

THE ICF BUGLE

Editor: Scott Freeman

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

Rt. 1, Box 230C
Shady Lane Road
Baraboo, WI 53913, USA

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China Establishes Refuge for Siberian Cranes

by Scott Freeman, Education Coordinator

The government of Jiangxi Province, China, has set up a new nature reserve to protect the largest flock of Siberian Cranes in the world. The new, 22,000 hectare (55,000 acre) reserve encompasses key areas of Lake Poyang (Poyang Hu), the largest body of fresh water in China. Thanks to the preservation of these wetlands, two of the three wintering areas for Siberian Cranes are now officially protected.

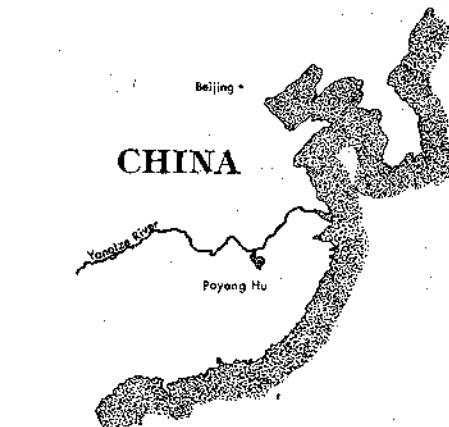
Dr. Zhou Fu-chang and Dr. Ding Wen-ning of the Institute of Zoology in Beijing first discovered Siberian Cranes at Lake Poyang in the winter of 1980. They counted a total of 100 Siberians on that historic survey. Then in 1981 and '82, Drs. Zhou and Ding followed up with more extensive aerial surveys, and in 1982-83 found an estimated 230 Siberians, including 19 juveniles. The Siberians were using several different wetland areas along the western edge of Poyang Hu.

Lake Poyang is a remarkable wetland. It is connected to the Yangtze River, whose floodwaters fill the lake basin each spring. From April until September water covers an astounding 3,000 km² (about 1,200 square miles). But by fall the lake begins draining back into the river, and the water-covered area shrinks to a mere 500 km². As a local slogan says, there is "water touching sky in summer and fall, muddy bank with no ending in winter and spring." By mid-winter the remaining water is only about eight inches deep.

The combination of vast mudflats, exposed by the receding water, with emergent vegetation and shallow open water makes Poyang Hu a paradise for wintering waterfowl, waders, and shorebirds. The protected area alone attracts more than 130 species, including large flocks of swans and black and white storks. Zhou and Ding have also seen a total of about 450 White-naped Cranes and 150 Hooded Cranes in several flocks, virtually side by side with the Siberians. They report that the Siberians stay in shallow-water areas, where they probe for submerged tubers, while the White-napes feed in mudflats and the Hoodeds in zones of emergent vegetation. Although they are closely related, the three crane species utilize different habitats and avoid competing with one another.

The Siberians generally arrive at Poyang Hu in the middle to end of October, and stay until late February or early March. Zhou and Ding speculate that the Poyang flock is the one which breeds between the Lena and Indigirka Rivers in the Yakutia region of Siberia, and is reported to stop during spring migration at the Zha Long Natural Reserve in northeast China. ICF's George Archibald and colleagues will be leading teams of EARTHWATCH volunteers to Zha Long this spring and fall, and hope to study the Siberians there in depth (see EARTHWATCH/ICF notice, page four).

Although we have no details as yet, the *China Daily* reports that a special research institute is being set up in the Poyang Hu reserve to carry out studies on endan-



gered species. ICF would like to congratulate the government of Jiangxi Province on their work to preserve Poyang Hu, clearly a wetland of global significance, and to continue research activity there.

We would also like to again applaud Dr. Zhou and Dr. Ding, who made their historic discovery only after years of painstaking effort, and who followed up on their find with an excellent series of field surveys. Their research has led to the protection of one of the only habitats remaining to the Siberian Crane—"the lily of birds," the most endangered of all cranes.

Archibald Receives Award

Dr. George Archibald, Director of the International Crane Foundation, has been appointed Ridder in the Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands. The Order of the Golden Ark is a Dutch Order of Chivalry, created by Prince Bernhard in 1971, which "marks outstanding service to the conservation of wildlife and the national environment."

Dr. Archibald received the insignia of the Order at a ceremony at Soestdijk Palace on September 17th, 1983. The appointment recognized "his outstanding efforts in many countries on behalf of the world's endangered cranes, and in particular for his tireless work in building up the International Crane Foundation."

