



# THE ICF BUGLE

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World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

## OUR POT OF GOLD ARRIVES!

By Marianne Wellington, Assistant Curator of Birds

Photo courtesy of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

It's St. Patrick's Day, the light is flashing on my answering machine. I am expecting a very important call. The message says to please call Marty. Marty Folk is one of Florida's finest Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission biologists working on the Whooping Crane Reintroduction Project in Florida. I can't wait to hear from him. I'm sure it will be good news. By 8 PM...

...I am listening to Marty's very calm and controlled voice. He believes he has seen two orange fuzz balls at the feet of a pair of Whooping Cranes earlier reported as incubating. Two chicks! I can't believe it, these cranes are first time parents and they managed to hatch both eggs. The parents are a male from Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland and a female from ICF. Her name is Zots Pops and was hatched at ICF in 1995, when candy was the theme used for naming all of the chicks. Hanging up the phone, I am speechless. Even though Marty is saying two orange fuzz balls, I feel like they are pure gold treasures.

Patience and teamwork have finally paid off. Since 1993, nearly 200 Whooping Cranes reared at four captive breeding centers have been released to establish the non-migratory flock in Florida. The

first two to three years could have easily persuaded the less hearty to quit. Our biggest obstacle seemed to be naive birds and an abundance of hungry bobcats. In order to combat this biological predation, the captive centers worked on training the young cranes to hang out in wide-open spaces and in water. The release sites were relocated to better crane wetlands, often on private land. Last year was the first time the release birds produced eggs, but their nesting attempts were unsuccessful. This year brings better news.

These Whooping Crane chicks are the first chicks hatched in the wild in a non-migratory setting since the late 1930s when they nested in Louisiana. Although one chick passed on, the surviving chick is thriving and there are hopes that this is just the beginning of many more chicks for the non-migratory flock in Florida. ♣



## How We Handle Those “BAD TO THE BONE” Cranes

by Scott Swengel, Curator of Birds

During 17 years of caring for ICF’s crane flock, I’ve made many friends and enemies among our cranes. Their territorial nature causes cranes to react strongly to us caretakers. If I thought ICF’s cranes would show gratitude to us for cleaning their pens and providing food and water every day, I was sorely mistaken. Some of our cranes are easy to work with, especially the females. But we also have our share of aggressive cranes that want us to KEEP OUT. This is my story of working with the scariest cranes at ICF.

The meanest of the mean is Tsuru, a big Red-crowned Crane. Tsuru has one response when

he sees a human—to attack relentlessly. Tsuru has become unusually aggressive for one natural and one unnatural reason. Breeding cranes naturally defend their territories, and join forces with their mates to vigorously protect their eggs and chicks. But Tsuru also lacks fear of humans, making him much more aggressive toward humans than usual. This fearlessness is due to his upbringing in 1975 as the first crane chick ever bred at ICF. Tsuru’s mother was infirm and unable to raise him, so ICF staff hand-raised Tsuru, giving him plenty of attention to ensure that he grew up a healthy crane. Cranes raised with that much human contact defend their pens against us as if we were rival cranes intruding on their territories.

To prevent future cranes from becoming like Tsuru, ICF has adjusted its rearing techniques to give the chicks less human contact so that they will view people less as parental figures. This effect has had the dual result of rearing more tractable cranes and helping develop techniques for rearing cranes for release.

Tsuru is incredibly strong and fast. He weighs just 20 pounds, but has the strength of a 100-pound person. He is a strong flyer and goes airborne to gain a height advantage, then tries to beat people into submission using a deadly combination of clawing, pecking, and wing slamming. Tsuru quickly explodes around any obstacle and tries to slam into people as if he were Reggie White of the Green Bay Packers sacking a quarterback.

I’ve learned a few moves of my own, however. When Tsuru comes blindly charging at me, I step aside at the last second and grab him by one wing (crane wings are extremely strong, so this grabbing doesn’t hurt them) as he goes plowing into the spot where I just stood. Surviving a trip into Tsuru’s pen is much easier with two people—one to divert Tsuru’s attention and the other to grab him. For safety’s sake, we simply avoid Tsuru by locking him outdoors when we go into his house in Crane City (ICF’s off-exhibit breeding area). Unfortunately, people must still tangle with Tsuru during health exams or to check on eggs being incubated by him and his mate, Abs.

