Recycled Paper



International Crane Foundation

E11376 Shady Lane Rd.
P.O. Box 447
Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913-0447

(608) 356-9462
Fax: 356-9465
cranes@igc.apc.org

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