At age 37, Archibald is the youngest person ever to be admitted to the Order. Prominent among recently-inducted members of the Order of the Golden Ark are Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and William Conway, Director of the New York Zoological Society. Dr. Harold Coolidge, founder of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, was the first person ever appointed to the Order.



Dr. Archibald (left) is congratulated by Prince Bernhard, as Princess Juliana of the Netherlands (right) looks on.
photo by van dam

CRANES IN FOLKLORE

On these two pages the *Bugle* explores how cranes have become interwoven with human cultures all over the world. This account of crane-related folklore and art, though very incomplete, will give you an idea of the variety of ways cranes have inspired storytellers and artists since Cro-magnon man.

Cranes have a prominent place in the folklore traditions of many peoples. Because of their unusual dancing, loud calls, and tremendous size, cranes are very striking, visible birds—an easy figure for an audience to recognize. Although many animals represent one consistent theme in many folklore traditions—foxes as cunning characters or owls as old, wise figures, for example—cranes have served in a wide variety of capa-

cities. A storyteller can capitalize on their reclusiveness and rarity to make them into mysterious, powerful figures, or use their long legs and beaks or unusual markings to inspire a tale.

The following is a small sample of crane stories from different parts of the world, collected for ICF by Marie Oesting. Although each is, of necessity, drastically abbreviated, the flavor of each story is intact.

AFRICA

A king became lost in the desert. It was hot, and he was alone and very thirsty. An elephant happened to pass by, so the king asked it for a ride. But the mighty elephant replied, "No, I will not carry you." Then a giraffe came near. The king asked it for a ride, but it, too, said, "No, I will not carry you." The king was getting weaker and weaker. Finally, he spotted a flock of cranes, and asked for their help. They said, "Surely, oh great king, for we have always helped you and your people." The cranes took the king on their backs, and flew him to an oasis. Then they danced for him as he recovered his strength.

The king wanted to reward the cranes, so he declared, "From this day on you and your children will be honored by all the creatures of this land just as I am. I will set beautiful gold crowns on your heads, of the same magnificence as my own."

Everyone gasped in awe of this generous gift, and were amazed to see the cranes bow before the king, balancing their new golden crowns on their heads. The people began calling the birds crowned cranes, because of their great honor.

But after several days passed, some greedy men said, "Let us kill the cranes and take the golden crowns for ourselves." So they began to slaughter the cranes. But one crane escaped them, and flew to the king. "Please take back this gift," the crane pleaded, "which has caused my family to be slain."

The king was very sorry for the grief he had caused his friends. "You are called crowned cranes because of my gift, and crowned cranes you shall remain. But from this moment on," he declared, waving his hands in magic circles, "your crowns will no longer be solid gold."

The crane's crown suddenly began to feel lighter and lighter on its head. All the people marvelled, for the golden crown had been transformed into a crown of golden feathers.

AUSTRALIA

One time there was a happy girl named Brolga, who was the favorite of all the people because she was such a good dancer. Brolga always joined in the men's dances,

for she was not content to sit with the women, just beating the ground to keep time for the men. She danced all the dances better than the men, and even invented some new dances. Many came to watch her. Many men also desired her in marriage, but Brolga always refused them.

Nonega, the evil magician, wanted to marry Brolga most of all. Brolga refused him, too, so he went to the elders of the tribe for aid. But they would not permit him to marry Brolga because of his evil ways. When he heard this, Nonega shouted, "If I can't have her, neither will anyone else."

The next day Brolga was dancing by herself, out on the open plain near camp. Soon a dark whirlwind approached. Nonega was travelling in the center of the whirlwind, chanting magic words. The whirlwind caught Brolga, then passed by. When it was gone Brolga had disappeared, but in her place stood a tall, graceful bird moving its wings in a dance. When the people saw this they called out "Brolga! Brolga!" The bird nodded, bowed, and moved toward them, dancing just as before.