It is a good thing Tsuru isn’t as adept as some other cranes, because then he could do a lot more damage. For example, a Red-crowned Crane named Haiku broke into Miajima’s pen so many times before they were paired that we had to padlock the gate between them. And there’s Kuru, a Brulga, who last year managed to get out of his Crane City pen, a remarkable

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**What Siberian Cranes  
lack in strength,  
they make up with  
skill and persistence.**

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escape that we quickly put the kibosh to. Maybe Kuru’s Houdini act was inherited from his mother, Hugh. Hugh must have been more ready than we thought for us to pronounce her married in the late 1980’s. She broke into her intended mate’s pen one night, in essence eloping right then and there (the

male was agreeable, too!).

ICF does not sit idly by and let cranes attack helpless caretakers. Crane City was built with several new safety measures for both cranes and people, and we rapidly fix any security breaches discovered by cranes like Kuru. We train our



Far left: A pair of Red-crowned Cranes stand at attention in their Crane City pen. Left: Scott Swengel, Curator of Birds, checks on a pair of Siberian Cranes in Crane City. The pair is unison calling, a warning to intruders that this is their territory.

staff to be experts at catching and holding cranes before sending them into a pen with an aggressive crane. Our aviculturists use all of this knowledge and experience to teach other breeding centers the fine points of crane handling and facility construction. We are especially mindful of safety during egg checks, when angry cranes vigorously defend their eggs against us. During one egg check we had Tsuru locked indoors, but his mate, Abs, was more formidable than I expected. I let my guard down

me laugh more often than any other species. They turn every encounter into high drama, making loud gasping noises as we attempt to subdue them to conduct artificial insemination or some other procedure.

Male Sibes will bump their heads on the door frame repeatedly as they stand, at just the wrong spot, and mechanically go through the motions of Unison-calling to defend their territory—if only they moved one step back.

Our cranes will especially pick on new

for just one second and Abs jumped over the broom I was defending myself with and slashed my arm with her claws.

Siberian Cranes are the most fiercely territorial of all at repelling intruders from their pens, but they're not as strong as Red-crowned Cranes like Tsuru. What Siberian Cranes lack in strength they make up with skill and persistence. A Sibe approaches its victim with its beak just above the ground—lulling us into complacency (but not really, once we know what they're up to)—until it's close enough to lunge suddenly and peck us.

Although Siberian Cranes can be challenging, they make

caretakers, so we teach our staff to counteract this form of discrimination. Until a person holds his or her ground against the meaner birds, ICF's cranes will continue to single them out for intimidation. In this battle of wills, we can gain instant respect using the element of surprise. Even the angriest cranes waver if something unusual is happening. If a bird suspects that we plan to capture it (and they can tell!), it usually becomes evasive instead of attacking. For example, young Siberian Cranes often become rebellious 'teenagers' who like to throw their weight around. A notorious group of them called 'The Gang of Four' tried to intimidate one of our female interns. The intern called their bluff and unexpectedly charged the mob of delinquents, sending them fleeing in a single file line around the perimeter of their pen, fear showing in their eyes. I watched the comeuppance of these bullies with complete astonishment. Cranes sometimes succeed in their attacks, but ICF's bird staff has a good safety record in spite of all the feisty charges.

It's scary to look after mean cranes, but their very meanness shows that the cranes are ready to defend their captive 'real estate' where they breed. Through ICF's facilities and our avicultural knowledge, we manage these aggressive cranes safely for both them and us, and succeed in channeling that aggression into positive breeding results. 🐦

## Getting into the bird behavior business

By Tori Kaldenberg, Aviculturist

I came to ICF in September and one of my first goals was to socialize two Siberian Cranes (*Grus leucogeranus*). At that time, the male, Moda, and the female, Lance, had been housed next to each other for eighteen months. The first socialization attempt ended when neither of the birds showed much interest in each other. Unless the pair is "in love," it is not safe to leave them together. At any time the situation can take a turn for the worse.

