



THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

ICF is 25

By George Archibald, Director

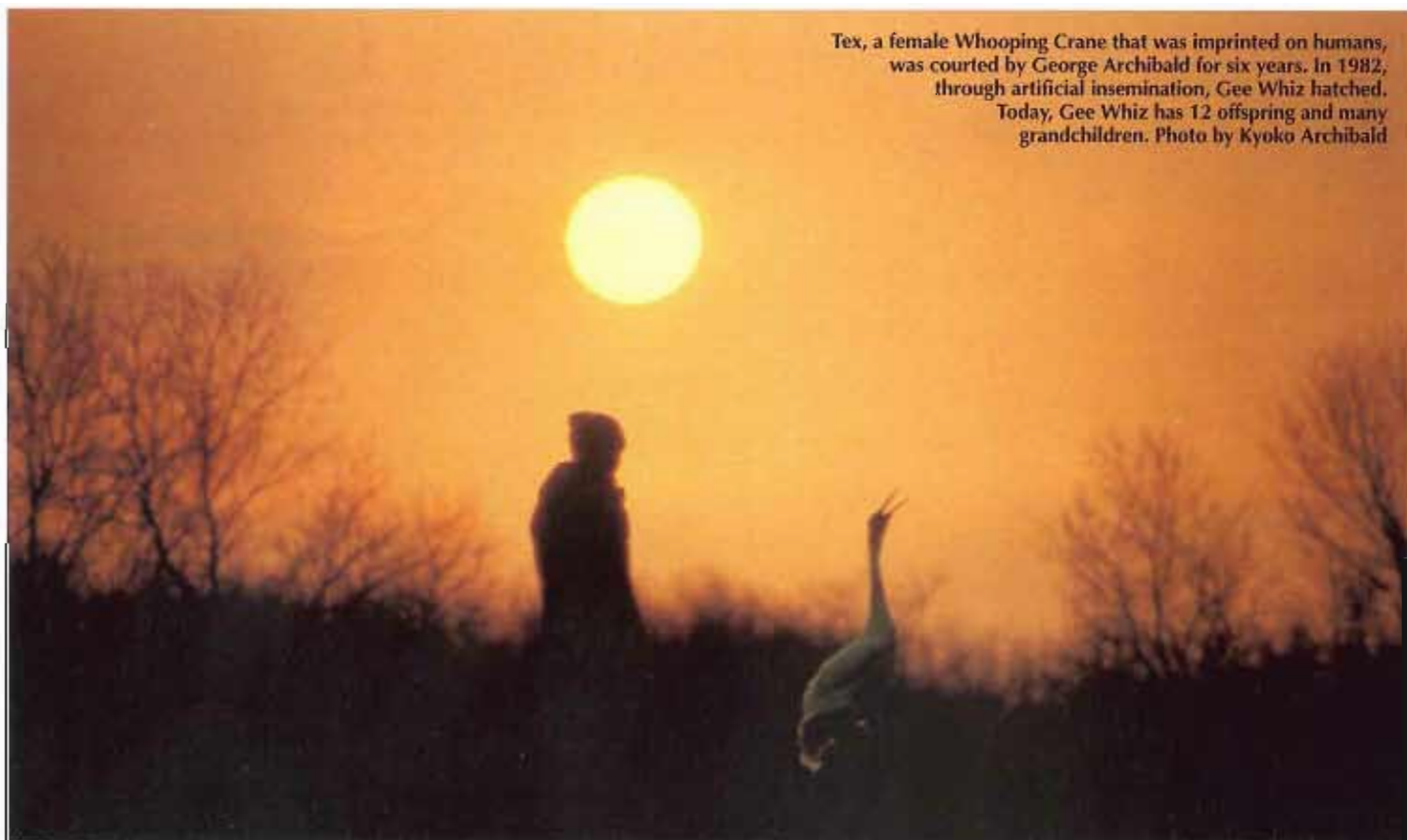
Ron Sauey came from Baraboo, Wisconsin, and I from Nova Scotia, Canada. From childhood our interest in birds was nurtured by loving parents. Our paths met in 1971 at Cornell University where I was just completing my graduate studies on cranes. The captive cranes I had assembled at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology fascinated Ron. Many species of cranes were endangered. Ron and I shared a dream of creating a center to help them.

Just before Christmas in 1971, I visited the Sauey family at their 65-acre farm near Baraboo. Arabian horses had recently been moved to a warmer climate in Florida, and lovely barns stood empty—great possibilities for captive cranes! My new friendships with the Sauey family and with Ron's mentors and teachers, Gerald and Gladys Scott, were inspirational. The nearby Aldo Leopold Memorial Reserve, where America's leading philosopher on conservation had so beautifully expressed the value of cranes and wetlands in his *Sand County Almanac*, provided the final confirmation that this sand country of central Wisconsin, with its flourishing population of wild Sandhill Cranes, was

the best place to locate a world center for the study and conservation of cranes.

Norman and Claire Sauey built 15 excellent enclosures for cranes and the rent was right—just a dollar a year. A generous attorney, Forrest Hartmann, drafted the articles of incorporation and for the next five years Forrest met with us every Wednesday evening to pay the bills and discuss crane business. Zoos sent cranes on breeding loan, and soon the ICF population topped 100. In 1975, Tsuru, a male Red-crowned Crane, was the first crane reared from an egg laid at ICF. Tsuru is still alive and well, and each spring some of his mate's eggs are sent to Russia to produce cranes for release into the wild.

Tex, a female Whooping Crane that was imprinted on humans, was courted by George Archibald for six years. In 1982, through artificial insemination, Gee Whiz hatched. Today, Gee Whiz has 12 offspring and many grandchildren. Photo by Kyoko Archibald



In the early years, everyone working at ICF was a volunteer. A monthly check from Wolf Brehm in Germany helped maintain the flock and through grants we went to Asia to study the wild cranes. Gradually the home base and international programs took form.

Twenty-five years later I pinch myself to dispel the illusion that today's ICF is not a dream. Reality strikes when I ponder the mounting pressures facing the survival of cranes in the wild, and all the bills that must be paid in Baraboo.