ASIA MINOR

One of Aesop's Fables is titled "The Wolf and the Crane":

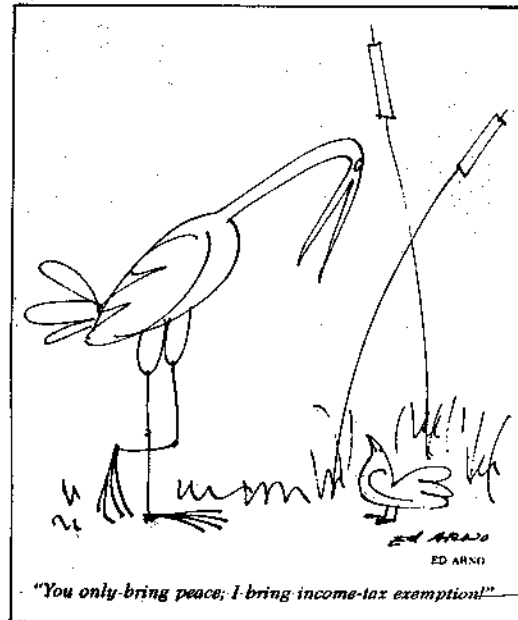
One day a wolf was much troubled by a bone stuck in his throat. Promising a huge payment, he asked a crane to put its long neck and beak into his mouth and extract the bone. The crane agreed to the bargain, removed the bone, and demanded payment.

The wolf cried, "Surely you have already had sufficient reward, in being allowed to draw your head safely out of the jaws of a wolf."

The moral of the story is: If you serve the wicked, expect no reward, but be thankful if you escape injury.

JAPAN

Once upon a time, in the far northern land of Hokkaido, there lived an old man and an old woman. They were farmers, and they were very poor. Then one day, while gathering firewood, the farmer came upon a beautiful white crane caught in a trap. He felt very sorry for the poor bird, and released it.



That night was very windy and cold. The farmer told his wife all about the trapped crane as they sat huddled by their tiny fire. Suddenly, there was a gentle knock at the door. They opened it to find a beautiful maiden, dressed in a dazzling white kimono, standing in the windy darkness. The maiden asked if she could please live with the farmer and his wife, and help them with their work. Since the farmers had no children, they happily agreed.

For many months the maiden lived with the farmers. Each morning she helped with the household chores or played with the neighbor's children, who loved her very much. Then in the afternoon she would go into the weaving room to work at the loom. She warned the farmers never to look into the weaving room while she was working, as she had to protect a secret. Late in the afternoon she would come out of the weaving room and give the farmer the beautiful cloth she had woven. The farmer took the cloth to market, and soon became quite rich through the sale of the maiden's work.

After the maiden had been with them for several months, the farmer and his wife became very curious. One day they crept up to the weaving room, and peeked through the door to watch the maiden at work. Lo and behold! There sat a beautiful white crane at the loom, plucking white feathers from its breast, and weaving them into fine cloth. The farmer and his wife were very much surprised, but they said nothing and crept silently away.

Later that evening, the beautiful maiden came and presented her cloth to the farmer. She seemed very sad, and after dinner she began to weep. She said, "Tonight I must leave you, beloved friends. Because you did not keep your promise and discovered my secret, I must depart." With that she kissed them goodbye, and went out the door. There she transformed herself into a white crane and flew away, into the moonlight.

NORTH AMERICA

One day Bear Woman was chasing some children. The children were very frightened, because Bear Woman had threatened to eat them up. They ran and ran as fast as they could, but Bear Woman came closer and closer. Then the children came to a river, and saw Grandfather Crane on the other side. "Grandfather Crane," the children cried, "please stretch out your long legs so we can cross the river and escape from Bear Woman." So Grandfather Crane stretched out his long legs, and the children ran across them to the other side. Then Bear Woman reached the river. "Grandfather Crane," she bellowed, "stretch out your legs so I can cross the river and eat those children." So Grandfather Crane stretched out his legs, and Bear Woman began to lumber across. But when she was above the river, Grandfather Crane twisted his legs away. Bear Woman fell into the water with a huge splash, and the children were saved.



