

*The ICF*  
**Bugle**  
*Inspiring a Global Community*

Volume 33, Number 2

May 2007

# Heads UP

*Photograph by Birgit Bateman*

This summer the International Crane Foundation presents *Cranes of India*, an exhibition focused on the subcontinent's crane species. Birgit Bateman's powerful photographs of Demoiselle Cranes are the exhibit's center piece and a perfect back drop to the rich history of ICF's partnership in India. *More on page 2*



**Mark Your Calendar!**

***Cranes of India* Opening Reception**  
Saturday, June 16, 2007 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

**ICF Annual Meeting,**  
Saturday, September 22, 2007

For updates on ICF's 2007 Whooping Crane egg production: [savingcranes.org](http://savingcranes.org) "What's New"

ICF's co-founder, Ron Saucy, began working in India in the 1970s while conducting his doctoral research on the ecology and behavior of the tiny flock of Siberian Cranes that wintered at India's famed water bird sanctuary, Keoladeo National Park, about 100 miles south of New Delhi. Ron's pioneering research led to the formation of lasting friendships and collaborative projects on behalf of the Siberian Crane and the other species found in India: Demoiselle, Black-necked, Eurasian, and Sarus Cranes.

*Cranes of India* is your chance to discover through photographs, video, and treasures from our archives, an important segment of ICF's early history, the beauty and the biology of India's cranes, and the current efforts now underway to help assure a safe future for these treasured birds.

We personally invite you to the *Cranes of India* Opening Reception on Saturday, June 16, 2007, from 2 - 4:30 p.m. in our new Donnelley Family Education Center where you will have the chance to meet celebrated photographer, Birgit Bateman, and her husband, Robert, and the Director of the Indian Cranes and Wetland Working Group, Gopi Sundar, and his wife, Swati.

### ICF Wish List

ICF is always in need of new or gently used equipment or vehicles. Please check our wish list on [savingcranes.org](http://savingcranes.org) "Support" to see if something you own is needed by ICF. We thank you for your help!

Please contact Dave Chesky (608-356-9462, x120) to make a donation.

1. A 27" high resolution computer monitor (minimum) for use by our Crane Conservation Department for viewing Whooping Crane pairs and chicks via video.
2. A low mileage four-door sedan.
3. An LCD projector.



## Notes from ICF President Jim Hook . . . Springtime Brings Renewed Hope for Cranes

It has been more than two months since we experienced the tragic events of February 2, when 17 of 18 young Whooping Cranes, almost the entire ultralight class of 2006, perished during an unexpected storm. The severity and destruction of this storm had devastating effects on both people and cranes as a significant number of human lives were also lost.

As dark as this day was, however, we have been encouraged and in fact deeply moved by the breadth of the response from our member and colleagues throughout the world. Expressions of heartfelt sympathy abounded and the many generous gifts will help support the major financial commitment we will continue to make to Whooping Cranes in 2007.

The Whooping Cranes in the eastern migratory population have moved on. They are intensely busy following the same life cycle that their kind has lived for thousands of years. Most of the flock, now numbering 60 birds, has returned to the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin where breeding pairs are confirming summer habitat and preparing for what we hope will be multiple hatches in the wild during 2007. The First Family (the pair that bred last year, and their offspring) is back, showing the way – they have laid their first egg!

As we at ICF, like the cranes, move on, we too find good prospects ahead. We are optimistic about the number of chicks that the captive centers will produce for the class of 2007. Operation Migration expects to lead another sizable cohort back to Florida while we at ICF rear birds for the Direct Autumn Release (DAR) program. We hope at least to double last year's count of four DAR birds to diversify our reintroduction strategy and efficiently grow the population.

Sandhill Cranes are back and are all over Wisconsin. Their abundance on the landscape reminds us of their remarkable recovery in the 70 years since the species nearly disappeared from the state. Our Briggsville project is gearing up as we continue building successful working relationships between private land owners and conservationists. This year, we expect to document results of expanded use of the non-toxic seed repellent Avitec,™ ICF has developed in collaboration with the manufacturer and

many farmers – by solving crane damage to seedling corn, we are making the future more secure for both cranes and the farmers.

