

# THE BROLGA BUGLE

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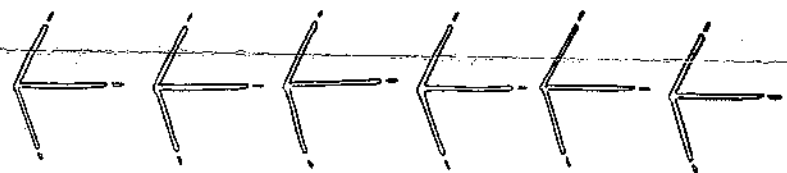
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## ICF Presents '77 Gamy Awards

## MAKING TRACKS - news of the foundation



The International Crane Foundation recently announced the winners of its new GAMY AWARDS for outstanding productivity. Four categories are recognized: Mother of the Year, Father of the Year, Most Promising Male and Most Promising Female. Winners this year were Lulu, a Japanese Crane, for Mother of the Year; Yukio Ueno, a Japanese Crane, for Father of the Year; Casey, a Whitenaped Crane, for Most Promising Male; and Phyllis, a Siberian Crane, for Most Promising Female (see side panel for details on this year's winners).



### *Mother of the Year . . .*

ICF affectionately presents our 1977 GAMY AWARD for "Mother of the Year" to Lulu, a Japanese Crane, who produced 7 chicks this year. Lulu is on loan to ICF from the Honolulu Zoo where she was hatched and raised in 1953. Lulu arrived in Baraboo in 1973 and we promptly paired her to Phil, a male Japanese Crane from the Philadelphia Zoo. Two years later, Lulu and Phil presented ICF with our first fertile egg which hatched into Tsuru, a beautiful male who continually delights visitors to ICF with his antics.

ICF's 1977 breeding season, the third since we hatched our first captive-produced crane in 1975, was outstanding for the number of species producing either young or showing reproductive behavior. Seven of the fourteen species at ICF produced young, including three endangered species: Japanese, Whitenaped and Hooded cranes. Two other endangered species, Whooping and Siberian cranes, laid eggs which proved infertile. Only two species, Broglas and Wattled, produced neither eggs nor sperm, though both showed some reproductive behavior.



### *Father of the Year . . .*

ICF's Gamy Award for "Father of the Year" goes to Lulu's mate, Yukio Ueno, who fathered 7 chicks this summer. Yukio arrived on March 10, 1976 from the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo, Japan. Rumor has it that Yukio, age 12, killed his last mate in Japan, so Lulu and Yukio remain separated in adjoining pens and the 11 chicks that they've produced over the last two years have all been the result of artificial insemination.

In all, 23 cranes were hatched and raised this summer at ICF, including two Siberian Cranes which were imported as eggs from the Soviet Union (see Vol III, #4 of The Broлга Bugle). Only one chick failed to survive, a young crowned crane which died at a week's age.



### *Most Promising Male . . .*

Casey, a male Whitenaped Crane, is a shoo-in for the Gamy Award for "Most Promising Male." Casey is not only the oldest known male crane at ICF, he also consistently produces the greatest volume of semen. Whereas most male cranes average .05 cc semen per collection, Casey averages .25, five times the normal quantity! Casey is on loan from the San Diego Zoo.

ICF expresses its thanks to the many, many people and institutions who helped make our 1977 breeding season the best so far. First and foremost, we extend our deepest gratitude to Judy Chalker and Barb Katz whose daily feeding, measuring, and "mothering" of our young cranes this summer undoubtedly accounts for our spectacular batting average of 23 out of 24 chicks raised to fledging. We doubt whether any zoo anywhere has had such a perfect record for cranes. Judy and Barb will always have a job open to them at ICF, especially at their rates — they both donated all their time! Thanks also to Lynn Mueller who took over as "Chick Mother" when Judy and Barb left.



### *Most Promising Female . . .*

"Most Promising Female" award goes to Phyllis, a Siberian White Crane who laid 10 infertile eggs this spring. Phyllis' background is not well known, but apparently she was trapped in India during the early 1950's and has spent most of her captive life at the Philadelphia Zoo. She was loaned to ICF in the summer of 1976 and we paired her with Wolf, a male Siberian on loan from the Walsrode Zoo in West Germany.

