



# Your 2006 Crane Count Results Are Enclosed!

March 15, 2007

Dear Midwest Crane Counter,

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) is pleased to present the results of the 2006 Crane Count. The 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Midwest Crane Count took place on April 22. This program completely depends on your dedication and participation – we could not do it without you. Thanks to all participants, and especially the County Coordinators for all of their volunteer work to organize the Count in your area!

Enclosed you will find a map of the reporting counties throughout the Upper Midwest, and tables summarizing data from each one. The totals for counties seem to have been fairly consistent, maybe a little lower this year. This year participation was again over 3,000 volunteers.

We appreciate all of the time and effort you put into this count every year. Thank you for helping with the 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Crane Count. We look forward to you continuing to participate for many more years to come. If you are interested in receiving extra Crane Count decals for your car, please contact us. We will also be sending a few on to our coordinators so you can ask them as well.

To show our appreciation for the time and energy you put into the Crane Count, ICF is offering free admission for all crane counters to our site in Baraboo, Wisconsin during our 2007 season. Free admission will be granted to all individuals whose name(s) appear on the mailing label on the front of this letter. Simply cut out the free admission pass from the back page of the newsletter (your address label will be on the back). Present the pass upon arrival at our Visitor Center for your free admission (any accompanying guests who are not listed on the mailing label will be charged the standard admission fee). ICF is open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., April 15-October 31. Daily guided tours are available at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and on weekends only in April, May, September, and October. We hope you will visit us!

Remember, a lot of handy information about Crane Count can be found on the ICF website: [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org). Crane Count information can be accessed four ways:

- [www.cranecount.org](http://www.cranecount.org) - The new and easy way of finding the Crane Count portion of the ICF website.
- On the home page, click the *What's New* button
- Under the *Conservation and Research* tab click on *North America*, look to the left and click on *Research in the Field* and then scroll down to *Annual Midwest Crane Count*.
- Use the *Search Site* tool, located on the top right hand side of the home page

Mark your calendars for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Midwest Crane Count on **April 14, 2007**. Thank you once again for your dedication and hard work.

Sincerely,

Joan, Alyssa and Casey

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# How Your Participation in Crane Count is Helping to Save Cranes!

By Anne Lacy, Sandhill Crane Project Manager

Have you wondered to yourself “Am I making a difference to conservation by participating in Crane Count?” Besides being a fun and memorable springtime ritual, your efforts are significantly contributing to ICF’s knowledge of how the Sandhill Crane population is growing and changing in the state of Wisconsin. The data you collect also helps us answer questions we receive from the general public and improves the quality of our educational curriculum about Sandhill Cranes for students K-12.

In 1982, ICF began monitoring state-wide crane population trends through the Annual Midwest Crane Count. The past twenty-five years have marked dramatic changes in the Upper Midwest’s population of Sandhill Cranes. To better understand

the natural history of these birds, ICF’s Field Ecology Department, began an intensive study of cranes near the town of Briggsville, WI. in 1988. Su Liying, as part of her dissertation for the University of Wisconsin, used crane count data to show exactly where the population of cranes in Wisconsin was increasing<sup>1</sup>. By mapping the data, we realized that the crane population is not growing equally in all areas. While cranes are colonizing some areas and growing in density in others, some locations remain empty. The common factor about the areas where cranes are increasing is that these sites have wetlands located close to agricultural activity and that forest cover is not very dense. The place where these habitat characteristics merge is located in portions of eight adjacent, central Wisconsin counties. These counties support well over half the breeding population of Sandhill cranes in Wisconsin.

One practical application of the long-term crane study in Briggsville is to help solve the problem of cranes damaging newly sprouted corn seedlings (a problem throughout the upper Midwest.). ICF biologists reasoned that as the population grew, more areas of the state would experience damage to planted corn. This



## Thank You

from the ICF Crane Count Staff

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) would like to extend a warm greeting and thank-you to everyone involved with Crane Count 2006.

An extra special thank you is extended to the County Coordinators that are retiring from their duties this year. Several of you have dedicated many years to ensuring that the Crane Count experience is rewarding for both the volunteers in your area and ICF. It is YOU, the County Coordinators, that give ICF the ability to reach the thousands of people involved with Crane Count and maintain such a wide geographic range for the survey. Thank you for all the hard work you have done and for your gifts of time and talent.

With County Coordinator retirements come County Coordinator position openings, and we have already had several individuals step up to the challenge. We are extremely grateful to those of you who have taken this opportunity to further your contribution to Crane Count. ICF encourages all others who may be interested in coordinating a county anywhere throughout the five-state region to contact us by phone at 608.356.9462 extension 127 or by email at [naturalists@savingcranes.org](mailto:naturalists@savingcranes.org).

Thank you again to everyone and we look forward to working with you in 2007!