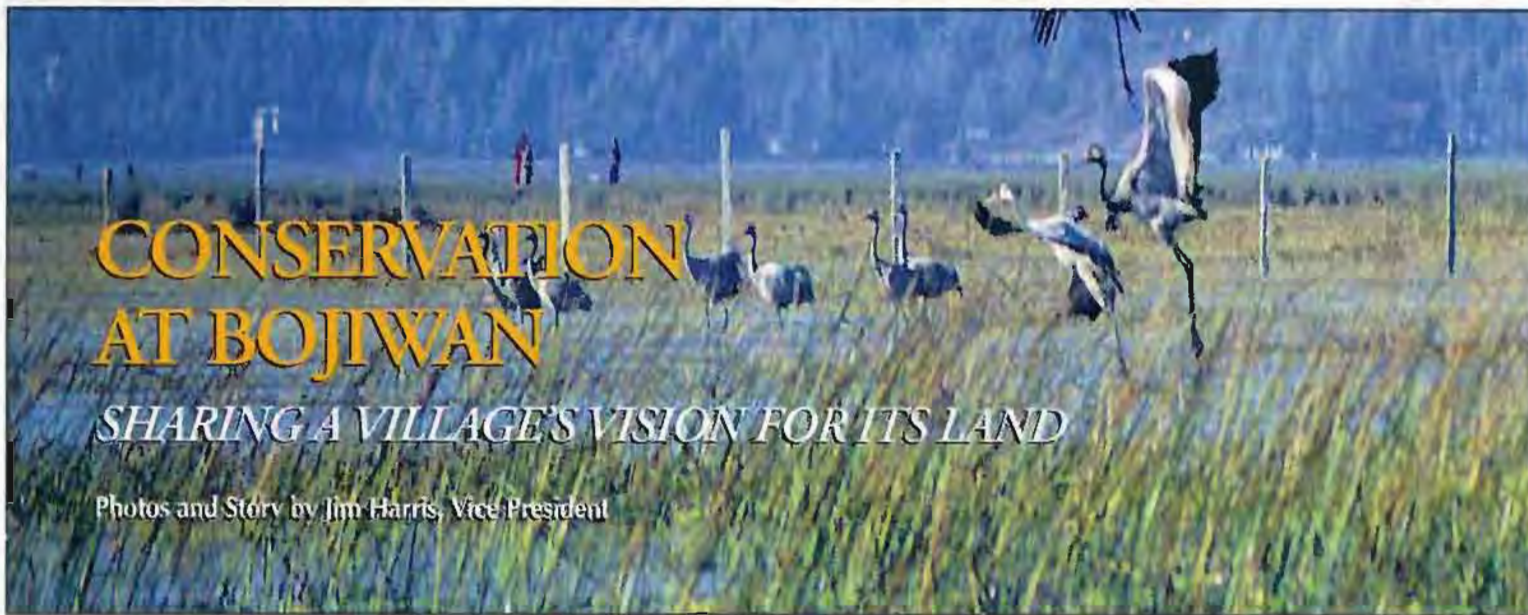
I began doing observations one month after I arrived. First, I needed to get to know the birds personally. I was not satisfied with going back into past observational records and learning about their relationship as recorded by others. Secondly, the relationship between the birds could have changed so quickly. Within a couple of months or even weeks the past observational records may become completely insignificant.

I sat in an adjacent building to observe the two birds while they were separated. I wanted to see how much time they spent near each other and how many synchronized behaviors they displayed. These behaviors are two very important indicators of a good pair. My observations continued until I felt that they too were interested in each other enough to move to the next step - the introduction.

I entered Moda's enclosure. As he gave me the highest intensity

threat there is for a Siberian Crane, the crouch threat and charge, I simply captured him with my bare hands. With him in hand I walked Moda over to Lance's half of the enclosure and closed the door very quickly. Today, that seems simple enough, but that was my first experience with an extremely aggressive, five-foot tall bird. I repeated this process for 13 days. At first there were many synchronized threats but the displays gradually decreased until there were only one or two very low intensity threats during each socialization. At this point, they were dancing, unison calling and becoming more aggressive as a pair. It was time for the "honeymoon" to begin. We use this term when it comes time to leave the pair unsupervised overnight. What a nervous "parent" I was. The next morning, I came in early—the suspense was too much. Would they both be all right? Fortunately, there had not been any problems that night and from that morning on they have been considered "married".

One morning, a few months later, I approached Lance and Moda's enclosure. Instead of them both standing at the door ready to defend their territory, I only saw Moda standing quite a distance away. Where was Lance? Was something wrong? When I walked to an area where I could get a better view, I saw her. She was lying on a nest. In that nest was an egg. Lance and Moda were doing an excellent job of defending their territory and their new addition. We are yet unsure if this egg is fertile, but we know the pair is well on their way.



