

Mark Your Calendar

Language without Border - Chinese Art

You're invited to experience the artistry of Mr. He Yuan Ming from **July 8 – October 31** in the ICF gallery. Mr. He is a celebrated water-colorist and finger-painter, from the province of Sichuan, China. His childhood experiences of growing up on a farm in rural China are reflected in his images of horses, bulls, and nature landscapes. Come to the opening reception at ICF on **July 9** from 5 - 7 pm and witness Mr. He's unique painting techniques. His wetland and crane paintings are sure to inspire you and provide the perfect backdrop to learning more about ICF's conservation programs in China.

Prairie Fest – Celebrate ICF's Blooming Prairie!

On **July 17**, celebrate ICF's unique, long-term approach to ecological restoration as our restored tall grass prairie turns 24 years old! As one of the oldest restorations in Wisconsin, our prairie is allowing us to better understand the interaction between ecological processes and all the species that exist in a prairie community. The Fest will include discussions on prairie and wetland ecology by ICF experts, guided prairie hikes to view the prairie at the height of its bloom, live animal displays, concessions, and children's activities.

Annual Meeting

Save **September 11, 2004** ICF Open House all day and evening banquet at the Wintergreen Resort in the Dells.

Bird-a-thon 2004



ICF wishes to thank Eagle Optics of Middleton, Wisconsin for its generous donation of birding equipment for our 2004 Bird-a-thon grand prize! ICF also wishes to thank Wild Birds Unlimited of Middleton, Wisconsin for donating gift certificates of \$50 each for second and third place winners of the Bird-a-thon.

For more information contact Sally sally@savingcranes.org
608-356-9462 x 145



International Crane Foundation

E11376 Shady Lane Rd.
P.O. Box 447
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www.savingcranes.org

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THE ICF BUGLE

World Center for the Study and Preservation of Cranes

Ethiopia: Ancient Land of Cranes

By Rich Beilfuss, Africa Program Director

Long before the first light of dawn reaches the Rift Valley floor, the clamor on the marsh builds to a raucous climax. First in groups of three or four, then in numbers that blur into the hundreds and thousands, the cranes take flight from their roost. They rise higher and higher, circling up and over the surrounding peaks before descending on the terraced fields where waste grain of *teff* and wheat is plentiful. My companions stand at the ready with expensive cameras, but are fully absorbed in the sights and sounds of the spectacle overhead. In the distance, we hear the Muslim call to prayer and the ring of Christian bells that renew daily life in Ethiopia.

Mention Ethiopia and you are likely to conjure up images of desert, drought, and famine. Few can forget the haunting footage of starvation and hopelessness that beckoned for our compassion and charity during the 1980s. But the Ethiopia we "discovered" this past winter is far more complex, a country of diverse peoples, landscapes, and wildlife, and a country surprisingly rich in wetlands and cranes.

The only African nation to have largely avoided colonization, Ethiopia has maintained a strong sense of cultural identity through the centuries. Ethiopia features 83 indigenous languages with more than 200 dialects. The ancient granite monoliths of Aksum, dating back more than 2000 years, mark one of the greatest civilizations of ancient times.

Ethiopia's rugged landscape is a source of unparalleled biological diversity. Nearly 20% of the flora is found nowhere else in Africa. Ethiopia is home to 31 endemic mammal species, and birdlife is abundant with more than 860 species. Water is surprisingly plentiful in the

Ethiopian highlands, giving rise to the Blue Nile River and a wealth of lakes and marshes - crane marshes. Ethiopia is the only country in Africa that hosts four species of cranes, including wintering Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes and resident Black Crowned and Wattled Cranes.

I visited Ethiopia to work with our long-term colleague, Yilma Dellelegn Abebe. Yilma is employed by the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, an indigenous non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and conserving Ethiopia's natural heritage. Yilma is one of the top ornithologists in Ethiopia, and for more than a decade has championed the protection of cranes and wetlands.

Our team also included two renowned crane experts from Germany. Carl-Albrecht von Treuenfels, President of WWF-Germany, is a lifelong friend of the cranes and has visited ICF projects around the world for his stunning book, "Cranes - Heralds of Joy." Dr. Günter Nowald, Director of the Crane Information Center in northeastern Germany, is among the top crane biologists in Europe. We focused our attention on two of the crane species - the Eurasian Crane that Carl and Günter are dedicated to protecting on its northern breeding and staging grounds, and the endangered Wattled Crane. Our goals were to assess the species' needs, status, and threats in Ethiopia, and establish new priorities and partnerships for conservation action.