My own sense of crane horizons has changed dramatically this spring. While our Midwest population of Sandhills has grown dramatically, our flocks are small compared to the Platte River in Nebraska where from late February through early April crane enthusiasts can witness the movement of a half million cranes on their way to summer habitat in Canada, Alaska and Northeast Siberia. The Platte was my first major crane expedition. I was astounded to hear, in my first visit to the viewing blind, that the number of cranes roosting for the evening exceeded the entire eastern population in the Upper Midwest. That's nearly 50,000 birds within sight of our blind!

Support for the cranes this spring is not limited to the landscapes where cranes live. In late March, Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) and U.S. Representative Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) introduced legislation in their respective houses of Congress to protect cranes throughout the world. The Crane Conservation Act has drawn support from both Democrats and Republicans and Senator Feingold introduced the Senate bill along with Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID).

Recognizing that Wisconsin plays an important role in crane conservation, this legislation also has the support of Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) and U.S. Representative Ron Kind (D-WI). While this is not the first time such a bill has been proposed, we are cautiously optimistic about its chances during the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. If passed, the legislation would provide funding for five years that would help ICF and many other organizations act on behalf of the cranes in North America, Africa and Asia. The footprint cranes leave is large and includes critically important wetlands habitat. As we protect those wetlands for cranes, we positively impact a significant diversity of other species.

As ICF opens its site for the 2007 season, I extend an invitation to all members to come and visit. Aside from the beauty of the cranes, and our restored landscapes, that give hope and inspiration, the gallery in our Donnelley Family Education Center will feature the remarkable cranes of India. I look forward to seeing you.

# A Simple Idea Blooms

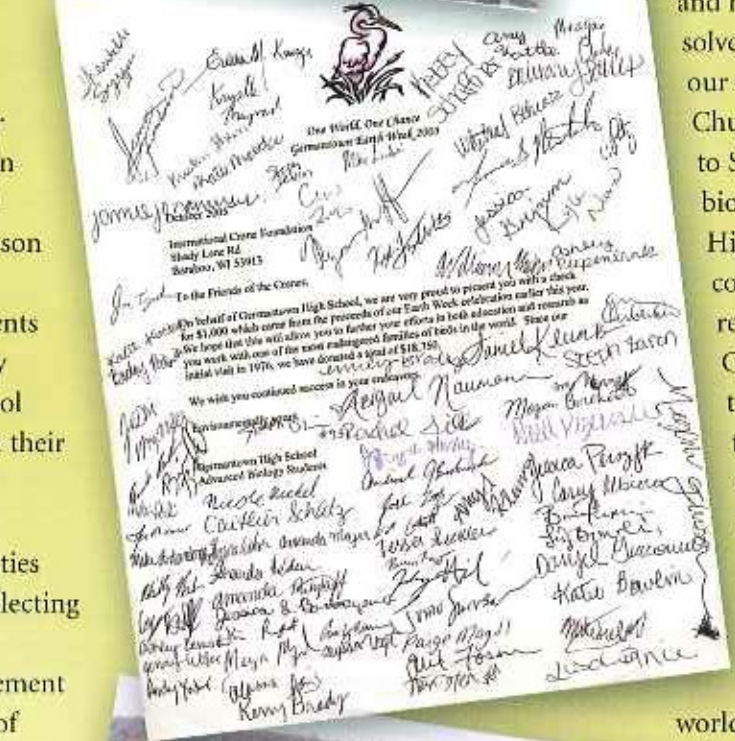
By Jeb Barzen, Field Ecology Director

Chuck Ritzenthaler has taught biology at Germantown High School in Wisconsin for 36 years and will retire this May. For 30 of those years, Chuck led a total of approximately 1,500 students through ICF on field trips to learn, work, and present financial contributions to ICF worth an accumulated \$19,000. Chuck's contribution to conservation, however, extends far beyond these impressive numbers.

I define conservation as an activity where people apply ecological principles to the land on which we live so that our biological heritage and function may be preserved or enhanced. Conservation recognizes that the ecological problems looming before us are created by people and must, therefore, be solved by people. Chuck's activities over the last three decades exemplify conservation, and suggest to the rest of us how we might better engage with conservation in our own environs.

Chuck acted on a simple idea: our children will inherit this world and in doing so must learn how to be good stewards of it. Why not teach this lesson to kids by engaging them with real conservation projects? Chuck's students started their conservation journey by obtaining a Germantown High School lifetime membership to ICF through their own contributions and fundraising campaigns. Later, fundraising was combined with restoration work parties such as preparing fire breaks and collecting prairie seed at ICF.