We are also grateful for the continuing support of the following zoos who loaned us cranes which produced young this year: Busch Gardens—Tampa, Henry Vilas Park Zoo, Honolulu Zoo, Lincoln Park Zoo, Milwaukee County Zoo, New York Zoological Society, San Diego Wild Animal Park, San Diego Zoo, Southwick Animal Farm, and Ueno Zoo.



A freshly hatched Hooded Crane. Photo by Bill Gause



A week-old Japanese Crane takes a stroll at ICF. Photo by Bill Gause



"Chick Mama", Judy Chalker, measuring a 3-month old Japanese Crane. (top photo)



One of five Sarus Cranes hatched at ICF in 1977.

feature . . .

## Part of ICF's 1977 Hatch

# THE MIGRATION OF CRANES

Editor's note: Our guest author, Jim Harris, is a free lance writer who currently lives in Madison, Wisconsin. Jim has little formal training in biology (he holds a M.A. from the University of Wisconsin in Agriculture Journalism), but ever since the sixth grade, he's had a passion for wildlife and has conducted and published scientific studies on waterfowl, gulls, terns, Peregrine Falcons, and Zone-tailed Hawks. Jim also teaches courses on wildlife for the University of Wisconsin Extension.

by Jim Harris

It's a brisk, clear February day on the Arasaki Plain of southern Japan. A large group of elderly Japanese stand silently on the windswept ground, their faces peering intently into the sky. High above them, flocks of cranes circle ever upward into the air, their bugling voices becoming fainter as the birds gain altitude. Finally, the last traces of the cranes disappear from view and the crowd of watchers bursts into excited chatter about the birds and their departure to their Siberian breeding grounds, hundreds of miles to the northwest.

Most birds start their migratory journeys unnoticed, out of the middle of a woods, or under the cover of darkness. Not cranes. These large birds seem to have a penchant for showy behavior and they leave their wintering grounds en masse, soaring in great circles until they gain sufficient altitude and assemble into v's or in lines and aim for the far horizon. To the Japanese, the spring migration of cranes is sufficient cause for a ceremony. The rest of the world simply watches in awe, as the largest of migratory birds make their way back and forth across continents.

Except for the few resident Japanese Cranes at Hokkaido, Japan, all cranes nesting in northern latitudes migrate. Some tropical species, such as the Sarus of Asia, or the Crowned Cranes of Africa, do not migrate, although they may move about locally during the year. Some of the rarest species travel the farthest. The Whooping Cranes summer and winter at refuges 2600 miles apart. The eastern population of Siberian Cranes must fly 3,500 miles twice a year, while the western population migrates about 5,000 miles between Siberia and India.

Different races of the same species of crane can have strikingly different migratory tendencies. For example, while Lesser Sandhills migrate between Canada and southern United States and even Mexico, other populations of Sandhills spend the whole year in Mississippi, Florida, and Cuba.

Why do cranes migrate? Is it that winter weather is too harsh for these lanky creatures and they must escape or freeze? The northern cranes kept at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo easily endure the cold Wisconsin winters—some even seem to enjoy blizzards. In the wild, cranes return to their breeding grounds in late winter, sometimes before the ice and snow are gone. No doubt cranes seek southlands in the fall, not for mild weather, but for food and drink

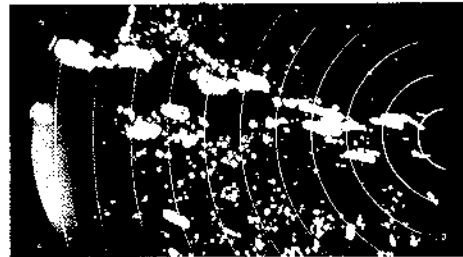
which become inaccessible under wintry conditions.

Cranes, like many other species of birds, habitually use the same migration areas year after year. Scattered over the world are wetlands famous as yearly stopover locations for migratory cranes. Some, but not all, are refuges where habitat is maintained, hunting is controlled, and grain is sometimes planted to keep local farmers' fields free of the hungry migrants. Siberian Cranes stop briefly at the lake called Abi-Estada in Afghanistan where they are completely unprotected, and again at the Astrakhan Reserve in southern U.S.S.R. where their hunting is strictly forbidden. A sizable portion of the world's Greater Sandhills visit Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area in Indiana. Two hundred thousand Sandhill Cranes use a 150 mile stretch of the Platte River in Nebraska.