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Cranes in Art

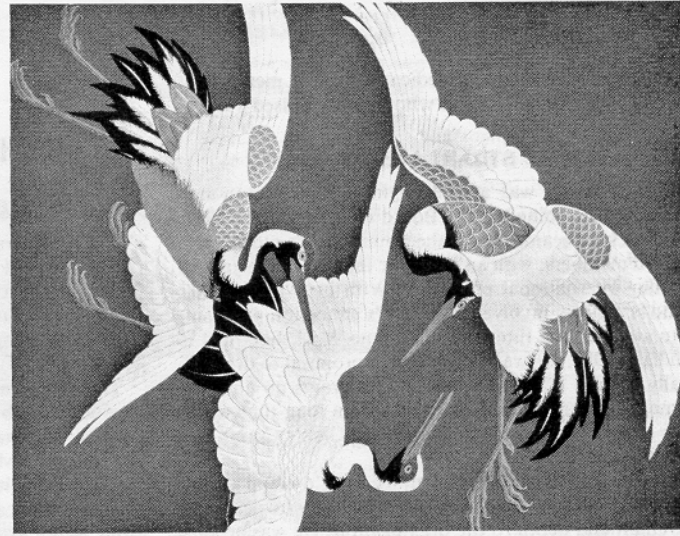
Painting

Cranes are particularly attractive to visual artists because of their long, lean forms and remarkable array of gestures. The Japanese screen reproduced below, for example, shows cranes in preening, head scratching, foraging, and flight postures, while the embroidered cloth to the right shows cranes in an interpretation of the courtship dance. The variety of gestures that cranes make has given both artists extraordinarily rich possibilities in composition. Certainly painters appreciated the pure form of crane gestures long before biologists appreciated their behavioral significance.

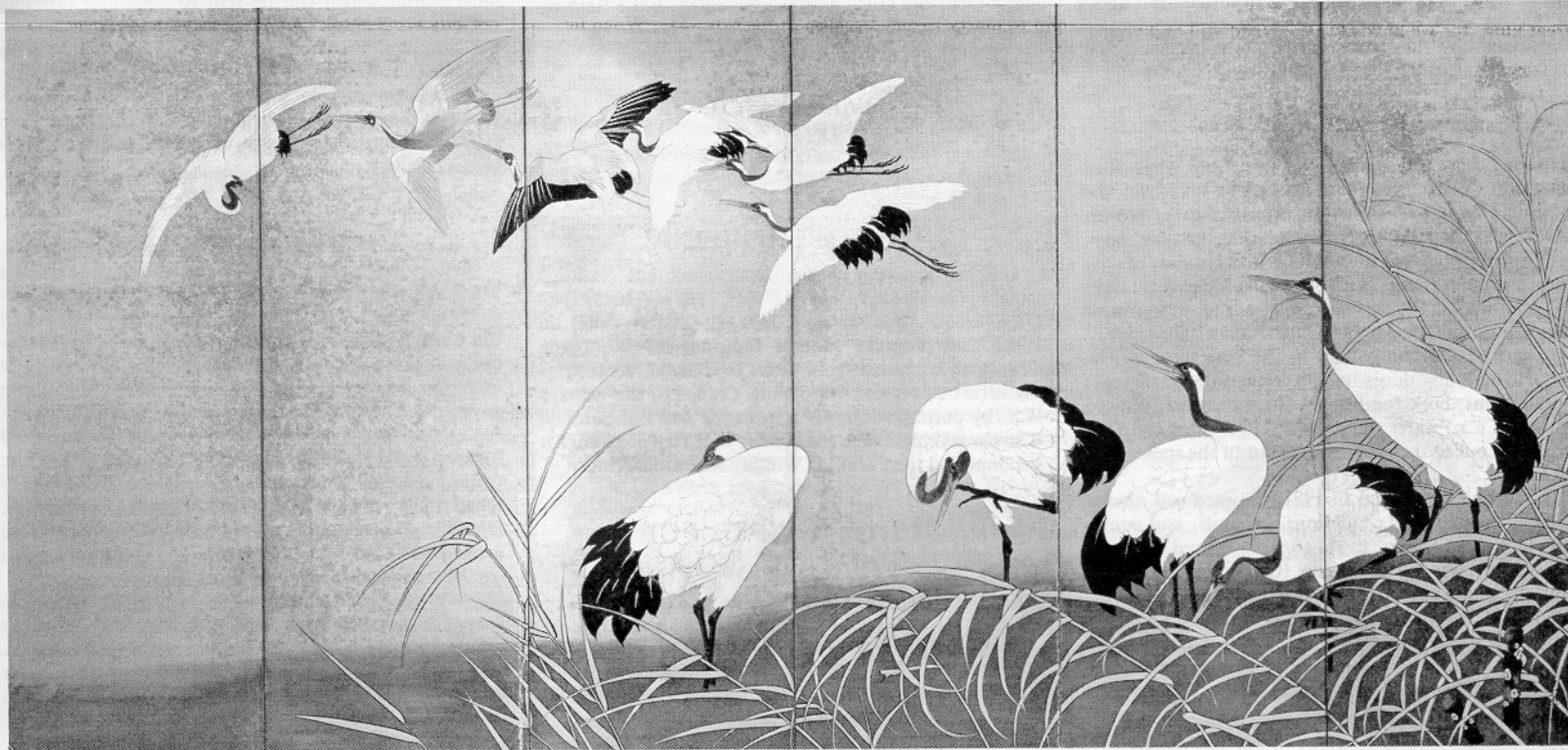
But form is not the only reason why painters use cranes as subject material. Almost all of the significant crane paintings come from China, Japan, and Korea. Why do oriental artists find cranes so appealing?

