

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

# *The* Bugle

*Saving cranes and the places where cranes dance!*

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## The Flock Saving the Flock

*International Crane Foundation Crane Conservation Fellow Alicia Ward holds young Whooping Crane 16-23. Photo by Scott Judd*



*"It's truly been a partnership of all walks of life. We really need that shared passion from private landowners, hunters, communities, and policymakers to make saving these birds possible."*

- Anne Lacy, Director of Eastern Flyway Programs - North America



## Field Notes from the President

By Dr. Rich Beilfuss, President & CEO



*The International Crane Foundation has partnered with China to recover the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane for more than 40 years. Photo by Zheng Zhongjie*

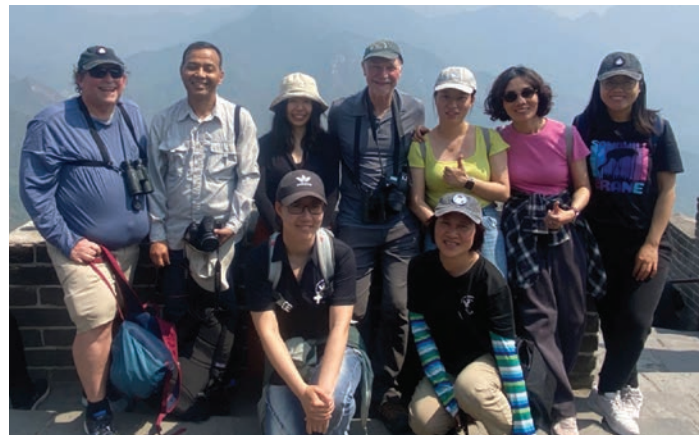
It's an election year in the U.S., and the only thing more certain than yard signs and kissing babies is the political bashing of China by all sides. And here in China, when politicians seek to gain favor with the populace, they are quick to blame the United States for all their ills, too.

But as I write from this park bench in Beijing, watching a group of elderly people practice *White Crane Spreads its Wings* and other ancient movements of Tai Chi, I'm moved by the values we share and how much we can accomplish when we join together.

For more than 40 years, the International Crane Foundation has worked side-by-side with our Chinese team and partners here to build an impressive conservation legacy across China. We've cultivated our deep commitment with China for good reason. China is home to eight of the world's 15 species of cranes, more than any other country in the world. Chinese reverence for cranes has resulted in a remarkable network of 46 National Crane Nature Reserves, protecting a total area of over 71 million acres.

Our "safe flyways" program for Siberian Cranes was awarded one of the best 10 projects of the decade by the World Bank Global Environmental Facility. We established one of the world's first community-based conservation projects, supporting Black-necked Cranes at Cao Hai. Our long-term commitment to Poyang Lake has helped maintain the natural water fluctuations needed to sustain this most important freshwater wetland of Asia for cranes, other migratory waterbirds, and local fishing communities. We've opened fun, engaging "crane schools" to support local teachers in educating the next generation of Chinese conservation leaders. In 2017, when China passed a new law requiring foreign non-governmental organizations to formally register in the country, ICF was among the first conservation organizations in the world to be officially registered and welcomed to carry on our important work here.

I traveled to China this past month to further our mission in China and deepen our sense of connection with our team here as "One ICF." We met with our key partners and government hosts, including China's National Forest and Grassland Administration, to discuss our conservation plans and impact for the years ahead. We traveled to Inner Mongolia to learn more about our new project to secure breeding and stop-over grounds for White-naped Cranes and other grassland birds—a wonderful new partnership with local communities and leaders.



We also took time to hike a section of the Great Wall of China together, sharing many laughs along the way.

I am very proud of the positive impact we've achieved for cranes, wetlands, and people through our long-term partnership with China. But more important, perhaps, is that we've made the world a bit smaller, and a bit friendlier, with cranes as our ambassadors for goodwill.

## The Flock Saving the Flock

By Ryan Michalesko, Communications and Advocacy Specialist

It's a crisp April morning as spring sets in at the marsh. One step at a time, ecologists trudge their way through the wetland—sometimes fighting to keep from getting a foot stuck. Their destination is the nest of a Whooping Crane pair, recently filled with this season's clutch of eggs. While their slow progress through the wetland is tough, these passionate experts are just one link in the chain of partners working tirelessly to bring back the endangered Whooping Crane.