## ICF Free Admission Pass

Thank you for making Crane Count 2006 possible!  
Present this certificate at the ICF Visitor Center for free admission to ICF any time during the 2007 season.

Valid to all crane counters whose names appear on the mailing label on the reverse side. Any accompanying guests who are not listed on the mailing label will be charged the standard admission fee.

ICF is open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., April 15-October 31. Daily guided tours are available at 10 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and on weekends only in April, May, September, and October.

Thank you for your generous gift of time!

through central Florida, not only taking the lives of 20 people, but of 17 Whooping Cranes. These cranes were part of the sixth year of the ultralight-ported portion of the reintroduction project. Operation Migration, one of the partners in the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), leads the birds on migration by using ultralight aircraft.. “My heart is aching both for the young birds we lost and for the dedicated people who devote so much of themselves to this project,” stated John Christian,



WCEP Co-chair. “Our thoughts also go out to those in central Florida who suffered personal losses as a result of these storms.”

Yet out of the dark storm, a ray of light emerged in the form of a radio signal from Whooping Crane number 15-06. The lone crane’s signal was picked up by ICF Aviculturist Marianne Wellington and confirmed with an aerial sighting from ICF Tracking Intern, Tally Love. The juvenile Whooping Crane

was observed with two Sandhill Cranes, with no signs of injuries.

As humbling as nature can be, it also has a way of working out. Even with such a loss, the Eastern migratory Whooping Crane population still gained five more young birds to their flock. With the help of the first wild hatched chick, the DAR birds (one bird died over the winter), and surviving ultralight chick number 15-06, the migrating class of 2006 was able to grow.

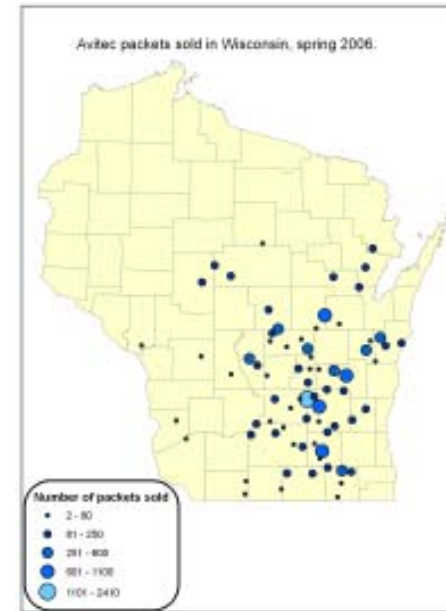
“While this is a setback for the Whooping Crane reintroduction project, WCEP has faced challenges in the past and we plan to move forward with our effort to return this highly imperiled species to its historic range in eastern North America,” said Joan Garland, ICF’s Acting Director of Education. “Breeding season is just now starting up in the captive centers and we are looking forward to the

production, training, migration and release of another group of Whooping Cranes in 2007. We will move forward and rebuild the flock with your support.”

If you are interested in keeping up to date with what’s going on with this new migratory flock of Whooping Cranes, sign up for the ICF Whooping Crane Reintroduction Update E-Newsletter. Please send your email address to ICF’s web editor Ann Burke at [aburke@savingcranes.org](mailto:aburke@savingcranes.org). ICF will not share or sell your email address.

hypothesis has turned out to be true as revealed by Crane Count data and crop damage reports.

Using Crane Count data, researchers at ICF demonstrated that, in any given year, up to three million acres of corn are vulnerable to crane damage, at a cost to growers of approximately \$55 million in Wisconsin alone. These results helped ICF to lead a successful collaborative effort with many state and national groups to address this problem. In 2006, the group received EPA approval to use an experimental chemical, anthraquinone, to deter cranes from damaging germinating corn in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. The news could not have come at a better time because 2006 was the first year when growers had no alternative available to protect their corn. (The chemical Lindane, previously used to deter cranes, was, banned by the EPA in 2006). Testing by

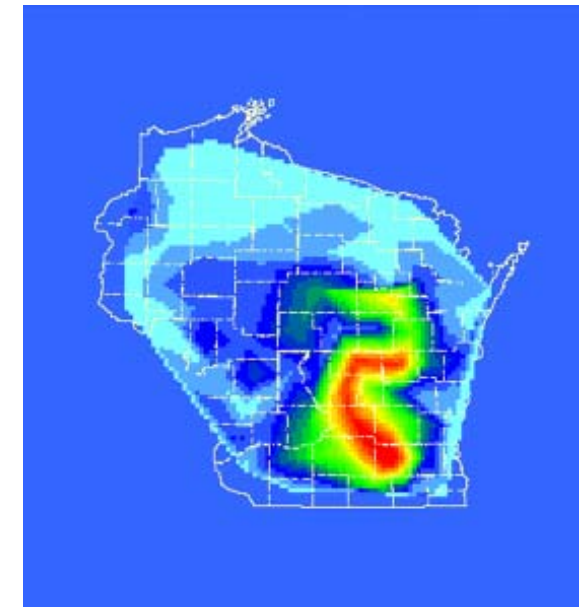


Distribution of Avitec™ sold in Wisconsin. A total of 15,107 packets of Avitec were sold in spring 2006. There were 502 packets that could not be traced to a specific location. A 3.5 oz. packet treats 2.5 acres.