Building a Headquarters

Wisconsin's dean of wildlife art, Owen J. Gromme, and his wife Anne, had retired near Baraboo. Ron commissioned Owen to create a large painting of Whooping Cranes at their nest in northern Canada. A limited edition of signed and numbered prints of "Salute to the Dawn" and a second Gromme, "Sacred Cranes Over Hokkaido," helped support ICF during the early years.

The Grommes introduced us to John and Mary Wickhem of Janesville, Wisconsin and the Wickhems became pillars in ICF's growth. The Sauey's property, the Scott's hospitality, Gromme's contacts and Wickhem's advice, as well as the many visitors who became volunteers and

supporters, nourished the mission.

Within a few years, all the crane pens were filled. We kept unpaired birds in a spacious ten-acre fenced-in field. Then as the snow melted in March of 1978, disaster struck. A formerly unknown variety of avian Herpes virus suddenly killed 22 cranes in the nonbreeding flock. Through the superb work of scientists at the nearby University of Wisconsin and the National Wildlife Health Laboratory in Madison, the virus was identified, a test was developed, and the biology of the pathogen described. Forty other cranes that had not shown signs of disease tested positive for the virus. During this period, ICF was at a crossroads and so was I. The challenges both at home and abroad led me to a deeper commitment to my Christian roots. I had to learn to allow Christ to be the pilot. As I yielded, the sky opened.

That July, Mary Wickhem chaired a meeting of our major supporters to discuss ICF's challenges. After discussing the excessive work load on volunteers, the fear of disease, limited facilities at the Sauey farm for visitors, and the need for financial resources, the group expanded the Board of Trustees to twenty members. Mary was elected Chairman of the Board and has continued as such to this day. She has never missed a meeting!

The Board decided that ICF should own its own land. The next winter while I studied cranes along the Korean DMZ, Ron and the Wickhems cross-country skied over 160 acres that had been advertised for sale just five miles north of the Sauey's farm. The attractive rolling topography, with two wetlands and a remnant prairie, were key ingredients that led to a decision to buy and move. Thanks to Mr. Merlin Zitzner, current CEO of the Baraboo National Bank, we purchased our new site in June of 1979.

Herb Fritz, architect and former student of Frank Lloyd Wright, designed the buildings. The Department of Landscape Architecture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison helped create a site plan. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel C. Johnson of Racine, Wisconsin, provided stock that backed a loan for our first building, the Sam and Gene Johnson Exhibit Pod. We opened the new site to visitors in 1983, and the last crane moved from the Sauey farm in 1989.

Tragedy struck again in December of 1986. On Christmas Day, while cooking dinner for his beloved family, Ron suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and passed away on January 7, 1987 at the age of 39. Following his pioneering research on Siberian Cranes in Afghanistan and India,



In 1974, the staff at ICF were all fireless volunteers. Sitting on the fence from left are John Baldwin, George Archibald, Karen Voss, Ron Sauey, Jim Bruskwitz, Marly Voss and Frank Fernald.



ICF's Staff Today

The full-time staff at ICF is rarely seen all together and rarely seen standing still, as this photo suggests. The energy, intensity and miles these people put into their job are remarkable and fueled with passion. Thanks to this team, the future of ICF rests in secure hands.

From left: Top row: Curt Meine, Joan Garland, Kate Fitzwilliams, Nancy Bayer, Bob Hallam, John Bonnell, Kelly Maguire, Nancy Businga, Marianne Wellington, Dave Chesky, Sergei and Elena Smirenski. Middle row: Rose Blada, Teresa Searock, Peter Murray, George Archibald, Jim Harris, Claire Mirande. Bottom row: Tom Voight, Jeb Barzen, Rich Beilfuss, Julie Zajicek, Gordon Dietzman, Victor Bakhtin, Jeff Gerencser and Li Fengshan.

Photo by Mike Cody. Not pictured: Scott Swengel, Julie Langenberg and Betsy Didrickson

Ron's doctoral dissertation is a masterpiece in field biology and a permanent testimony to Ron's remarkable contribution to science and conservation. He continues to be sorely missed by close friends around the world.

Ron lived to see our dream come true, and now tens of thousands of visitors come each year to see the results. The "new" site has expanded to 240 acres. After parking, visitors enter the Cudahy Education Center and gift shop. At the African Crowned Crane Exhibit, the Johnson Pod, and the Amoco Whooping Crane Exhibit one meets and learns about all the world's 15 species of cranes. As Ron aptly put it, "The first time since Noah they've been together."

Becky's Picnic Shelter shaded by oak savanna, and the Ralph Moser Overlook on the rim of a glacial kettle, enhance the series of nature trails that border wetlands and wind through prairie, savanna and forest, allowing visitors to experience pure nature when exploring our site.

Most of the cranes live in a 12-acre complex, Crane City, not open to the public. Sixty-two "crandominiums" along

four streets provide solitude and well-drained soils that keep the captive birds healthy and prolific.

In Ron's memory his parents and siblings built at ICF the Ron Sauey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation to house the world's most complete collection of crane literature, photographs and sound recordings. Two years later in 1993, Gladys Scott officiated at the opening of the Gerald and Gladys Scott International Guest House.

Twenty-five years after ICF incorporated in Wisconsin, the campus provides superb facilities for cranes, staff, the general public, and special guests. ICF has a full time staff of 27 whose commitment and expertise are our greatest strengths.

Building a Global Network

From the start, our foremost concern has been the welfare of the wild cranes and the grasslands and wetlands where they live. Helping cranes depends on helping colleagues that live near the wild cranes. We traveled to Asia and Africa to study the cranes and meet dedicated individuals who shared our interest and concerns.

Five endangered species of cranes live primarily in Russia and China. In the early 1970s, relations were strained among the USA, Russia and China. In Moscow and Beijing we met with leading ornithologists, Vladimir Flint and Cheng Tsohsin. United by trust and common interests, contacts and collaborations started to grow behind and over the iron and bamboo curtains. Particularly when international relations were tense, our work was aided enormously by the Office for International Affairs of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

In former times two months, or more, sometimes passed before letters to Russia were answered. The fax machine and e-mail have revolutionized our communication. ICF is in close contact with hundreds of colleagues around the world as we exchange letters, faxes, e-mails, publications and frequent visits.