"Reintroduction has been critical to helping restore Whooping Crane populations," said Anne Lacy, Director of Eastern Flyway Programs - North America at the International Crane Foundation. "But it's a team effort and there's a lot of hands that make what we're doing possible."

The International Crane Foundation has long worked to establish partnerships critical to promoting the reintroduced populations in overcoming significant threats. As a result of years of dedication by many affiliates, two reintroduced populations of Whooping Cranes have been established—the Eastern Migratory Population and a non-migratory population in the species' historic range in southern Louisiana.

### The Rescue of 16-23

While captive breeding and reintroduction is vital to helping these populations grow, it also means the birds have a lot to learn. "They are naive to the landscape. Once they're out in the wild, there are a lot of hurdles the cranes have to contend with," Lacy explained. "Throughout the flyway, we need a chain of stopover sites for the Whooping Cranes along their migration, and it's up to all of us to create these safe havens."

This new-to-the-wild naivete was made fully apparent in the case of Whooping Crane 16-23, also known as Animal. This young bird made an unexpected appearance in a residential neighborhood in suburban Chicago in late April.

Animal was raised at ICF and released to the wild last summer. For reasons we're not sure of, Animal got off course while completing her first migration this spring back north to Wisconsin from Indiana. When Animal appeared in a Wilmette, Illinois front yard, the chain of "craniacs" jumped into action.

"All of the stars aligned in this case, and we really got to see our outreach and education efforts pay off," Lacy said. "The most important thing is folks in the area knew she was a Whooping Crane, that they're an endangered species, and she was very out of place."

As word of the wayward Whooping Crane spread among area birders, the news also reached Hillary Thompson, the Whooping Crane Project Manager at ICF. Thompson and Crane Conservation Fellow Alicia Ward hit the road on a rescue mission. They safely captured Animal and relocated her to her home in Wisconsin's Horicon Marsh that same day.

In this instance, many partners joined in Animal's successful rescue. From the neighbors and volunteers who originally reported the bird and monitored its safety to the support provided by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a local veterinarian, the chain of partners functioned at its best.



*"Throughout the flyway, we need a chain of stopover sites for the Whooping Cranes along their migration, and it's up to all of us to create these safe havens."*

Photo by Tom Lynn

### L4-23 Highlights Continued Challenges

Another recent Whooping Crane story ended differently. We can trace L4-23 all the way from incubated egg at ICF in Baraboo, Wisconsin, to his death in the wild in far south Louisiana. This young crane's egg was the third of four laid in 2023 by Whooping Crane pair Anzac and Slash at ICF headquarters in Wisconsin. On day 26 of its incubation, the egg was transferred to the Dallas Zoo's Whooping Crane Center of Texas. There, the egg made news as the first-ever successful hatching of a Whooping Crane at the Dallas Zoo. Foster parents Huckleberry and Juniper raised the chick in Texas. Then the juvenile crane joined the wild Whooping Crane population in Louisiana in November 2023.

After less than two months in the wild, L4-23 was found near Mamou, Louisiana with a fatal gunshot wound. Numerous people and organizations had watched over, cared for and celebrated him along the way, and then he came to this senseless end. An award is being offered for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for this illegal shooting.



Photo by Ted Thousand

Clearly, with such a small number of Whooping Cranes in the world, this one death, whether from negligence or malice, is a blow to all of us. And it's also a stern reminder that we must keep vigilant and remain persistent.

Yet overall, the picture is improving. While still far from their historic totals, the population of Whooping Cranes is growing. The total number of Whooping Cranes in the world is estimated at 831 individuals—536 in the Aransas-Wood Buffalo natural population, 162 in the reintroduced populations, and 133 in captivity.

Optimism is a key ingredient in ICF's work. While we don't always get the individual happy ending we want, we know—and the data shows—that we're going in the right direction.

**"It really is a flock of partners saving the flock,"** Anne Lacy said, **"and that's a wonderful thing to witness."**



Photo by Scott Judd



From left to right: 16-23 on her return to Horicon Marsh. Hillary Thompson. Young Whooping Cranes in flight. Tom Lynn. Map by Dorn Moore/International Crane Foundation.