Teaching requires not only engagement with students to make the concepts of conservation tangible but requires patience and perseverance to transform lessons into ethics for a lifetime. As with the seeds that germinated and grew into plants still gracing ICF prairies, Chuck planted in each one of his students a land ethic that would establish deep roots and flower robustly in the future. By bringing his biology



students to ICF over 30 years, it was possible to illustrate for each respective class what their past peers had done. The collective experience of Chuck's career can thus be shared in a single event that crosses decades.

Finally, conservation focuses upon what people can do. People can solve the problems they create. Through his engagement with myriad students Chuck has helped restore prairies and helped keep ICF financially solvent as we continue to pursue our shared mission. As important, Chuck is passing on his dedication to Stacey Bast, the incoming biology teacher at Germantown High School. Stacey plans to continue the conservation relationship between Germantown and ICF. It is that transference of the land ethic through new teachers and new students that allows conservation to persist at a scale that can make a difference in this world. In doing so, Chuck has made his mark and has made this world a better place in which to live.

*You inspire us at ICF and at Germantown, Chuck. Thank you.*

Photos and 2005 contribution letter provided by Germantown High School

# Utility Companies & Conservationists – working together to make overhead power lines visible to birds

By Jon Smallie of the Eskom – Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) Strategic Partnership

Next time you are outside, take a careful look at the overhead power lines criss-crossing the landscape distributing electricity to villages and farms. While the poles supporting the cables stand out clearly, the cables between them are not always that easy to see, are they? Luckily for humans, they are built well clear of our everyday movements. Birds are unfortunately not so lucky. If you are a crane in flight, the cables almost

water bird. These large birds have limited maneuverability in the air which makes them more vulnerable to collision. Many of the collision sensitive species in southern Africa are considered threatened and are long living, slow reproducing species under natural conditions. These species can't sustain high adult mortality rates over an extended period, which means that an artificial source of mortality such as power line collision may compromise the population's

Particularly on larger transmission lines, the conductors are often bundled, making them relatively visible, while the shield or earth wires are single, thinner cables. Birds may even see the conductors and gain height to miss them, only to fly straight into the earth wires.

Bird collisions with power lines are usually detected by finding the carcasses or injured birds lying on the ground beneath the line. Usually a linesman from the utility company, a landowner or a member of the public finds the carcass. The more remote a line is, the less chance of collisions being detected. The likelihood of finding carcasses is also affected by the presence of scavengers, which may remove carcasses shortly after the collision occurs. A number of factors determine the collision risk that a certain section of power line poses: power line size and type, bird species present, species flocking behavior, flight characteristics, age of birds, weather conditions, land use, and topography.

## So what is the solution?

Since collisions occur because the birds can't see the cables, the obvious solution is to make the cables more visible or to place them out of harms way underground. Placing power lines underground has seldom been a feasible option in South Africa, due to prohibitive costs. In the case of new lines, it is sometimes possible to route the line through low risk areas. However, thousands of kilometers of line already exist in the landscape, much of it built long before people were aware of the impact of these lines on birds. For these lines, an "on site" mitigation method is required. Most mitigation measures to date have focused on marking devices installed on the high risk lines to make the lines more visible. The marking devices are installed at about ten-meter intervals, and alternate between light and dark colors to ensure a contrast with both light and dark

backgrounds. Two types of marking devices that have most commonly been used are Bird Flight Diverters and Bird Flappers. Bird Flight Diverters (BFD's) or "pigtailed" were developed in Europe where various studies have proven them to be effective in reducing the rates of bird collisions. Bird Flappers have been used in South Africa since 1995 and have proven more effective than the BFD, almost certainly due to the added dimension of movement. Bird Flappers typically consist of a round or teardrop-shaped disc made of UV resistant plastic, which is attached to the power line with a clamp. The disc is attached to the clamp by a swivel so that it is free to "flap" and move in the slightest breeze. Since 1995, the Bird Flappers design has evolved with durability being the main challenge. Wear and tear on the moving parts is inevitable and often the devices slide out of position on the line or fall off altogether. A new device currently undergoing testing in South Africa is a polished metal sphere attached to the line by means of a short cable and a clamp. This device is an attempt to strike a balance between visibility and durability. The lack of movement relative to a Bird Flapper compromises its visibility slightly, but at the same time extends its lifespan on the line as there are less moving parts that can fail. To answer the problem of night time collisions, a South African manufacturer has developed the Bird Lite, which is a one-meter long fluorescent tube – similar to those used for office lighting. It is attached to the conductors and illuminated (or "fired") by the ambient electrical field generated by the live conductors. The Bird Lite is reported to have worked well for curbing flamingo mortality on overhead lines in South Africa and Botswana.