**B**ojiwan, a wide bay on the east side of the Cao Hai Basin, is the winter home for Black necked Cranes in southwestern China. Bojiwan has the best habitat for cranes, and the most waterbirds in all of this nature reserve. The highway

crosses a hill above Bojiwan, and for years I have stopped here to watch the birds and the reflections of sunlight and clouds on water. This place is beautiful; one can hear crane voices and the chattering of Ruddy Shelducks from the lake. At first, I hardly noticed the village beside the bay, a scattering of brick houses with tile roofs among trees, with the same name Bojiwan.

Our project with the Cao Hai Nature Reserve began in 1994, and has become well known in China as a model integrating poverty alleviation for rural communities with nature reserve management. As a result of efforts to provide local people with new alternatives for development, much of the conflict between farmers and crane conservation has been resolved. The project has emphasized farmer leadership and decision-making.

Farmers eagerly participated in small business efforts supported by grants from the Trickle Up Program (TUP) of New York and administered by the staff of the nature reserve. Many farmers joined revolving loan funds managed by the farmers themselves. But participation by farmers in the main conservation work of the nature reserve has been more difficult, because we conservationists (both Chinese and American) have had to learn to look at conservation from the farmer's view.

Early last year, the reserve staff helped the farmers begin their own land use and conservation planning. Farmers have held eight meetings. In May 1999, they conducted a first vote on their priorities. Each participant received six kernels of corn, and placed three kernels beside what he/she felt was the most important of six proposed action items. Each person placed two kernels beside the second most important, and one kernel beside the third most important. The top votes went to improving the village road (35 kernels), improving the water supply (26), creating a special bird protection area (18), and forest improvement (13). Later, they identified additional priorities: establishment of a village grazing area, and construction of a bird watching tower.

Since then, the reserve and ICF have helped the villagers get expert help to implement

their plans - for example, creation of a land use map and the design for the road. The State Environmental Protection Agency provided funds for the special bird protection area, while Oxfam International donated funds for road improvements and construction of a bird watching tower near the highway. The farmers themselves are providing labor.

Creation of the bird protection area is important to the villagers because increasing numbers of Chinese tourists are coming to Cao Hai. By protecting Bojiwan wetland and its birds, and by building the tower, villagers expect to attract visitors who will then purchase souvenirs and food from village members.

From the beginning of the Cao Hai project in 1994, our goal has been to build trust between the villagers and the nature reserve. Trust goes both ways. Those of us who are conservation experts have learned much from trusting the farmers to discuss their own resource problems and pick their own priorities. I am reminded of how hard crane lovers work to open other people up to our point of view, all for the sake of cranes. Now (it seems at last), when the farmers set their own agenda, we learn to look at green hills and blue waters in their way.

On my recent visits to Bojiwan, I have had an odd feeling of imbalance. My guides choose the right footpaths, leading me past the village wells (that are drying up in part because of forest loss on the slopes above). As we climb past trees recently planted on what once were hillside crop fields, we look down onto the wetland. I have the odd feeling of not knowing what will happen next for this ICF conservation program... because the farmers will decide. Actually, we all know the next projects, according to the vote with kernels of corn. But as we work together, other ideas emerge, and new needs for the village and its land. The process is clear. As we restore Cao Hai, the lives of people and cranes will improve. 🐦





**ICF worked with...**

the State Environmental Protection Agency of China to hold a two-day workshop in Beijing. Forty people met on February 28-29, 2000 to evaluate results of the Cao Hai project and implications for other nature reserves. On the second evening, China National Television aired a 13-minute, prime time segment on our project.

**The Ford Foundation has provided...**

financial support for the Bojiwan Village planning and for the Cao Hai Workshop in Beijing. The Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation provided substantial support for the first four years of the Cao Hai project. Deng Yi and Guan Yube of Cao Hai Nature Reserve have facilitated the village work at Bojiwan. Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund of Japan has just given a grant for our work at Bojiwan.

We wish to thank David Cowhig, who made a donation to the Cao Hai Environmental Education Program as a memorial to his mother. David Newbart and Jessie Fenske also contributed to the same program. With these donations, 30 sets of student desks and chairs (one set is used by two students) were built for Dongshan Rural School, and four poor children from the reserve are sponsored to go to school.



Top and bottom right: Bojiwan villagers made their cement fence posts and fenced almost all their wetland, to keep out tourists, fishermen, and livestock. The village devised its own regulations, creating a favored resting and feeding site for waterbirds. The families at Bojiwan rotate protection duties, with two families on lookout for each 10-day period.