Many of the endangered cranes are migratory and relations among the nations that cranes cross are sometimes nonexistent or strained. ICF's role is to bring people together to develop and coordinate plans that help the cranes. This role



ICF likes to brag about its dedicated and committed crew of volunteers, and we should. As a non profit organization, people power must come to us on a volunteer basis—and they come, averaging 100 volunteers per year. In this 1975 picture, graduate student, Barbara Brownsmith tends to a Red-crowned Crane chick. Thank you to all of our students and volunteers who have spent the last quarter of a century making ICF such a success.

is of particular importance for the most endangered of cranes, the Siberian Crane, that ranges across 13 Asian nations. Our aid to "Sibes" is now strengthened by the secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species in Bonn, Germany.

ICF has several major programs in China, Russia, Vietnam, and Mozambique. Recently we employed our first foreign representative, Dr. Li Fengshan. We met him at a crane workshop in China in 1987. He came to ICF to upgrade his English and eventually to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1997, he secured his doctorate. Now with strengthened academic credentials and a better understanding of our approaches to conservation, he has returned to China as an ICF employee empowered to take crane conservation to a higher level. In the near future, we hope this model can be repeated in Indochina and Africa.

EPILOGUE

The late Dr. Tadamichi Koga, Japan's "Mr. Zoo," raised cranes at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo after the war when it was no longer possible to secure birds from the mainland. He pioneered the captive breeding of cranes and dreamed of creating an international center in Japan for worldwide crane conservation. When he visited ICF in 1975, he realized, happily, that his dream was coming true in the heart of the United States. From the sand country of Wisconsin springs a message of hope and healing that resonates around the world on the wings of these magnificent birds. ■

This commemorative edition of the ICF Bugle was brought to you by Webcrafters, Inc. of Madison, WI and the Puelicher Foundation of Milwaukee, WI.

Our sincere thanks to you both for generously supporting this momentous anniversary.

Don't forget our 25th Anniversary Director's Tours "Behind the Scenes at ICF" every Saturday this season.

Please call Rose Blada at ICF for reservations and details.



Ming Yideng, a graduate students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, helps check the welfare of a Black Crowned Crane during the annual health check at ICF in 1982. ICF continues to provide training experiences for foreign colleagues.

Committed to Cranes

ICF's dedicated board of 25 national members has served ICF with their time, energy, knowledge, expertise and financial support. Their enthusiasm for saving cranes and their habitat is unmatched. Each and every member participates as an ICF guide, leading the way towards new ideas, and maintaining ICF's mission of conserving cranes and the wetland and grassland communities on which they depend worldwide. The ICF staff would like to thank the current Board of Trustees: George Archibald, Sara Bolz, Joseph Branch, Robert Brumder, Kent Chandler, Jr., Thomas E. Donnelley, II, Sam Evans, C.P. Fox, Richard Fox, Nina Griswold, Thomas Hoffmann, Charles Jahn, Pierre Manigault, Ruth Nugent, Nancy O'Donnell, Fred Ott, George A. Ranney, Sr., Diane Ridders, Donald P. Sauey, Norman Sauey, Sr., Jeffrey Short, Jr., Willis Sullivan, Jr., Mary Wickhem, Virginia Wolfe, and Gary Woods. We would also like to thank our former Board of Trustees Stuart Avery, Abigail Avery, James Batt, Mary Burke, Victoria Cohen Shaw, John Day, John Henry Dick, Gilbert Gerdman, Owen Gromme, Forrest Hartmann, Huey Johnson, James Kuehn, Frank Larkin, Mark LeFebvre, Charles Miller, Charles Nelson, Dorothy Pain, William Piel, Fred Pullman, Ronald Sauey, Willis Sullivan, Sr., Leonard Shelton, Patricia Stedman, Ann Tisdale, John Wickhem, Sr., Belinda Wright, Mildred Zantow.

The cranes arrive in India from Afghanistan

During the 1970s, Ron Sauey conducted his doctoral research on Siberian Cranes at Keoladeo National Park, India. In 1976 he witnessed the arrival of cranes following a migration that spanned a continent. The following spring he discovered these same cranes at Lake Ab-i-Estada, Afghanistan. His historic letters from the field to George Archibald are presented below.

Since then the population has declined, apparently due to hunting along their long and perilous migration route across six nations. During the winter of 1997–98, only three Siberian Cranes from this population were spotted in Russia and in India.

Ron's work on the central population of Siberian Cranes cannot be repeated. We can only hope that effective education along the migration corridor can create conditions whereby a reintroduction of the cranes might someday be possible.

In March of 1977, Ron Sauey photographed these Siberian Cranes at Lake Ab-i-Estada, Afghanistan. Perhaps for thousands of years, this large lake surrounded by mountains and deserts has provided a resting area for Siberian Cranes and other water birds. Photo by Ron Sauey



The same cranes arrive in Afghanistan from India.

March 23, 1977

Dear George,

Mission accomplished in Afghanistan! On Thursday March 17, I and a large party of Americans from FAO and the American Embassy drove to Ab-i-Estada over some of the worst roads I've ever seen—they even had it over the Alaska Highway! One hour after we arrived at the lake, I spotted the Siberian Cranes—all but one of the 57 at the Ghana Sanctuary. It was like being reunited with old friends. The whole bunch were in shallow water on the western side of the lake digging in the mud—naturally—but not for tubers! John and I dug in the same area the next day and found a number of small, white geminating seeds. The plants were about 3 inches in the soil beneath the water (We carefully watched the cranes... pulling up very small items and rapidly swallowing them before we dug for the plants ourselves).

Unfortunately we could only spend two days at Ab-i-Estada. The lake is so remote and inaccessible that only a jeep can get to it and it costs us \$50.00/day for the use of the jeep—not counting food and equipment costs. Fortunately one of the Americans with our party, Dr. J.O. Young, a horticulturist, got turned on to the cranes and will return to the lake in two or three weeks to continue research. Afghanistan is a spectacular place, but the people are gun-crazy. Everywhere in the market there are guns. I found 3 *Grus grus* hanging in one of the poultry markets.

I will be addressing some Afghan people tonight with a slide show on cranes. Hope to win some friends for the cranes.