In the past, many species of cranes were eaten by humans, and with the decline in the standard of living in many parts of the world, depredation on cranes is likely to increase. Moreover, some cranes cause extensive damage to grain fields as they migrate south. Early harvest can lessen losses, or harvested fields can be left unplowed until all fields are harvested so that waste grain remains available as feed on the ground surface.

Cranes are vulnerable to accidents during their long journeys. Often they must rest in unfamiliar places. Sudden storms can overtake flocks. Each fall the personnel of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge wait in suspense as the Whooping Cranes return from Canada, to learn how many of the older birds have perished on the two flights and intervening summer. In 1972, 13 cranes did not return, nearly a quarter of the population.

Until 1940, a few non-migratory Whooping Cranes remained in Louisiana. In August of that year, a storm blew the 13 remaining birds out of



Radar echoes of Sandhill Cranes migrating across the Bering Strait between Alaska and Siberia. Photograph by Dr. Warren Flock of the University of Colorado. Cranes normally fly so high during migration that they are undetected by observers on the ground. Radar might prove an important method for studying patterns, speed, and numbers of cranes on migration.

their isolated wetland into farm areas. Six never reappeared, while a seventh, crippled by gunshot, was captured. Her captive-bred offspring, Tony and Angus (both now at ICF), are the only living Whoopers descended from the Louisiana race.

It is possible that migratory urge of cranes is genetically endowed. If so, Tony and Angus represent a precious, perhaps last hope for the re-establishment of a wild but sedentary population of Whoopers. Such birds could easily be managed on a single refuge. In contrast, descendants of the purely migratory Whoopers might wander each spring and fall.

How cranes find their way on migration is another interesting question. Many birds, for example songbirds which migrate at night, have apparently inherited some means of navigation, for young birds travel on course independently of adults. But longer-lived birds that migrate in families or flocks appear to follow traditional routes, with youngsters learning the way from their elders. Cranes probably belong to this latter group. Recently an unusual program for Whoopers was initiated which depends on the transmittal from parents to young of this marvelous "knowledge."

Starting in 1975, small numbers of Whooping Crane eggs have been placed in Sandhill Crane nests at Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho. These particular Sandhills migrate 800 miles to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico. It is hoped the young Whoopers raised by the Sandhills would travel with their foster parents to New Mexico, then north again in spring, thus learning the migratory pathways of the Sandhills. So far, the hopes have been fulfilled. In January 1977, three 1975-hatched and three 1976 hatched Whoopers wintered at

(Continued on page 4)

## THE ICF PRAIRIE — AN IDEA BLOSSOMS

Several years ago, at the very inception of ICF, someone suggested that a 10 acre field on ICF's property be converted into a natural prairie. The idea sounded like a good one. Whooping Cranes once nested in the prairie marshes of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and several provinces of Canada, and what better way for visitors to ICF to get a feeling for the way America once appeared than to combine the cranes and a sample of their former habitat?

For the next three years, the idea remained dormant—establishing a prairie is a complex undertaking requiring a certain knowledge of botany and a great amount of dedication and hard work. Finally in 1977, Charlie Luthin, a botany student at the University of Wisconsin — Stevens Point, volunteered to mastermind the prairie project, and this summer the first half acre of land was prepared for the prairie and one-fourth of this was planted into eight species of grasses and 38 species of prairie flowers or "forbs." Charlie also planted a prairie nursery which will eventually supply plants and seeds for the prairie, as well as provide visitors a chance to examine and compare the various species at close range.

Planting one-fourth acre perhaps sounds like a miniscule start on the project which eventually will cover 10 acres, and Charlie estimates that over 400 hours were spent collecting seeds this summer and fall just for this area. However, enough seeds are available for the remaining quarter acre of prepared ground which will be planted this spring, and the remaining nine and one-half acres should go more quickly as the prairie nursery begins producing its own seeds and seedlings.

Like all ideas at ICF, many people were involved in the start of the ICF prairie. We are particularly grateful to Joyce Powers, Gene Woehler, Bob Litscher, Pete Chickering, Ruth Wynn, Keith Wendt, Nina Bradley, Dave Fordham, and Susi Dudley who volunteered their time, labor, and green thumbs to get the prairie idea firmly rooted at ICF.