Above: Farming is the main economic activity at Bojiwan. The villagers, by improving their road, will improve access to the nearby market in Weining Town.

At Left: Bojiwan residents recognize the values of the wetland and its waterbirds. This new tower will attract bird watchers and bring income to the village.

Far Left: Project Hope in China, ICF members, and Chinese-American families are sponsoring tuition for village children at Cao Hai, including this girl from Bojiwan. We support mainly girls, since families can seldom afford to send all children to school and favor the boys.



# Contributions

January 1 - March 31, 2000

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**Lufthansa**  
ICF's Official Airline

## ICF WISH LIST:

Want to help? Call Vice President Peter Murray at  
**608-356-9462 ext. 153**

- Two 17" or bigger color monitors
- Radiographic table (*Please contact ICF's Veterinarian Barry Hartup for details*)
- Quality binoculars
- Real-motion, time lapse recorder/player (VCR) used to record and view videos of crane pairs housed in Crane City. Model number AG/RT600A preferred.
- Golf Cart

## THANKS!

Terry Moore, Leica Camera Inc., Samuel Silverstein and Nicky Rolls receive a standing crane ovation for their generous wish list donations.



## Look What's Popping Up in ICF's Gift Shop!

Be the first to own the official year 2000 collector's pin.

This year's theme is the Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*), which can be seen blooming in May and June. This magnificent blue flower reaches heights of six inches to two feet. Its star patterned leaves are as impressive as its flower. The Lupine 2000 Collector's pin will be an attractive accessory to every lapel, hat or blouse. This pin is only available at ICF's Gift Shop during the open season, so hurry in! As an ICF member you always get a 10% discount at ICF's Gift Shop.

The 5th Annual

## Crane - Bird of Peace

exhibit in ICF's gallery located in the basement of the library is out of this world!

Enjoy seeing kid's art from China, Cuba, Russia, Nepal, Wisconsin and New Jersey. Just visit ICF and don't forget to check out the gallery.

## Crane - Bird of Peace

will be displayed until June 25.

Pen and ink drawing from Russia, artist unknown.



## CLICK AND CONNECT

[www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org)

It's an address you can easily remember, so spread the word!

The **ICF Bugle** is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Bugle comments or questions? Please write me 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	Family .....	\$35	Sponsor .....	\$500
Senior Citizen \$20	Associate ...	\$100	Patron .....	\$1,000
Individual .....	Sustaining ...	\$250	Benefactor	\$2,000
Foreign .....		\$30		



# ICF Flock Grows!

Welcome new staff members.

**Dorn Moore,**  
*GIS & Remote Sensing Analyst*

Dorn served as the GIS Associate for the Field Ecology Department during 1999 and was hired this year to fill the new GIS & Remote Sensing Analyst position.



Dorn received a BA in Anthropology and Spanish from Beloit College and a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of Arizona. "ICF is such a wonder-

fully diverse place to work and because geography touches everything we do here, I get to help out in all of the departments." Dorn and his wife Sara, an environmental educator for ICF, live in Baraboo.



**Sara Zimorski and Jeanne Marie Pittman**

**Sara Zimorski,**  
*Aviculturist*

Sara came to ICF from Charlottesville, Virginia. She grew up and went to school in Charlottesville, receiving her BA in Biology from the University of Virginia. Sara served as an aviculture intern for over a year before receiving her new temporary position as an aviculturist under special funding. Her addition to the staff gives ICF the flexibility to help with this year's release of Sandhill Cranes in Wisconsin, which is a prerequisite to any releases of Whooping Cranes that may follow. Sara enjoys playing basketball and following Duke University's basketball team.



**Rachel Jepson,**  
*Outreach Coordinator for Education*

Rachel is a Wisconsin native and grew up knee-deep in the Wolf River exploring the fields and forests surrounding her childhood home. She received her BS in Environmental Education and Interpretation at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point (UW-SP). After graduation she studied at the University of Minnesota - Duluth while participating in a naturalist training program at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center. Rachel returned to UW - SP in 1998 to work for the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station as the School Program Coordinator. Rachel is an avid soap maker and parent to many pets.