Dear George,

November 16, 1976

Yesterday the first Siberian Cranes flew in—4 birds, apparently pairs judging from their manner of unison calling. Today I went out before dawn and camped before them, waited till the sun rose and they thawed out. At 6:12 all four birds seemed to stiffen and I quickly scanned the horizon for the inevitable Sarus Cranes, expecting any minute to have the male Sarus charge in like a B-52. No Sarus. Then I heard the "doo-dah" flight call of the Siberian Crane and looked up to see a family flying into Ghana from the northwest. They were quite high but they still elicited several unison calls from the birds below.

The new family circled around, and suddenly another family appeared out of the northwest. Around and around the two families flew and finally drifted off to the southeast. A few minutes later five more Siberians flew in. By that time the original four had flown off so it was difficult to keep track of who was who. By mid-morning I counted fifteen birds including two juveniles in brown. The whole group was together for about an hour until a pair of Sarus charged into their midst and chased them off. Late this afternoon the large group came together again and this time there were 19 birds.

It's been a big day. All day long I've been crisscrossing the sanctuary on bike to keep track of everybody. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that I have witnessed the arrival of several birds from Afghanistan.



The Ron Sauey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation, created by Ron's immediate family, was completed in 1991. While grounded in the past, the library is moving into the future. Betsy Didrickson, ICF's new librarian, is creating an efficient library environment that encourages global use of our vast collection of crane material. While new technologies are making this happen, the basic objectives—cooperation, communication, and collaboration—are never out of sight. This combination of technology and tradition will carry us into the next millenium with a world class bird library. Photo by Steve Landfried

An Amazing Network...

by Claire Mirande, Director of Conservation Services



Places Protected

Poyang Lake Nature Reserve was established in 1984 to protect the eastern population of Siberian Cranes. Huge areas have been set aside for cranes in many countries. Since 1979, China alone has created over 30 nature reserves that protect habitats for cranes. Photo by Carl-Albrecht v. Treuenfels

For 25 years, ICF has helped nurture a growing network of dedicated crane and wetland conservationists. Starting with the early days, an amazing array of individuals has been caught up in the magic—and the plight—of the cranes.

Today, this network consists of several thousand scientists, managers, government officials, educators, students, financial supporters, and concerned local citizens. The Crane Action Plan, completed by ICF and published by the IUCN (World Conservation Union) in 1996, summarizes the best knowledge and recommendations of these combined minds. While ICF's Director George Archibald serves personally as chair of IUCN's Crane Specialist Group, the network is far from formal. Individuals as diverse as Japanese farmers feeding the cranes in Hokkaido, school children counting cranes in Wisconsin, and people managing the world's most beautiful wetland reserves, all share both concern and action for the cranes.

The fate of the cranes and their homes is precarious. Their future will be determined in large part by these daily actions and long term aspirations of people on five continents under widely varied circumstances. Although we are only able to highlight a few examples of this powerful network's achievements, ICF is proud to recognize the extensive contributions of kindred spirits worldwide.



Ambassadors at Work

In an historic meeting, colleagues from Russia, China, and Mongolia met at the Dauriski Nature Reserve in 1991 to plan an international nature reserve for the border region where the three nations meet. Cranes do not understand political boundaries, and their migrations have stimulated communication among formerly isolated countries through international workshops and collaborative research. Photo by Stephen Bouffard

Technology Transferred

Vladimir Krever (WWF—Russia) and Julie Langenberg (ICF Veterinarian) collaborate to conduct telemetry and disease studies on wild cranes in Russia. ICF provides technical support and training to a growing network of health care and conservation professionals who respond to health problems in wild and captive cranes. Photo by Laurie Baeten



Captive Network

A breeding pair of Siberian Cranes explores their 'territory' at Vogelpark Walsrode in Germany. Today 16 zoos in 8 nations cooperate to manage a genetically healthy species bank of over 100 captive Siberian Cranes. The zoos provide chicks, eggs, funds, and technical advice to support reintroduction and field conservation projects. Photo by Claire Mirande

Populations Recovered

The western European population of Eurasian Cranes is now returning to areas from which it has been extirpated for decades. Thanks to the European Working Group on Cranes, this population has benefited from legal protection, research and monitoring programs, as well as improved habitat protection and restoration. Today, there are 17 regional Working Groups around the world under the auspices of the IUCN Crane Specialist Group. Photo by Carl-Albrecht v. Treuenfels



Fascinating Crane Behaviors Aviculturists Have Known

By Scott Swengel, Curator of Birds

Since our first Red-crowned Crane hatched in 1975 at our old site on the Sauey farm, ICF has been a leader in breeding difficult and endangered species of cranes, like Siberian and Hooded Cranes. More than 500 chicks of all 15 crane species have been raised here, and about 90 of our fertile endangered crane eggs have been sent to reintroduction projects. Along the way we've had an opportunity to exchange knowledge and techniques with many dedicated colleagues from important captive centers and wild crane sites. But as important as our breeding successes have been, even more interesting to me are the numerous rewarding—often unexpected—things we have learned from maintaining all the species of cranes at ICF.

Probably the most remarkable observations of our cranes concern their complex social behavior, which includes several important parallels with humans. Cranes walk upright, looking tall and thin. Cranes, like us, rely heavily on their eyes and ears to perceive their world. Most wild cranes eventually develop a long-term pair bond resembling marriage and stay with their mates year-round. I believe these parallels contribute greatly to the wide cultural and conservation appeal of cranes.

But what behavioral nuances have we learned about cranes in a quarter century of careful observations? For starters, cranes recognize all of the people who regularly work around them, and can distinguish each of us from all other people. We know this because each crane consistently responds differently and specifically to different people. They remember us for years after they haven't seen us, too. Why should these capabilities surprise us, since wild cranes must have the vision, hearing, or other senses to recognize their families among huge flocks of cranes?

Cranes treat each avicultural worker here differently, according to the cranes' experiences and perception of that person. We regularly capture cranes for medical exams or breeding activities, and the cranes clearly remember what person caught them and how things went. This memory gets applied the next time the crane sees that person getting too close for comfort. Large people who have captured the crane several times are usually accorded more "respect" than smaller people or inexperienced crane handlers. In fact, cranes that treat me with a good measure of circumspection may, in contrast, try to take advantage of

a new intern and attack them. Learning such vagaries of crane temperaments is an important step in safely handling our captive cranes.