Perhaps the most important reason is that cranes have clear symbolic value for oriental peoples. If an oriental artist wants to express a longevity, marital fidelity, or good fortune motif, cranes are ideal subject material. Also, the Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes which live in the orient are among the most beautiful of all cranes, and so appeal from a strictly aesthetic point of view. These cranes happen to frequent areas which are relatively close to human populations, and so are familiar to artists and accessible for study.

You can usually find crane paintings in any art museum with even a modest oriental collection. Failing that, take a careful look at the wall decorations in the next oriental restaurant you visit. More than likely, you'll find cranes providing some of the atmosphere.



Japan, Meiji Period



Right screen from pair of six-fold screens by Suzuki Kiitsu, Japan, Edo Period.

Sculpture and Heraldry

The most famous crane statues in the world stand in Beijing's Forbidden City. There are two crane sentinels there, standing on either side of the emperor's throne in the Imperial Palace. The birds stand for vigilance, longevity, and good fortune.

For similar reasons, cranes were frequently sculpted or carved on family crests in medieval Japan and Europe. In Japanese heraldry they represented longevity—a belief based on the crane's long lifespan in nature—and hence good fortune for the family. In European heraldry cranes usually stood for vigilance—a belief based on a more involved story. In medieval Europe popular belief held that one crane in each resting flock would stand as sentinel. This sentinel crane would hold a rock in one uplifted foot, so that a splash would wake it if it fell asleep.

Sculpture seems to be one artistic field where cranes are still serving as important subject matter. Modern sculptors are fashioning cranes out of thoroughly non-traditional materials, though. Not long ago, for example, ICF received a photograph of a Sarus Crane sculpted from chrome automobile bumpers!

Dance

Cranes very likely do the most spectacular "dance" of any bird known. It's no wonder, then, that they have inspired several equally spectacular human dances.

It's interesting to note, however, that crane dances are done primarily by aboriginal peoples. The Ainu of Japan and the Aborigines of Australia, for example, have crane dances which are a prominent part of their traditional repertoire. Modern dance, on the other hand, with its emphasis on free form and non-traditional subject material, has yet to use cranes widely as a theme. There are two likely reasons why cranes have largely dropped out of modern dance and painting: contemporary art is less imitative than traditional art, and artists tend to use subjects and forms they see around them.

Poetry

The Crane

People pursue the things they like; things don't change, but people's feelings do; some say a crane can dance quite well, but for me, no dance it does can equal its grace while standing silently alone.

Inquiring of a Crane

Crows and hawks fight for their food while sparrows struggle for a place to nest; through rain and snow you stand alone by the water's edge; for days on end you stand on the ice with one leg raised, neither calling nor moving! What is the meaning of this?

from *Bai Juyi*, a collection of Chinese poetry translated by Rewi Alley and published by New World Press

ON THE HOME FRONT

SPOTLIGHT:

This issue's Spotlight is dedicated to the memory of two of ICF's closest friends who recently passed away.

STUART AVERY

Stuart Avery was a civil engineer and Boston-area resident who joined ICF's Board of Directors in 1981. He quickly became one of the Foundation's most active Board members, with an energetic interest in the growth of our international programs. With his wife Abigail, who is actively involved with ICF's education program, Stu attended the International Crane Workshop held in India in 1983. He was working on a proposal to dramatically expand ICF's international programs up until the time he fell critically ill. He was also a long-time member and recent chairman of the Sierra Club's Committee on Wildlife.

ICF will cherish Stu's memory as a dynamic, concerned, and responsible Board member who lent real strength and depth to the organization. He was accomplished at analyzing problems clearly and objectively, and at working toward competent solutions. But above all, he was a friend—a man who had a real feeling for people and how they work. We will miss his leadership, his friendship, and his irrepressible, optimistic spirit.

HOWARD AHRENSMEYER

Howard Ahrensmeier was on the scene when Ron Sauey and George Archibald arrived to take over the Nodoroma Horse Farm from Ron's father, Norm. Howard was working for Norm Sauey at the time, serving as a superintendent of buildings and grounds for the Sauey farm and home. As Ron recalls those early days now, "Howard's 'horse sense' went a long way toward helping us turn that horse farm into a crane foundation."