the ICF in our long- term study area demonstrates that the chemical anthraquinone (trade name Aviatec™) effectively deters cranes from damaging newly planted corn, but does not harm the cranes or leave toxic residue in the environment. It is a win-win-win for farmers, cranes and the environment!

As you can see from Figure 1, Avitec™ sales were highest in areas of Wisconsin where Crane Count data showed the most cranes. Crane Count data independently corroborated this outcome in a way that would be impossible through other means. Thank you for the many years of Sandhill Crane data and know that Crane Count continues to be an important component of our research in the future!

<sup>1</sup>Su, L., J. Harris, and J. Barzen. 2004. Changes in population and distribution for greater sandhill cranes in Wisconsin. Passenger Pigeon 66(4):317-326.



Crane density in Wisconsin, derived from 2003 Annual Midwest Crane Count. Light (outer) shades indicate low density, dark (inner) indicates high densities.

# Annual Midwest Crane Count 2006 Results

Pages 4-8 contain the results of Crane Count 2006 (this includes all of the data returned to ICF by December 31, 2006) are included.

## Tables

Pages 5 and 8 contain a tables for each of the 5 Crane Count states (Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and Iowa.) The tables provide a county-by-county summary of 2006 Crane Count data. The number of cranes (seen or heard), the number of pairs (determined by unison calls heard), the number of sites, and number of observers, are reported.

## Map

Pages 6 and 7 contain a map of the five-state Crane Count area. The map illustrates total crane sightings

by county (how many cranes were seen or heard in each county during the official two-hour Crane Count period). Counties that participated in the Count are shown in varying shades of grey, depending upon how many cranes were observed.

The number of cranes observed or heard during Crane Count does not tell us precisely how many cranes are found in any given county. Factors such as weather conditions during the Count, number of sites counted, and number of counters has to be considered when we use Crane Count data to estimate crane population trends.

## 2006 Crane Count State Totals

State	Cranes	Pairs	Observers
Wisconsin	10,659	1,951	2,717
Michigan	455	103	232
Minnesota	190	39	78
Illinois	235	55	168
Iowa	70	12	44
Total:	11,609	2,160	3,239

# Whooping Crane Eastern Migratory Flock Updates

By Casey Gutkowski, ICF Naturalist

Crane Counters consider themselves quite the experts in Sandhill Cranes, but what about their North American crane companion, the Whooping Crane? The occasional counter might have the privilege of sighting one of these beautiful white birds, and when such a sighting occurs, “craniacs” usually ask the question, “So what’s up with the Whooping Cranes?” Follow along as we cover the story of the Eastern migratory flock of Whooping Cranes in 2006.

## First Family

The birds, now 62 in the flock, have gone through many accomplishments this year, including the first migration in the Eastern flyway completed by a wild

Whooping Crane in over 100 years. The first wild hatched chick, number W1-06, left with her parents (numbers 11-02 and 17-02) from their summer home at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Wisconsin, on November 19 to begin their long migration south. The family arrived at their winter territory in Florida on December 9, spent the winter in Hernando County, Florida, and returned to the Necedah NWR on March 20. This event marks a historic milestone in the recovery of the endangered Whooping Crane.

## DAR Project

With the successful migration of Whooping Crane W1-06, comes the successful migration of the Direct Autumn Release (DAR) cranes. In 2006, four juvenile Whooping Cranes, raised at Necedah NWR, were released with older cranes at the refuge. The DAR birds then migrated south with their companions in two separate groups, reaching the warmth of Florida in early December. This is the second year for the DAR birds and we look forward to continued success with this reintroduction method.