In South Africa, marking devices are usually fitted onto power lines at the expense of the utility company. On the smaller distribution lines, installation can be done from the ground, while on larger transmission lines it must be done using a helicopter – with obvious cost implications. Since the utilities' core business is distribution of electricity, advice from bird specialists is usually required to assist in identifying lines that require marking.

## The South African approach

The approach to bird interactions with electrical infrastructure in South Africa has taken the form of co-operation between the utility company and the conservation community. Eskom, the largest utility company, and the EWT, a non profit conservation organization, formed the Eskom – EWT Strategic Partnership in 1996 in response to power line – wildlife interactions. Since then the partnership has worked towards implementing a holistic approach, incorporating expertise from ornithologists, engineers, businesses and a host of other fields. A strong relationship has developed, in which there is mutual trust between parties and a willingness to work together to solve the problems at hand. Through the partnership's efforts, thousands of kilometres of existing line have been marked, and new lines are now built in a bird-friendly manner as far as possible. The work to mitigate lines and develop the perfect marking device is by no means complete, but with every line marked, we approach a situation where our large terrestrial birds are safe as they fly over the landscape. Eskom deserves strong commendation for its efforts to minimize the impact of its activities on birds.

While we all want to flick a switch at night and light up our homes with "clean, affordable electricity", what we don't want is for this convenience to come at the expense of majestic birds such as cranes. With on-going co-operation and a real will to protect our birds, we can develop and implement solutions!

For more information contact Jon Smallie of the Eskom – EWT Strategic Partnership at [jons@ewt.org.za](mailto:jons@ewt.org.za), or visit [www.ewt.org.za](http://www.ewt.org.za)

A. Bird Flapper installation for this 400kV line depends on helicopter use. Photo by Albert Froneman

B. The scavenged carcass of a Secretarybird lies under a 220kV line. Photo by Jon Smallie

C. The Bird Flight Diverter. Photo by Chris van Rooyen

D. The latest Bird Flapper design. Photo by Jon Smallie



disappear against a dark background. Even if you are lucky enough to see the cables at the last moment, your size and slow wing beat make it difficult for you to take evasive action. You collide with the cables midair. If the impact with the cables doesn't kill you, your fall to the ground probably will.

The above scenario is not at all uncommon in South Africa, and probably all over the world. Collision with overhead power lines is one of the biggest threats to large terrestrial bird populations in South Africa. The species most at risk are the cranes, bustards, storks, flamingoes and various species of

stability. Using computer modeling, the Endangered Wildlife Trust's (EWT) South African Crane Working Group estimated in 2001 that an annual mortality rate of 150 adult Blue Cranes could reduce the eastern population of Blue Cranes (approx. 2000 individuals in Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal provinces) by 90% by the end of the 21st century. At that stage the population would be functionally extinct.

Evidence in South Africa and elsewhere has shown that where power lines have shield or earth wires, more bird collisions occur with the shield wire than with the conductors themselves.



# A Wisconsin Family's Legacy

By David Koehler, Director of Development



Wanted Crane chick, Africa. Photo by Warwick Tarbotan

With a love for nature and animals that began as a child in the Washington Park Zoo in Milwaukee, Frederick (Fred) Dohmen traveled the world with his family exploring wild things and unique places. It was on one of these adventures, recalls Mary Dohmen, Fred's second wife, that they became a family. It was also during these travels that a shared passion for conservation

grew among the Dohmens: Fred, Mary, and Fred's sons William and Bob.

Inspired by early adventurers Martin and Osa Johnson, the Dohmen family visited Africa in the early 1970s where they were forever changed by the

continent's diversity. To satisfy Bob's fascination with hippos, Fred brought his family to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to a place where hippos exist in their highest densities on the planet. Fred accompanied Bob as he ventured from their safari vehicle—against the better judgment of their guide—perilously close to many hippos wallowing in mud. Bob describes that unique experience as one of the

most memorable moments of his life.

Having taught elementary school in Baraboo at the beginning of her career, Mary Dohmen had a special place in her heart for the hilly landscape surrounding the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Mary and Fred visited ICF in the 1990s. After a tour with friend and ICF Co-founder George Archibald, they began generously supporting

*"The Dohmen family has made and continues to make tremendous impacts on our work," said George Archibald. "We are honored to advance in memory of Fred and through the family's continued friendship and support for our work in Africa."*

ICF's work to protect cranes and their habitats. Fred later shared his interest in crane conservation with his son Bob who also became involved.