I believe that in some respects cranes are more perceptive about us than we about them, even though we ICFers fancy ourselves to be experts on crane behavior. We humans need training before we are capable of distinguishing the sex of male from female cranes using their behavior (the two genders look alike, but males average slightly larger). Most cranes, however, have the capacity easily to tell men from women, and we have gradually realized that our captive cranes treat us differently depending on our gender. Male cranes are "nicer" to our women

employees than to men, while female cranes are nicer to men. Big surprise there! And our Lead Aviculturist, Marianne Wellington, noticed several years ago that as chicks, hand-raised cranes already prefer to follow humans of the opposite sex. This arcane knowledge becomes invaluable each summer during our annual contest to see which volunteer can correctly predict the sexes of the most crane chicks.

But it gets even more complicated than that. Cranes behave differently

towards us depending on what other people are with us. Two examples illustrate this well. First, when our Veterinary Technician Nancy Businga is alone or with aviculturists and interns, the cranes treat her as a benign person. But when Nancy appears in the company of our Veterinarian, Julie Langenberg, cranes treat Nancy's approaches with much greater mistrust, as if they are expecting an unwanted medical house call. And although the cranes we raise are properly imprinted on their own species, certain female cranes that tolerate me alone inside their pens suddenly become animated and threaten or attack women who accompany me. These few cranes become especially catty if the woman with me is someone with whom I have a significant emotional attachment, like my wife or a friend. The cranes somehow detect this attachment, and then it's time to watch out!

We are constantly trying to apply these important observations to improving how we care for and breed ICF's cranes. With all of this behavioral intrigue surrounding our daily work, caring for ICF's captive flock is not just rewarding, but also a process of continual discovery. ■



This submissive display by a female Red-crowned Crane is usually seen only when she must defend the pair's territory by herself. Here, Aviculture Intern Cynthia Thiele approaches this very strong 16-year-old crane to search for a nest. If there are eggs, the female will vigorously defend them, and a second person will be needed to collect the eggs. Photo by Patty McCourt

Dr. Heckle & Ms. Hide

by Marianne Wellington,
Chick Rearing Supervisor

The year is 1986, and eight Greater Sandhill Cranes are being isolation reared at ICF. People dress in funny gray costumes. Each carries a tape player under the costume to play crane sounds and wears a Sandhill Crane puppet on one sleeve as they exercise crane chicks in the secluded back yard of the ICF chick house. During midmorning or afternoon this menagerie heads out over the hay fields and down to the east kettle (Stedman Marsh). Once the chicks are a month old, non-costumed humans hide among the grasses and pop out at the chicks. Then we chase them, giving them a good fright... this is their human avoidance training.

Dr. Rob Horwich, an animal behaviorist working closely with ICF, has masterminded the isolation rearing technique used to release cranes in the wild. Last year's release was a success, and everyone is excited about the prospect of another successful year.

I am one of the new ICF interns and I feel like I have walked into another world, the world of crane behavior. Actually, I am experiencing the beginning of what will become a major part of my job for the next 12 years. My interest in combining knowledge and skills gained in the captive situation, and applying them to field work, has found a medium from which to grow. The question of imprinting—what cues are important and the timing of these cues—slowly will be pieced together like a multidimensional puzzle with pieces yet to be discovered.

During my first five years at ICF, some pieces of the puzzle were provided through research projects on parent/offspring interactions, release experiments, and various crane rearing methods. I was especially interested in the release experiments and figuring out what works and what doesn't work. One glitch often appeared—the chicks looked for humans when wild cranes were not present. The only explanation for this problem was that our disguise was not working as well as we had hoped. The cranes were picking up on our behaviors whether we were in a costume or not.



It is an unforgettable experience, to walk with the Whoopers, and have the chicks fly over and around you and land close beside you. Photo by Jim Harris

It is 1992, the first year we raise Whooping Cranes for release in Florida. Isolation rearing can raise more chicks for release than other methods. Because this is the first shot at developing a nonmigratory flock, these birds will not have other Whooping Cranes in the wild from which to learn survival skills. We hope they will learn from the native Sandhills. The question is how to reduce the chances of the cranes realizing humans are in the costumes. I decide to take what I have learned to the extreme. I create a split personality, thus enters Dr. Heckle and Ms. Hide.

Ms. Hide is the caring, parental person dressed for the part, wearing a Whooping Crane costume. She digs earthworms, catches grasshoppers and offers these tasty treats to the chicks. Ms. Hide becomes a crane. She does not pick up or handle chicks. On the other hand, Dr. Heckle loves to chase, grab and scare them. I become Dr. Heckle when capturing a chick for medical examinations, treatments or weighings. Dr. Heckle is loud, aggressive, shows up at stressful times and is a human not wearing any costume.

Does this split personality work? For a short time, I believe so! The cranes are terrified when captured by people and shipped to Florida. Eventually, they hook up with the wild Sandhills that at times are not so wild. The Sandhills will eat out of cattle feeders and find places where people provide an all-you-can eat

outdoor buffet. It is disheartening to see the newly released birds learning this behavior from the "wild" Sandhills, but survival remains the key.

It is now 1998. The isolation rearing techniques have been modified based on what we have learned. Dr. Heckle and Ms. Hide are still employed at ICF, although they have mellowed. Interestingly enough, so have the chicks' wariness toward humans. We now know that it is not necessary for the cranes to fear humans, after all, humans provide food to cattle and Sandhills. Bobcats are the ones to be feared. As of yet, Dr. Heckle has not developed a cat-like personality, though Ms. Hide has altered her behavior. Her time with the chicks is spent foraging or roosting in the ponds. She also spends less time with them, increasing their chances of learning more appropriate behaviors from the Whooping Crane role models that live in adjacent pens. These changes look promising. Now that the nonmigratory flock has grown to more than 65 cranes, these chicks also have the benefit of joining other Whooping Cranes in Florida.