## Ultralight Reintroduction

As with any year in life, one must take the bitter with the sweet. On February 2, 2007, a deadly thunderstorm brushed

# 2006 Crane Count Results By State and County

## Michigan

County	Cranes	Pairs	Sites	Observers
Alger	132	36	28	40
Allegan	14	3	1	1
Baraga	8	0	10	15
Cass	not available	not available	not available	not available
Clinton	5	2	2	2
Delta	35	7	7	17
Dickinson	31	13	13	15
Hillsdale	not available	not available	not available	not available
Houghton	60	11	17	27
Ingham	not available	not available	not available	not available
Iron	not available	not available	not available	not available
Jackson	not available	not available	not available	not available
Keweenaw	18	8	8	12
Lenawee	not available	not available	not available	not available
Marquette	47	9	11	21
Menominee	21	4	4	5
Ontonagon	22	4	28	40
Schoolcraft	29	4	9	9
Shiawassee	not available	not available	not available	not available
Washtenaw	33	2	17	28

## Minnesota

County	Cranes	Pairs	Sites	Observers
Anoka	80	17	4	4
Beltrami	3	1	1	1
Chisago	19	1	2	3
Dakota	not available	not available	not available	not available
Hennepin	6	3	21	25
Houston	18	7	5	9
Morrison	19	0	1	1
Polk	not available	not available	not available	not available
Ramsey	2	1	4	6
Roseau	2	1	1	2
Wabasha	33	6	11	11
Winnon	8	2	10	16

## Illinois

County	Cranes	Pairs	Sites	Observers
Boone	9	2	3	4
Carroll	4	2	1	2
Cook	1	0	3	8
DuPage	not available	not available	not available	not available
Grundy	3	0	1	2
Je Davies	not available	not available	not available	not available
Kane	19	4	12	17
Lake	72	20	22	45
McHenry	58	11	20	50
Stephenson	28	6	9	16
Whiteside	4	2	1	2
Winnebago	37	8	14	22

## Iowa

County	Cranes	Pairs	Sites	Observers
Allamakee	not available	not available	not available	not available
Bremer	25	6	8	17
Buchanan	0	0	1	1
Butler	not available	not available	not available	not available
Chickasaw	2	1	1	2
Clinton	9	3	2	5
Greene	not available	not available	not available	not available
Hancock	0	0	7	8
Humboldt	not available	not available	not available	not available
Jackson	7	1	2	2
Johnson	0	0	1	1
Jones	not available	not available	not available	not available
Kossuth	not available	not available	not available	not available
Louisa	3	0	1	1
Polk	not available	not available	not available	not available
Scott	not available	not available	not available	not available
Tama	15	0	2	4
Winnebago	not available	not available	not available	not available
Winneshiek	9	1	1	1
Worth	0	0	2	2
Wright	not available	not available	not available	not available

# 2006 Crane Count Results By County in the State of Wisconsin

County	Cranes	Pairs	Sites	Observers
Adams	20	4	17	34
Ashland	6	1	6	8
Barron	78	23	23	46
Bayfield	6	2	10	16
Brown	176	19	35	54
Buffalo	55	9	15	31
Burnett	190	45	24	54
Calumet	164	25	16	27
Chippewa	92	32	28	43
Clark	68	14	20	34
Columbia	1193	176	98	208
Crawford	70	20	12	26
Dane	544	111	80	153
Dodge	306	63	33	58
Deer	98	20	21	40
Douglas	20	5	17	21
Dunn	129	36	31	60
Em Chaire	125	25	18	37
Florence	0	0	1	1
Fond du Lac	113	28	14	28
Forest	2	1	8	10
Grant	27	8	6	8
Green	67	12	15	26
Green Lake	365	61	27	62
Iowa	55	18	12	22
Iron	30	9	7	17
Jackson	60	18	12	28
Jefferson	687	122	65	120
Juneau	76	19	14	22
Kenosha	58	15	7	15
Kewaunee	24	4	7	14
LaCrosse	89	31	16	33
LaFayette	not available	not available	not available	not available
Langlade	not available	not available	not available	not available
Lincoln	85	18	19	34
Manitowac	80	17	11	15

County	Cranes	Pairs	Sites	Observers
Marathon	269	53	38	70
Marquette	73	23	17	24
Marquette	735	128	96	125
Menominee	81	40	14	17
Milwaukee	2	0	3	5
Monroe	221	31	19	30
Oconto	196	30	24	28
Oswego	140	48	39	64
Outagamie	469	75	27	43
Ozaukee	2	0	1	1
Pepin	14	5	5	8
Pierce	8	3	7	10
Polk	9	2	2	3
Portage	87	3	15	110
Price	73	10	39	85
Racine	26	11	6	15
Richland	96	28	23	46
Rock	362	31	25	55
Rusk	22	4	9	14
St. Croix	21	3	14	22
Sauk	197	43	34	71
Sauyer	11	3	9	17
Shawano	479	42	37	56
Sheboygan	130	28	17	30
Taylor	24	11	10	13
Trempealeau	89	24	24	47
Vernon	4	0	3	4
Vilas	31	9	6	16
Walworth	35	8	13	16
Washburn	24	5	19	25
Washington	20	3	6	9
Waushara	132	22	18	37
Waupaca	201	28	20	36
Waushara	251	15	17	25
Winnebago	560	97	39	68
Wood	407	74	42	67

# Annual Midwest Crane Count Results 2006

## By County