Africa has remained a special place for the Dohmen family, and through ICF they were able to focus their desire

to protect its cranes and wild places by creating the Dohmen Endowment for African Cranes and Wetlands. The fund generates income each year that directly supports ICF's diverse conservation programs on this important continent for cranes. Today, thanks to the generosity and shared commitment of the Dohmen family, the fund has grown to nearly \$250,000 and will continue to support our work in Africa into the future.

Bob Dohmen has also committed his time and talent to conservation by serving on ICF's Board of Directors where he shares his passion and experience gained running his family's fifth-generation pharmaceutical distribution business, The F. Dohmen Company. Bob's leadership and invaluable counsel now help guide and expand ICF's work throughout the world.

Sadly, ICF and the cranes lost a good friend last spring when Fred Dohmen passed away at the age of 88. Adding to the legacy Fred has left through his son's leadership and his family's continued impact on our Africa program, ICF recently learned that Fred also made a provision in his will to support crane conservation. Fred's gift, like all planned gifts to ICF (unless otherwise directed), became part of our growing conservation program endowment established by donors to ensure that future help will be available to the cranes.

The world is fortunate to have the Dohmens as friends and champions of cranes and the special places where they are found.



Photo by George Archibald

*The moment after Bob shared his family's desire to establish the Dohmen Endowment for African Cranes and Wetlands. Okavango Delta, Botswana.*

*The ICF Bugle is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation. ICF was founded in 1973 by Ronald Sauer, Ph.D. (1948 - 1987) and George Archibald, Ph.D. Bugle comments or questions? Please write Kate at [kate@savingcranes.org](mailto:kate@savingcranes.org) or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913*

*Editor: Kate Fitzwilliams Memberships are vital to ICF. Please join or give a membership to a friend at the following annual rates:*

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Student or Senior Citizen..... | \$25    |
| Individual.....                | \$35    |
| Family.....                    | \$50    |
| Associate.....                 | \$100   |
| Sustaining.....                | \$250   |
| Sponsor.....                   | \$500   |
| Patron.....                    | \$1,000 |
| Benefactor.....                | \$2,000 |

# Survey Reveals Threatened Black-necked Cranes Are Increasing in Tibet

By Jim Harris, ICF Vice-President and Dr. Mary Anne Bishop, ICF Expedition Leader

Record numbers of Black-necked Cranes and Bar-headed Geese are wintering in the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. A January 2007 joint survey by the Tibet Plateau Institute of Biology and the International Crane Foundation (ICF) revealed a population of over 6,900 of the rare Black-necked Cranes, an increase of more than 3,000 cranes since 1992 when the international team conducted a similar survey. The new survey also found close to 32,000 Bar-headed Geese, more than double the population of 15

years ago. At a time when most Asian waterbirds are declining, this news is especially surprising. The Black-necked Crane is the only one of the world's 15 crane species that inhabits high altitude wetlands, with the species limited to the Tibetan-Qinghai Plateau and adjacent areas. While smaller numbers occur in Bhutan, India, and China's Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Tibet has by far the largest wintering population in the world.

Unlike most of China's large wildlife, the Black-necked Cranes live very close to people, descending from alpine meadows to winter in farming areas of nearby valleys. "The farmlands in southern Tibet provide a perfect combination of harvested grain fields for feeding and rivers for nighttime roosting," said Professor Tsamchu Drolma, of the Tibet Plateau Institute of Biology and co-leader of the expedition.

The team of researchers covered more than

2,600 km over 11 days, searching the Lhasa, Yarlung, and Nyang River valleys and their tributaries for the birds. "We were delighted by how much the numbers have grown. The creation of the Yarlung Zangbo River Middle Reaches Black-necked Crane Nature Reserve, along with better wildlife protection by the Tibet Forestry Department and public awareness has made a big difference for both of these species," reported Dr. Mary Anne Bishop, expedition leader for ICF and renowned crane researcher. Over 76% of the cranes and 48% of

the geese were found within the boundaries of the new nature reserve.