With each release experiment, the cranes reveal another puzzle piece. Ms. Hide continues to look for them while preening and observing the flock, while Dr. Heckle wonders if it's time to wear a cat suit. Whatever the future holds, I await with wings spread ready to fly with the cranes. ■

TRADITION & INNOVATION: 25 Years of ICF Education

by Gordon Dietzman, Education Manager

In our library are the mounted remains of a Passenger Pigeon, an extinct species once the most common bird in North America. The bird sits upon an oak branch amidst a cluster of silk leaves and beneath a cover of protective glass, its lifeless eyes staring vacantly at the oak savanna beyond the library windows. The old oaks still produce the billions of acorns once necessary to feed the massive flocks, but the pigeons are gone leaving behind only an ecological vacuum and this poor facsimile of a once glorious bird.

In the mid-1900s, the Whooping Crane nearly followed the Passenger Pigeon into oblivion, but committed people wielding conservation plans—containing strong educational components—prevented their loss. The education programs created both an awareness of the Whooper's plight and the support necessary to save them.

The goals of ICF's education programs mirror these early educational efforts by raising awareness for the precarious status of cranes and the natural communities in which they live, developing support for ICF's mission, and providing opportunities for people to become involved in crane conservation.

Since the beginning of ICF two and half decades ago, nearly 400,000 visitors have seen our cranes dance and have heard the cranes' ancient calls echoing off glacial landscapes. Tour guides engage visitors in lively discussions about ICF's model programs at Cao Hai, Tram Chim, Lumbini, Briggsville, and the Amur and Zambezi Rivers. These are powerful experiences that will not soon be forgotten. What about the audiences that cannot be reached using traditional methods? And how do we involve people, changing them from passive observers to active participants?

Sometimes referred to as the Fourth Media, after print, television and radio, the Internet is experiencing extraordinary growth. After two short years, the number of people using the ICF homepage is nearly double the number of people subscribing to *The ICF Bugle*. Students use our homepage to write reports, professionals use it to find colleagues or resources in the library's database, and members use it to learn more about ICF. Most importantly, this technology allows us to reach audiences ordinarily inaccessible due to distance, time, expense or staffing constraints.

An example is a new pilot program called "A Classroom Expedition: The Black-necked Cranes of Bhutan." In early February, an ICF team attached a small backpack-mounted transmitter on a Black-necked Crane wintering in the Himalayan nation of Bhutan, in order to study the migration routes of these birds. Signals from the miniature transmitter are collected by a satellite, beamed to an ARGOS earth station for processing and then relayed by electronic mail (e-mail) to ICF. We in turn send the data by e-mail to distant schools. Students often have the coordinate data plotted on maps within a few hours of the satellite receiving the signal.

Students like the project because they participate in real, ongoing research, with the outcome still unknown. Teachers like the project because it provides an innovative new tool to teach geography, biology, conservation, math, and technology issues. In the future, similar projects will reach diverse audiences both in North America and in crane conservation hot spots around the globe.

Our education programs are increasingly taking advantage of new technologies without compromising the traditional programs that have proven so effective. For instance, volunteers participate in traditional education programs by leading tours and providing school presentations. Their efforts pay tremendous dividends by allowing staff to stretch meager resources and to work on important new initiatives. These new programs, such as the Classroom Expeditions, international art exchanges, and the Small Grants Conservation Program, provide opportunities for many others to join ICF conservation programs.

A sign on ICF's Whooping Crane Exhibit bears the words of William Beebe, the famous English naturalist, "...but when the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more, another heaven and another earth must pass before such a one can be again."

Beebe's eloquence is a testament to the awful finality of extinction. While we will not see Passenger Pigeons again in this creation, we can walk through the exhibit's doors and still see the fierce glint in the eyes of a living Whooping Crane. The continued presence of Whooping Cranes and other crane species at ICF and in the wild confirms that we will not make the same irrevocable decision with cranes as happened with Passenger Pigeons. Raising awareness, developing support, and providing opportunities for involvement in conservation will assist us in attaining this goal. ■



An ICF team attaches a satellite transmitter to a Black-necked Crane in Bhutan. Students participating in ICF's Classroom Expeditions program use data generated by the transmitter to join researchers in studying the bird's migration route. Special thanks to the Wild Bird Society of Japan and the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature in Bhutan for their cooperation. Photo by Eleanor Briggs

FROM CRANES TO ECOSYSTEMS

by Jeb Barzen and Rich Beilfuss, Field Ecology Department

What traits do lands as diverse as southern Wisconsin savannas, the Plain of Reeds in Vietnam, monsoon wetlands of Nepal's terai, high plateau wetlands in China, and the Zambezi River Delta of Mozambique share? They are all places where efforts to preserve cranes and their habitats have helped inspire the conservation and restoration of entire ecosystems.

Over the past 25 years, ICF efforts have grown from the urgent task of protecting threatened crane species to the long-term restoration of natural ecosystems that serve, in part, as crane habitat. Through a program of research, adaptive management, and community-outreach, we have joined colleagues around the world in healing our degraded landscapes. Much of this effort focuses on understanding how ecosystems change through time and upon using this knowledge to restore our natural diversity. Ecological change can result from natural events, like the pulse of water across a flood plain, or human disturbances like the damming of rivers. All species, from inconspicuous sedges to bugling cranes, must adapt to changing conditions whether human-caused or natural. Failure to adapt means extirpation.

The savannas, prairies and wetlands that grace our ICF home are the Field Ecology Department's restoration laboratory. Here we strive to return the bounty of species that once shared a home with Sandhill Cranes in southern Wisconsin. With the help of interns and hundreds of volunteers, we have restored more than 250 species of plants native to this region. Field experiments expand our knowledge of restoration. We are testing the effects of climatic fluctuations on the success of prairie plantings, the colonization of restored prairies by invertebrates and grassland birds, the establishment of savanna species along a gradient of sun and shade, and the influence of water level fluctuations on diversity of prairie pothole wetlands.

In the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, ICF has collaborated for the past ten years with Vietnamese scientists to restore a remnant of the original Plain of Reeds at Tram Chim National Reserve. Before the region was ditched and drained, nutrient-rich floodwaters covered the plain each year. As floodwaters receded during the dry season, they exposed rich soils where plants and animals thrived. By studying the historic

ebb and flow of the Mekong Delta, we could adapt our management practices to mimic these natural conditions in the reserve using water gates. In years of great flooding, water levels across the reserve remain deep throughout the dry season, and fish and fish-eating birds flourish. In other years, the reserve dries more thoroughly and Eastern Sarus Cranes gather in great numbers. By managing for these natural hydrologic fluctuations, the reserve supports diverse species with different habitat needs.