## NEW SIGNS GRACE ICF

A Brolga is a Brolga is a Brolga. But what's a Brolga, anyway? And how does one distinguish a Demoiselle from a Sandhill, or a Siberian Crane from a Stanley? Visitors to ICF's headquarters in Baraboo are often confused by our 14 varieties of cranes, most of these birds, after all, being variations on the color grey. Thanks to Harold Bessac, some of this confusion has been eliminated. Most pens at ICF now have signs identifying the cranes within which were made by Harold at his tool shop in Markesan, WI.

Tool making, engraving and milling are a family tradition at the Bessacs. Harold, Mrs. Bessac and their two children all have worked at the Markesan shop making such items as screws and spacers that were part of the guidance system for the two moon ships, as well as parts of the buggy still sitting on the moon.

Crane signs admittedly are more mundane items than space rockets and moon buggies, but we are still very proud of our new signs and we thank Mr. and Mrs. Harold Bessac for their contribution.



Harold Bessac at work on ICF signs in his Markesan tool shop.



Charlie Luthin preparing ground for the Prairie Nursery at ICF. Plants raised in the nursery will be transplanted to a 10 acre restoration site on ICF property.

## MILE-STONES

# WHOOPEERS AT NEW HIGH

For nearly forty years, the world watched anxiously as the Whooping Crane teetered at extinction's edge. When the species hit its nadir in 1939 with only 14 of the majestic white birds remaining in the wild, many U. S. ornithologists sadly predicted the crane's extinction. Arthur A. Allen, dean of American ornithologists, even bade a "poignant, albeit premature, farewell" to the Whooper in his article in a 1937 National Geographic issue.

Yet in 1977, the Whooper still lives and this year's numbers of Whoopers are at an all time high for this century — 105 at last count — including 27 in captivity.

Man's efforts to preserve North America's tallest bird have probably been the most intensive and costly for any species of non-game bird in history. There are currently three programs which conservationists have formulated to help the Whooping Crane survive. The first of these, strict protection of the wild birds and their habitats, was formulated by the National Audubon Society in the dark days when the Whoopers were just about gone, and resulted in Robert Porter Allen's classic monograph on the species in 1954. The Society's campaign made the Whooping Crane a household name throughout the U.S. and influenced the governments of Canada and the U.S. to strictly protect this extremely rare bird and its habitats.

In the late sixties, these two governments devised a second program to help the Whoopers. In 1967, scientists began to take eggs from the wild Whoopers at Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Alberta and fly them to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center at Laurel, Maryland where they were hatched artificially in incubators. The birds raised at Patuxent were to form a second population of Whoopers from which cranes could eventually be released to bolster the wild population.

A third program involving actual restocking of Whooping Cranes into the wild began in 1975 when Whooping Crane eggs were taken from

Wood Buffalo Park and flown to Grays Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho where they were substituted for the eggs of wild Sandhill Cranes. The plan was that wild Sandhills would be duped by the similarity between their eggs and that of the Whoopers and would hatch and raise Whooping Crane chicks as if they were their own. In this manner, the reintroduced Whoopers would be as wild as their wild foster parents.

This year's high Whooper count can be attributed to successes in each of these three programs. The wild Whoopers, at Wood Buffalo National Park had another excellent breeding season. Ten young Whoopers fledged at the Park, but as this article is being written, only nine of these, as well as 61 adults, have arrived at Aransas, Texas, the winter home of the Whoopers. Since birds continue to arrive in Texas into January, a final count will not be possible until then. Scientists who keep track of the identity and numbers of Whoopers will have an easier job this year because the Canadian Wildlife Service managed to catch and band the young cranes that fledged. These bands should give us a great deal of important information in the coming years, particularly about Whooper mortality.

The captive Whoopers at Patuxent had a productive year also. Four pairs laid a total of 30 eggs, 14 of which were sent to Grays Lake for the reintroduction project. Two chicks were hatched from the 16 eggs remaining at Patuxent and these two birds were successfully raised, bringing the total number of Whoopers at Patuxent to 22, three of which are second generation birds.