# It Takes All of Us—

neighbors, aviculturists, partners, policymakers—to care for these birds.  
Help us to secure every link in the chain, from egg to adulthood and all along the flyway.



It takes all of us, from all points of the compass, from ecologists to zookeepers, from expert birders to everyday nature-lovers, to care for these birds. It's passionate people like the researchers, aviculturists, and outreach staff at ICF, and it's all of you, too.

"It's truly been a partnership of all walks of life," Anne Lacy said. "We really need that shared passion from private landowners, hunters, communities, and policymakers to make saving these birds possible."

We need to secure every link in the chain, from egg to adulthood and all along the flyway. It's up to all of us—and together we can do this.

**YOUR GIFT  
MAKES A  
DIFFERENCE**

Please send your donation in the enclosed envelope or visit [savingcranes.org/donate](https://savingcranes.org/donate) to make your gift today.

All photos this page: Tom Lynn

# The Centenary of Vladimir E. Flint

By A.F. Kovshar, A.G. Sorokin, E.I. Ilyashenko

**I**n my half-century of work for cranes around the world, Vladimir Flint (alias Vladoka) was one of my closest, most amusing and remarkable friends. During the Cold War he took many chances and with a smile sometimes commented, “One day, I’ll make a mistake. Then you won’t see me again!” On the anniversary of his 100th year, I am thrilled that Russian colleagues continue to remember and honor him through the V.E. Flint Crane Working Group of Eurasia. What follows is a condensed version of an article published in *Cranes of Eurasia (Distribution, Conservation)*. 2024. Issue 7. Moscow, p. 10-36.

—George Archibald, ICF Co-Founder



George Archibald (center) and Vladimir Flint (right) in 1985.

It has been 100 years since the birth of Vladimir E. Flint (March 14, 1924 – March 20, 2004), an outstanding ornithologist and a prominent wildlife conservationist. Among Flint’s multifaceted scientific interests, cranes occupied a prominent place. Many young ornithologists were inspired by his 1981 book “Operation Siberian Crane.” Flint was head of the Biodiversity Department of the All-Union Scientific Research Institute for the Protection of Nature as well as founder and president of the Russian Bird Conservation Union and the first chairman of the Crane Working Group of the USSR.

In “Operation Siberian Crane” he describes his admiration for cranes, saying:

*these birds react to everything as if thinking through the situation. Sometimes they simply amaze us with their seemingly “human” response to our actions. They are capable not only of mutual understanding, but even of a kind of friendship.... They are beautiful with a special complete grace, elegance, freedom and originality of movements, a delicate, thoughtful and natural range of colors. In addition, cranes have an amazing voice—sad and at the same time solemn, life-affirming, melodic, as if silver. Probably, all this was the reason for the special love for cranes that exists among different peoples of the world.*

He found his first Siberian Crane nest in 1965, marking the beginning of many years of effort to conserve the Siberian Crane and other crane species. Flint was the first to determine the size and distribution of the Siberian Crane Eastern population in Yakutia through a number of expeditions in the 1960s and 1970s. As the leading Soviet specialist in the study of the Siberian Crane, it was to him that International Crane Foundation Co-founder George Archibald reached out in 1974. This was the start of a long-term friendship between the two, and the dawn of decades of cooperation on Siberian Crane conservation.

Thanks to their efforts, the first Siberian Crane captive population was created at ICF, and the Oka Crane Breeding Center was organized in Russia for reintroduction purposes.

In 1980 Flint became the first chairman of the Crane Working Group of the USSR. He organized ornithological conferences and worked on vital international agreements to protect cranes. After the collapse of the USSR, the Crane Working Group virtually stopped. Then in 2000, Flint supported the restoration of the CWG as the Crane Working Group of Eurasia. Up until 2002, when his health began to fail, he didn’t miss a single international meeting on cranes.

Flint remained faithful to cranes until the end of his days. His contribution to the study and preservation of cranes was immense. He is remembered as an example of determination in science, love for birds and other animals, and to nature in general. The organization he led has been renamed in his honor as the V.E. Flint Crane Working Group of Eurasia.



Vladimir Flint doing field work in Yakutia, 1960s.