Howard was a handy-man in the best sense of the term. He built new doors to help convert the horse stalls to crane pens, built food boxes for the cranes, plowed snow so ICF's "water wagon" could get through to the birds, then pulled the water wagon out of the snow when it got stuck.

Up until his retirement in 1981, Howard was always on hand to keep ICF's buildings, grounds, and equipment in tip-top shape. Even after he retired, though, Howard remained part of the ICF scene. He would regularly climb up the Baraboo Hills to visit with his friends at ICF and look in on the birds he had known as chicks. We'll remember Howard fondly every time we recall those early, struggling days, or look out at his namesake, "Howard," a beautiful young White-naped Crane.

News & Notes

EARTHWATCH / ICF in China

from George Archibald, Director

ICF members have a special invitation to join one of the eight 1984 EARTHWATCH/ICF expeditions to China. Teams of volunteers will continue studies of the avifauna of the Zha Long Natural Reserve—an historic project begun at one of the world's great wetlands in 1983 (see 9(4) Bugle).

This year, teams will travel to China in spring and fall to document bird migration on the reserve. Siberian Cranes, for example, should be sighted in late April through early May.

Eight expeditions of 17 days each are planned for this season. Teams will make their round trip journeys from San Francisco in April, May, September, and October. Each team will be led by a professional ornithologist from the U.S., and accompanied in the field by biologists from the Institute for Wildlife in Harbin.

For more information, contact:

Laurie Rothstein
EARTHWATCH
10 Juniper Road
Belmont, MA 02178
(617) 489-3030

WHOOOPER SPECIAL

U.S. readers should be sure to watch the National Geographic Special FLIGHT OF THE WHOOPING CRANE on April 4th at 8:00 p.m. (eastern time) on PBS. The program follows radio-tagged Whooping Cranes on migration from Texas to Canada, documents the effort to restock Whooping Cranes in the western U.S. by putting Whooper eggs in the nests of Sandhill Cranes, and highlights the captive breeding program for Whoopers at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

Thanks to WPTI, IFCB

from Shirley Russman, Supervisor of Aviculture

We'd like to thank the Wildlife Preservation Trust International (WPTI) and the International Foundation for the Conservation of Birds (IFCB) for supporting ICF's cryogenic semen preservation program.

Gene pool protection is a key part of any captive breeding program. One way to achieve it is to create "banks" of frozen semen and embryos all over the world. Dr. George Gee, of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, and Dr. Tom Sexton, of the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, began freezing crane semen in 1976. They have since successfully frozen semen from Whooping Cranes (*Grus americana*) and Mississippi Sandhill Cranes (*G. canadensis pulla*). There is still, however, much to be done before techniques are perfected for the other crane species. Now, thanks to funding from WPTI and IFCB, ICF will be able to purchase equipment, set up a cryogenic laboratory in our new hatchery building, experiment with freezing techniques, and eventually build up a semen bank.

A semen bank can be drawn upon frequently early in the breeding season, to inseminate females when males are not yet producing semen. Even more important, frozen semen can be sent to zoos and breeding centers worldwide to increase genetic variability without shipping the birds themselves. Shipping cranes increases health risks, costs, and time for inseminations.

It's a large-scale, long-term project for ICF's aviculture staff, but truly important. We'll be sure to keep ICF's members up to date on all the chilly details as the project progresses.

WISHES COME TRUE

Members gave such a terrific response to last Bugle's Wish List that we decided not to ask for anything this issue. (Don't worry—there'll be a long list next time.) Bill Campbell donated a sturdy washer and dryer set for our aviculturists to use in washing their coveralls and uniforms after working with the birds. Doris Applebaum gave a nice pair of binoculars and a magnifying glass for visitors to use on our nature trails this summer. Ed Mezner sent a great big box full of surprises just before Christmas: three tape recorders visitors will use to play taped tours, a pair of binoculars, and two cameras. Dr. Paul Howard of the University of Wisconsin also arranged the donation of an old set of surgery lights we'll use in the new hatchery building.

We'd also like to thank all of our members for the tremendous response to our request for "Christmas gifts" over and above regular membership donations. A total of \$5,100 came in—a great end-of-the-year boost. For the gifts of funds and equipment, thank you one and all. We can't do it without you.

Contributions

Received October-December, 1983

Grants and Awards

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John and Barbara Canfield
Mrs. Cecil Carpenter
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