At the Lumbini Crane Sanctuary, efforts to secure a home for the Indian Sarus Crane now support more than 260 bird species and the largest population of Blue Bull antelope in Nepal. ICF and Nepalese colleagues are reassembling a mosaic of wetland habitats that once dotted this region. Although each individual wetland is small in size, the close proximity of several wetlands across the landscape—each with differences in water depth, duration, and extent—collectively supports a tremendous array of wildlife.

The Caohai wetland reserve is perched in a high plateau leading toward the Himalayan Mountains. Its waters come primarily from mountain springs. The variation of contour in the lake's bottom creates a variety of plant communities. Black-necked and Eurasian Cranes feed heavily in the emergent zone of vegetation that surrounds the wetland in shallow water. Over 20 species of waterfowl use the deeper reaches of the lake where cranes do not go. Yet, as recently as 1984, Caohai was a drained wetland that supported few birds and a failed agricultural legacy. Through restoration, the wetland now supports about 75,000 waterfowl of all kinds, and is one of the most important wintering areas in southwestern China.

In Mozambique, the natural connection between the Zambezi River and its immense flood plain has been severed by



Our oak savanna at ICF recreates an ecosystem once abundant across southern Wisconsin. The partial shade created by savanna oaks produces special habitats for plants that cannot compete with open-grown, prairie species or shade-tolerant species of the deep forest. Sandhill and Whooping Cranes utilize these varied habitats as well. Photo by David Thompson

large hydroelectric dams, causing great hardship for the people and wildlife of this region. To encourage more ecologically sound management of the dams, ICF researchers and colleagues are investigating changes in the vegetation and wildlife communities of the flood plain system since the dams were built. We hope to predict future changes as we work with decision makers, villagers, and scientists to bring back flood waters in the Zambezi. Studies on the impact of reduced flooding for an endangered population of Wattle Cranes suggest how to restore the natural ebb and flow of the Zambezi for the myriad species that depend on natural flooding conditions.

By focusing on ecosystems, ICF strives to preserve a heritage of diverse and healthy landscapes. Cranes, important and conspicuous denizens of the places we work, serve as ambassadors for the many species and communities that we neither understand nor value as much. ■

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For 25 years, ICF has consistently moved in an upward direction. Financially our income and budget have steadily increased, our membership is at an all time high and our site's main buildings and exhibits are completed. As our income grows, our ability to continue our work preserving cranes and their habitat becomes more solid and more efficient. In 25 years, ICF has made valuable connections with people that care very much for the cranes. To everyone who has contributed to ICF in the last 25 years thank you. You have truly made the difference.

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Editor: Kate Fitzwilliams

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Members—hurry to ICF's gift shop and use your **10% discount!**

Our 25th anniversary has come to life on brand new T-shirts and sweatshirts.

Show off your ICF pride and commemorate **25 years** of crane conservation.

Beyond Cranes

by Jim Harris, Deputy Director

The years accumulate memories, stories, & connection. For Aldo Leopold, cranes were “the symbol of our untamable past.” For writer Peter Matthiessen, cranes evoke earth’s wildest open spaces. In 1992, Peter and I stood on one of those wildest spaces, the steppes of Mongolia close beside the Russian border. From a small hill we overlooked the Uldz River, gleaming amidst sedges, dark reeds, and the paler grasses that swept up and away from the wetlands. Our Mongolian companions pointed out the cranes scattered over this landscape: 3 Demoiselles, 7 Eurasian Cranes in a flock, and 5 pairs of White-naped Cranes each on its own territory.

All morning along the Uldz, we watched cranes, swans, bustards, falcons, and an occasional human on horseback. No where else in the world do so many White-naped Cranes nest, and few places feel so undisturbed.

I asked our companions, Ayurzaryn Bold and Natsagdorjin Tsevenmyadag, why so many White-naped Cranes lived here. “Wetlands,” they answered, referring to soggy edges of the Uldz with the shining necks of two White-naped, and then they gestured beyond. “Farmland nearby for feeding.”

While northeastern Mongolia has lush grasses and wide wetlands, the climate is too dry for crops. Along the Uldz, with Soviet subsidies, the Mongolians had developed irrigation agriculture, and the cranes discovered that grain fields were a richer food source than the native grasslands. The White-naped paraded their chicks over the furrows, and flocks gathered after harvest to feed on waste grain.

Through most of the world, where cranes manage to survive amidst human development, these birds with the ancient, wildest voices have come to depend on agriculture. Mostly their wild habitats have been destroyed, but even in Mongolia with its steppes almost as intact as its sky, cranes have learned to live among farmers. The cranes are thus a wonderful contradiction, symbols of the wild that have an ability, unusual among large wildlife, to co-exist with humanity. The balance already is precarious, however, and hence ICF’s mission is both urgent and long-term.

The beauty and ritual of cranes has 15 forms, the 15 species that live on five continents. In each place, people have come to love the cranes. And loving one’s local crane leads to concern about all 15 and the scattered places they inhabit: the corn land of Wisconsin, rice paddies along the Korean DMZ, barley fields below crumbling monasteries of Tibet, sacred lands at the birthplace of Buddha in Nepal. This linkage between

Indian Sarus Cranes—threatened in Nepal—find safe haven at Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha. In cooperation with the Lumbini Development Trust, ICF has established the Lumbini Crane Sanctuary. Through the cranes, we are enhancing international awareness of the relevance of Buddha’s ancient teachings to modern conservation issues. Photo by Jim Harris

local caring and global action is a unique gift of the cranes, and at the heart of ICF’s mission.

Crane conservation, however, cannot focus on just 15 cranes, or even stop with their “critical” habitats. For the wetlands live or die by the fate of their watersheds, and economic or technologic progress transforms entire landscapes. In Tibet, for example, Black-necked Cranes thrive on harvested barley fields left unplowed through winter. Recent expansion of winter wheat, and of fall plowing, is removing the waste grain on which cranes depend.