**Jeanne Marie Pittman,**  
*Veterinary Technician*

Jeanne Marie has been a veterinary technician for 22 years. She became Nationally Certified in 1984 while working for a companion animal practice in Plainville, CT. Her employment at two avian practices gave her extensive experience in avian anesthesia, nursing, husbandry and hand-rearing techniques. More recently, she held the position of Senior Veterinary Technician for Zoo New England in Boston, MA. In her spare time, Jeanne Marie is involved with wildlife rehabilitation. Jeanne Marie is impressed with ICF's multifaceted approach to conservation.

**Betsy Didrickson,**  
*Librarian*

Betsy is now ICF's full-time Librarian after serving two years at 3/4-time. Along with managing the library on-site and on-line, she also helps to coordinate special events and produces marketing materials for ICF using her graphic design skills. Betsy graduated from University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Germanic Languages and went on to receive her Master of Arts in Library and Information Studies from the University of Wisconsin. Betsy lives in Prairie du Sac with her husband, two children and labrador retriever.

**Sandy the Sandhill Crane,**  
*Mascot*

Sandy has been putting smiles on the faces of children and adults her whole life. Gordon Smuder and Jennifer Meroken, of The Puppet Forge, created Sandy for the Bell Museum in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Sandy attended ev-



ery special event the museum hosted. Thanks to Gordon and Jennifer's generosity, Sandy is now ICF's official mascot and will be working the special events we have planned on-site for this upcoming season. She is thrilled to be so close to her crane cousins in Wisconsin and is proud to be affiliated with an organization dedicated to saving the cranes of the world. 🦢

## Members —

### take advantage of your free ticket to ICF's Special Programs

**May 1 - June 25: 5th Annual Crane: Bird of Peace International Children's Art Exchange.** This is an exhibit you won't want to miss. Art from Cuba, China, Russia, and Nepal blend with the work of their American peers from Wisconsin and New Jersey. The art is so impressive you won't believe how young the artists are!

**June 18 : Become a better birder!** Want to improve your bird watching skills? Join us for a Bird Watching Program that will teach you tips on how to identify birds with your ears and your eyes. All experience levels welcome. Please bring binoculars. Meet in Cudahy at 10 a.m.

**June 25: Birding with the best!** Join Jim Marrari, international birding expedition leader, for a morning filled with tips on bird watching and exciting stories from the field. All experience levels welcome. Please bring your binoculars. Meet in Cudahy at 10 a.m.

**July 1 - October 31: Rebirth of the Prairie: Aldo Leopold and Ecological Restoration.** This is a wonderful traveling exhibit featured in our gallery located in the basement of the library. It illustrates the successes and challenges of prairie restoration in Wisconsin. Experience the beauty and diversity of ICF's restored prairie then learn about the history of re-creating this endangered ecosystem.

**July 1 : Naturalist Program 10 a.m. - 12 noon.** The Cedar Courting Flute: Delve into the fascinating history of this instrument, whose uses are as unique as the Crane's courtship rituals. Hear a story of how its music came to be, and relax to a repertoire of haunting melodies that 'whisper to the wind'.



There is nothing that compares to ICF's Whooping Crane Exhibit in the summer. Photographer Cliff Nieuwenhuis captures the serenity and wildness of this exhibit that educates over 30,000 people each season.

**July 9: Naturalist Program 10 a.m. - 12 noon.** Is a Crane a Dinosaur?: Using current research and fossil evidence, explore the relationship between birds and dinosaurs. Through hands-on activities, learn how fossils are formed and how scientists uncover the secrets of the past.

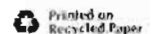
**July 16: Neighbor Appreciation Day at ICF!** From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ICF is free to any person living or working in Sauk County and Wisconsin Dells. Members take note - new crane identification signs designed by Wisconsin artist Jay Jochem, will be unveiled giving ICF a brand new look!

**July 23: Naturalist Program 10 a.m. - 12 noon.** Research Methods in Aquatic Ecology Workshop: Explore wetland ecology and scientific design by developing and implementing a small-scale research project involving Gromme's benthic invertebrates.

**September 9: Family Day is a Fun Day.** Nature never gets boring! From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. enjoy a day at ICF creating T-shirts, embarking on a nature scavenger hunt, learning about bugs, butterflies, and beaks, plus meeting the cranes of the world!

**September 16: ICF Member's Annual Dinner.** During the day ICF will be hosting special tours and programs for members only. Look in the August Bugle for registration information. 🐾

*For details about any of the events listed above, please contact Korie Harder, Visitor Programs Coordinator at [korie@savingcranes.org](mailto:korie@savingcranes.org) or 608-356-9462 ext. 127.*



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