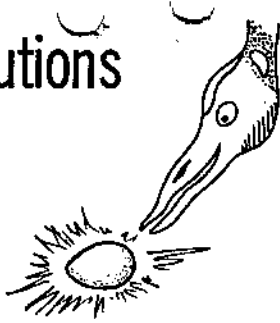
For the second year in a row, bad weather plagued the reintroduction efforts at Gray's Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Idaho. Out of a total of 30 Whooper eggs flown to Grays Lake, 14 from Patuxent and 16 from Wood Buffalo Park, foster Sandhill parents managed to hatch 20, but only fledged four. 17 inches of snow fell shortly after the first shipment of Whooper eggs from Patuxent hatched and the chicks disappeared. The rest of the summer was extremely dry causing 90% of the marsh to dry up. Dr. Rod Drewien and Elwood Bizeau, the project's coordinators, resorted to placing cattle troughs on the driest crane areas and artificially watering cranes and other wildlife. Unfortunately, coyotes had a field day with the dry conditions and were probably responsible for a sizeable portion of crane mortality. By the end of the summer, only four Whooping chicks remained. In October during migration to New Mexico, one of these chicks flew into a barb-wire fence and broke its neck. Strangely, this is the third accident of this kind with young reintroduced Whoopers.

The reintroduction project has to date produced eight Whoopers, with a possible ninth "phantom" bird that seems to appear and disappear while always eluding definite verification of its identity (all reintroduced Whoopers wear leg bands). Considering the extremely adverse weather conditions over the last two years, Rod Drewien and Elwood Bizeau are to be congratulated for their continuing success in producing a new population of wild Whoopers.



Whoopers and Sandhills mingle at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. The smaller Sandhill Crane (on the left) is being used in Idaho to foster-rear the larger Whooping Crane. Photo by W. F. Kubischek, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

# Contributions



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# MIGRATION . . .

(Continued from page 2)

Bosque del Apache. When the Whoopers reach breeding age, they are most likely to choose the Grays Lake range of their foster parents for nesting, and thus begin a second, wild population of Whoopers.

The two populations of Siberian cranes, with their long migrations and limited winter habitat, also appear highly vulnerable to accidents or disturbance. The efforts of ICF to establish a flock in southern Russia and Iran, with the aid of Common Crane foster parents, also depends on the cranes' ability to learn their migration route, a capacity that may one day prove essential for the survival of the species.

As always, the migration of birds still astounds humanity. The cranes in their journeying come to many parts of the world where people otherwise could never enjoy them. That twice annual restlessness has made management efforts terribly complex, as peoples and governments of scattered, often politically distant nations must work together closely. Yet cranes remind us that the peoples of the world do depend on cooperation for their future happiness. Our efforts toward crane conservation have been an opportunity to strengthen that goodwill.



A Common Crane hanging in a market in Kabul, Afghanistan. This species is often shot on migration through central parts of Asia. Rarer cranes, such as the Siberian Crane, have been found in these markets as well. Hunting may be a major factor in the decline of the latter species.

# International Crane Foundation

## World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes



Captain Jean Delacour (on left) and Ron Saury discuss the finer points of crane propagation during Delacour's recent visit to ICF. Dr. Delacour, 87, is the world's most acclaimed aviculturist and author of innumerable books on pheasants, waterfowl, cracids, and other families of birds.

Photo by Baraboo News Republic

In its organizational charter, the International Crane Foundation sets forth its five principal goals:

1. Research—to determine the biological attributes and requirements of cranes both in the wild and in captivity.
2. Conservation—to protect cranes and their habitats throughout the world.
3. Captive Propagation—to establish a species bank of rare cranes to guard against extinction.
4. Restocking—to reestablish cranes within former habitat wherever feasible
5. Education—to act as a disseminator of information on cranes to the people of the world.

The International Crane Foundation is a registered, publicly-supported, non-profit organization which is dedicated to the study and conservation of cranes throughout the world.

The International Crane Foundation currently holds the world's most complete collection of captive cranes. These birds are used as breeding stock and as subjects for behavioral and physiological research. Tours of the Crane Foundation are welcomed but only on an appointment basis. Tours can be scheduled year-round, any day of the week. For more information, contact the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The International Crane Foundation is completely supported by public donations. Memberships in the Foundation are the usual way of contributing to the organization. Information on memberships, bequests, and alternate ways of donating funds to the Crane Foundation can be obtained by writing directly to the International Crane Foundation, City View Road, Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913 or telephone: 608-356-3553.