Along the Uldz, collapse of the Soviet system shocked Mongolian agriculture. Without state funding for fuel and fertilizers, grain fields reverted to wild weeds and grasses. In nearby Russia, cranes and other wildlife concentrate on the few active fields, with severe damage to crops of struggling farmers.

Increasingly, ICF projects embrace larger issues. Our work at Caohai Nature Reserve, for example, responds to a critical issue threatening China’s eight cranes—nature reserves must find ways to alleviate local poverty without sacrifice of the resource base on which cranes and people depend. Increasingly, “crane” projects must address threats to the world’s major river systems: the Amur River, home to most Red-crowned Cranes, the mid Yangtze River Basin below Three Gorges Dam, the Mekong with its Eastern Sarus Cranes, the lower course of the Zambezi whose Wattled Cranes depend on annual flooding.

John Muir (a conservationist, like Leopold, with roots in Wisconsin crane country) expressed it well, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” The cranes provide ICF a sharp focus, and a clear message, but we cannot be narrow. The cranes are our theme, and we must use our limited resources to play and elaborate that theme the world over. The strength of ICF is reflected in the variety of our projects, which enrich our understanding of what it means to share the world with a creature ancient and wild. We have the challenge of how to recreate wild populations of Whooping Cranes in densely populated Florida, of how to manage the Cahora Bassa Dam on the Zambezi to recreate the river’s natural flooding, of how to expand agricultural production along the Amur River, or along the Yarlung Tsangpo of Tibet, while retaining our cranes.





Wetlands along the Uldz River in Mongolia support numerous White-naped Cranes during breeding season. The development of croplands nearby has enhanced food supplies for cranes and their chicks. Human activities benefit cranes in many regions. Photos by Jim Harris

The success of ICF further lies in that tension between the uniqueness of cranes and their generality. Each project must address a local situation, but gains significance as part of our global program.

We work to develop a worldwide community of people who care about cranes. Our strongest tool is the charisma of the cranes themselves. They bridge the distance separating peoples divided by economic interest, national borders, or geography. Farmers along the Uldz need the global crane community, just as we need these farmers who struggle through hard times.

ICF's home is central Wisconsin and the upper midwestern states. From the crane perspective, this region is most unusual for its history. ICF celebrates its 25th anniversary as Wisconsin celebrates 150 years of statehood. In 1848, cranes were abundant on a wild landscape. By 1898, we had lost our Whooping Cranes and almost lost the Sandhills. Today, the Sandhills are abundant, in large part because of farming, and we experiment with ways to return the Whoopers. Our 150 years of experience, of cranes and people learning to live together, offers hope that dwindling crane populations elsewhere in the world can recover. Conservationists must have a long perspective.

Of course, the story is not over in Wisconsin. How do we solve the problem of cranes damaging crops, largely an impact of successful crane conservation? This issue potentially divides farmers, wildlife enthusiasts, and hunters, all groups vital to conservation. ICF's work with 50 farmers near Briggsville, Wisconsin has importance for cranes and

farmers in many countries. Less obvious, the lessons from Mongolia, Russia, and China can strengthen conservation in Wisconsin.

As ICF looks to the future, we rely on that accumulation of memory and experience. Our task is to provide connections. One day, I hope to help Wisconsin farmers meet the Mongolian farmers, look at cranes and crops along the Uldz, and to think beyond cranes about what we will save and share as the world changes. ■

At China's Caohai Nature Reserve, these children enjoy new desks, repaired roof and windows, and education materials funded by Wisconsin school children. A top priority for ICF has been to connect caring people with urgent needs in the places where cranes live.



Sharing Lessons, Meeting Challenges

by Curt Meine

"So how are the cranes doing?"

Every crane conservationist grows accustomed to that question, and struggles to answer it. The simple answer is that some populations and species have fared well in recent decades, some have fared worse, and most face serious continuing threats. When ICF opened its doors 25 years ago, 7 of the 15 species of cranes were considered threatened. Recent data from the world's crane experts, as well as advances in our understanding of conservation risks, suggest that as many as 11 species should now be considered threatened.

Although this news is sobering, it reflects the fact that our foundation of knowledge is much stronger than it was in 1973. At that time, little was known about the numbers, distribution, and ecology of many species of cranes. Since then, dozens of researchers have made monumental contributions to our information base, allowing for more accurate evaluation of the status of the cranes. ICF has played a key role in building that foundation. In turn, however, this process has only intensified ICF's challenge to work more effectively.

Cranes are only one group of birds on a planet whose rich legacy of biological diversity is under increasing pressures from its human population. And ICF is only one of many organizations mobilizing to conserve that legacy. Although such global phenomena as population growth, habitat destruction, and climate change can seem daunting, ICF's experience has shown that it is possible to develop responses that



The migratory flock of Whooping Cranes has made a dramatic recovery from 15 birds in 1941 to 181 birds during the winter of 1997-98. Photo by Carl-Albrecht v. Treuenfels

benefit not only wild creatures, but the people who share their habitats. ICF's mission focuses on the world's 15 crane species, but it embraces five continents, a wide spectrum of habitats, watersheds great and small, and the innumerable human communities with which cranes interact and coexist.

One of the most important lessons that conservationists have learned in recent years is that it takes many actions, employing diverse fields of knowledge, to meet the long-term needs of people and wildlife in particular places. ICF is highly unusual in the degree to which it uses all the available "tools" of conservation, from habitat protection to captive rearing and reintroduction, from community development and education to research and training. Whether we are dealing with the problems of rare Siberian Cranes along their remote migration routes, or the

recovery of Sandhill Crane populations in our Wisconsin "backyard," all of these tools are important. Coordinating such a broad range of activities is not easy, but it is necessary. ICF has been a leader in this integrated approach to conservation, providing a model for other conservation organizations.

So how are the cranes doing? They are surviving—tentatively in some cases, tenaciously in others. As we look into the next century, we can see that the challenges to the survival of cranes are unlikely to diminish. But ICF has always served as an example of what is possible when imagination, knowledge, and dedication come together in the cause of conservation. As long as ICF retains those qualities, it will continue to serve as an example, and to meet those challenges. ■

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