The Black-necked Crane was the least known of the world's cranes until recent decades, when ICF and Chinese scientists began their studies. In 1993, following the first complete winter surveys in Tibet, Dr. Bishop estimated the world population to be about 5,600 birds. The 2007 survey, combined with other recent studies, indicate a world population of over 11,000.

Another factor contributing to the recovery of the Black-necked Crane may be warming conditions in Tibet, that lead to better survival of the

cranes. Temperatures have risen 0.42 degrees Celsius (about 1 degree Fahrenheit) each decade since the 1980s, according to the China Daily, citing the Chinese Academy of Meteorological Sciences. Over the long-term, however, climate change could lead to reduced water in Tibet and less wetland areas suitable for nesting cranes and geese.



Black-necked Crane, Rich Armstrong Photography

# Join Bird-a-thon 2007!

There is still time to participate in this fun annual event! Each spring, novice and expert birders collect pledges and take to the field for a day to identify bird species while raising money for conservation. To date, this event has raised nearly a half-million dollars for the protection of cranes and their habitats. Please become involved by forming your own birding team, sponsoring that of another, or making a pledge to the ICF team including George Archibald, ICF Co-founder and Jim Hook, ICF President and friends. Please use the envelope in the center of this Bugle to sign up or to sponsor George and Jim. Prizes for the Bird-a-thon raising the most money include a pair of Eagle Optics Vortex Razor binoculars (over \$800 value) and a signed and framed Owen Gromme print! Hurry, the Bird-a-thon concludes June 15 (recently extended to accommodate more birders!)

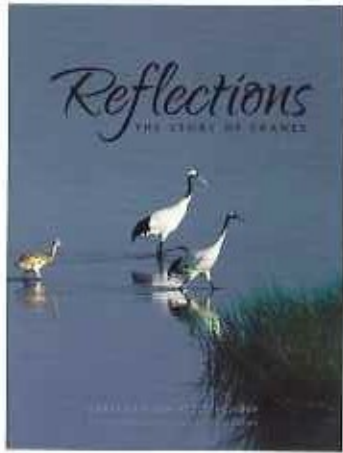
## Crane Heritage Society Event—June 16 & 17

The Crane Heritage Society is our way of recognizing those who make the meaningful decision to include ICF in their estate plans or who make gifts to ICF that generate a life income. These commitments create a lasting legacy by helping build ICF's program endowment so we may protect cranes and their habitats into the future.

ICF is hosting a special gathering for its Crane Heritage Society members. On Saturday, society members are invited to join ICF's Board of Directors and staff for the opening of photographer Birgit Bateman's *Cranes of India* in our new Donnelley Family Education Center followed by a special tour of the *Cranes of the World* and dinner with ICF President Jim Hook and directors in Lake Delton. On Sunday, society members will spend the morning bird watching with co-founder George Archibald at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge.

If you have made such a provision for ICF, please let us know so we may add you to the society. If you are interested in learning more about including ICF in your estate plans or this event, please contact David Koehler, Director of Development, at (608) 356-9462 ext. 140 or [dkoehler@savingcranes.org](mailto:dkoehler@savingcranes.org).

## Newly Revised Edition of *Reflections* Now Available!



### Hot off the presses

*Reflections* tells the story of ICF and the cranes of the world—with over 70 color photographs and new range maps for each crane species. Dr. George Archibald, ICF Co-founder, on the new edition, “During the 16 years that have passed since *Reflections* was first printed, the cranes of the world have experienced many changes. The

revised edition of *Reflections* brings us up to date on these changes as one of the world’s most threatened group of birds face the challenges of the new century.”

ICF is grateful for the editorial expertise of Dr. Richard Steeves and the incredible graphic design contribution made by Linda Weidemann, which made this new edition possible.

Now available in our Gift Shop or online at:  
[www.craneshop.org](http://www.craneshop.org)

## Travel with George to South Africa

January 13-January 26, 2008

While snow drifts across Wisconsin during the last two weeks of January, I invite you to South Africa where we will experience the onset of summer. Our adventure begins in Cape Town and continues along the east coast by bus, stopping at nature reserves that promise diverse wildlife watching. The Big Five (elephant, giraffe, lion, rhino and hippo) are guaranteed as well as the beautiful Blue, Wattled and Crowned Cranes. There are 12 spots open for this once-in-a-lifetime travel opportunity. For more information and a detailed itinerary email Julie Zajicek at [julie@savingcranes.org](mailto:julie@savingcranes.org) or visit ICF’s website [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org) “What’s New”.



### International Crane Foundation

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