Operation Siberian Crane

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



### Erica Bukouricz

Menasha, WI | Member for 7 years

I grew up in rural Wisconsin and saw my first Whooping Crane during a summer internship in Two Rivers, Wisconsin. I was immediately fascinated, did a lot of research, and discovered the International Crane Foundation just a few hours from my hometown. After college, I became an education intern at ICF for nine months. It was an eye-opening experience, one that I still talk about today. I learned so much, not only about all 15 species of cranes, but how one organization filled with so much passion could make such a big difference to the crane species throughout the world and the habitats that they call home. The internship left such an impression that I am now a naturalist in Appleton, Wisconsin, teaching the next generation about our environment and conservation.



### Thor and Kathleen Albro

Bow, WA | Members for 8+ years

Thor and I began our interest in cranes via my parents’ life-long interest in birdwatching. While working in Africa, they sighted one of Africa’s crowned cranes. It was such a stunning bird. From that interest, we pursued locations where migrating Sandhill Cranes came into our part of the country: eastern Washington in the Othello/Potholes Reservoir area, Oregon’s Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Northern California’s Lasson’s National Forest. It’s always a thrill to either hear them call or see them dance.

We decided to join the International Crane Foundation’s Frequent Flyer Program so that we could give consistently and factor the contribution into our yearly budget. This way of giving is easy and also allows us to make additional contributions when we can. We know that regular, recurring payments help ICF in setting annual donation goals. It has really worked for us.

### Are you interested in monthly giving?

By making an automatic gift each month, you can ensure that you are consistently growing our far-reaching efforts to save cranes and the threatened places they call home—every day of the year! [Learn more at savingcranes.org/monthlygiving](http://www.savingcranes.org/monthlygiving)

## George Archibald Wins Prestigious Eisenmann Medal

Join us in congratulating International Crane Foundation Co-Founder and Senior Conservationist George Archibald on winning the 2024 Eisenmann Medal from the Linnaean Society of New York. He accepted the award in New York City in March, and delivered a lecture titled “Cranes as Ambassadors for Wetlands, Grasslands and Goodwill.” The Linnaean Society is devoted to all aspects of natural history, with a strong focus on birds. The Eisenmann medal is given to an individual who has contributed to ornithology and who has helped amateurs by taking time to help young naturalists who express an interest in birds or has helped broaden an interest an amateur already has in birds. George adds to his already long list of honors, including the Gold Medal from the World Wildlife Fund, a Fellows Award from the MacArthur Foundation, and the Order of Canada on behalf of Queen Elizabeth II.



Left to right: Jane Alexander, George Archibald, Eleanor Hoagland, and Alice Deutsch.

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The Bugle is the triannual newsletter of the International Crane Foundation. The organization was founded in 1973 by Ronald Sauey, Ph.D. (1948 - 1987) and George Archibald, Ph.D.

Editor: Angela Woodward

Bugle comments or questions? Please email [Bugle@savingcranes.org](mailto:Bugle@savingcranes.org) or send mail to P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913. To become a sponsor of this publication, please contact the editor.

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## International Crane Foundation

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### *New puzzle: Reflections – A Crane Chick Grows Up*

Photographer Ted Thousand studied the same pair of Sandhill Cranes for three years. As he became part of the background, they allowed him to observe as they raised their chicks, including this intimate moment of a parent teaching its offspring to find food at the edge of a wetland.



Enjoy watching this delightful image come to life as each of the 550 pieces falls into place. \$19.95

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## Thank you, Members!

Please mark your calendar for our annual Member Appreciation Day on Saturday, Sept. 21, from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. Learn how you save cranes and their habitats through talks and presentations by our talented staff, enjoy tours of the Cranes of the World exhibits, take a walk on our restored prairie, and experience special behind-the-scenes opportunities offered exclusively for members.

Visit [savingcranes.org/memberday](http://savingcranes.org/memberday) to learn more. *Questions?* Contact Membership Manager Jennifer Fiene at 608-356-9462 ext. 151 or [membership@savingcranes.org](mailto:membership@savingcranes.org)



Thanks to our 2024 season sponsors: Leiden Conservation Foundation, Patti Manigault, and Martin and Karen Voss.

*Anne Lacy, Director of Eastern Flyway Programs – North America hosts a Whooping Crane Q & A with members. Photo by Hannah Jones/International Crane Foundation*