The magnificent spectacle of the morning fly-out of Eurasian Cranes ranks among the best crane experiences in Africa, and is only a short distance from the capital Addis Ababa. Ethiopia now supports the largest wintering population in Africa—we counted more than 9000 cranes at the Chelekleka Marsh roost alone. But the cranes have a

Cover photo by Rich Beilfuss.

very uncertain future. Over the past 30 years, rapid human population growth in the Rift Valley has led to intensive subsistence agricultural development. Local landowners complain that the cranes are increasingly causing significant crop damage when they first arrive for the winter, a time when the fields are freshly planted and kernels are vulnerable. Because waterbird hunting is illegal in Ethiopia, farmers resort to cracking whips, firing blank shots, and making other loud noises to chase cranes off of their fields. There is little doubt that exasperated farmers could soon turn to poisoning and snaring, however, as we have witnessed elsewhere in Africa. We will launch a new project with our colleagues in Germany to assess the root biological and social causes of land-use conflicts between farmers and cranes and develop proactive measures to reduce this tension.

Our most exciting discovery involved the largest and rarest of the African cranes. Separated by more than 1700km from the next closest population in Tanzania, the Wattled Cranes of Ethiopia have long been the subject of curiosity and speculation. In sharp contrast to their cousins that breed on the large floodplains of southern Africa, Ethiopia's Wattled Cranes are known to breed only in the isolated alpine wetlands of the high moorlands such as Bale Mountain National Park. During the dry season they are thought to form larger groups that feed at lower elevations, but little is known of their ecological requirements.

We targeted our search for Wattled Cranes on the Boyo Wetlands of southern Ethiopia. Boyo is a large freshwater lake bordered by an impressive expanse of grassy floodplain where the local Oromo people graze their horses, donkeys, and cattle and cultivate small plots of maize. Yilma once observed a nomadic flock of 62 Wattled Cranes near Boyo feeding on waste grain, but his subsequent visits revealed far fewer birds and we were uncertain where to begin our investiga-

tion of this vast area. We traversed the highlands and spoke with several elderly villagers, who told us they had often seen the *Kurinchise* feeding in their fields but never with chicks. Then three young men appeared and offered to lead us directly to the elusive cranes in the wetlands below.

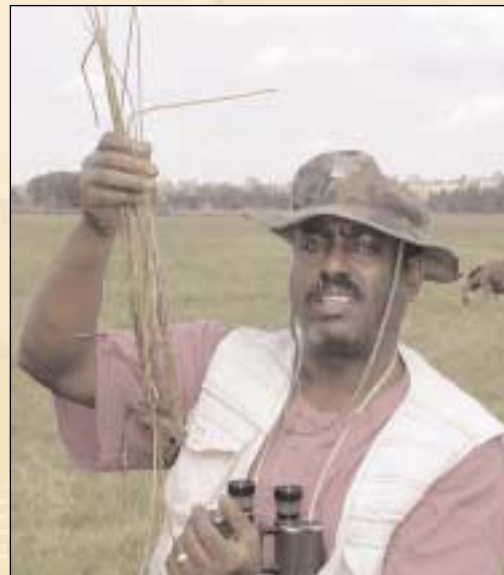
As we entered the wetland, we spotted a pair of Black Crowned Cranes with two chicks. The large Acacia tree silhouetted behind them suggested the perfect roost site. Then, as I stumbled forward through the grassy hummocks with eyes fixed on the horizon, I felt a sharp poke on my bare feet. It was the spike rush, *Eleocharis*! Thousands of tiny shoots thrust up through the grassy plains all around us. *Eleocharis* produces underground rhizomes, or tubers, that are the primary food source of Wattled Cranes throughout most of their range. Within moments, we caught sight of the first pair of Wattled



Ethiopia's diverse terrain includes 20 mountains above 4000m and the Danakil Depression, one of the lowest points on the Earth's surface. Map by Dorn Moore.

Cranes probing in the soil. We walked on, and more and more pairs came into view. Yilma would later confirm at least 107 Wattled Cranes feeding on the floodplain, including 51 pairs. Not only had we found the largest concentration of Wattled Cranes ever recorded in Ethiopia, we had likely discovered their major breeding ground.

Our excitement over this new discovery was tempered somewhat by the



Yilma Abebe holding fresh shoots of Eleocharis, a plant previously unrecorded in Ethiopia that is a vital food source for Wattled Cranes. Photo by Rich Beilfuss.

conservation challenges that lay before us. Boyo Wetland occurs in the most intensively populated and cultivated region of Ethiopia. The surrounding hills are devoid of trees and other natural vegetation, and massive erosion gulleys scar the landscape. The rivers draining into Boyo run thick with chocolate-brown sediments that were once fertile agricultural soils. Where the sediment spills from the river channels onto the wetland plains, the aggressive shrub *Mimosa* has taken hold and is spreading rapidly towards the productive *Eleocharis* beds.

As elsewhere in Africa, the endangered Wattled Crane can serve as a flagship species to save this magnificent wetland. Cutting the invasive *Mimosa* will buy us time, but ultimately the survival of the wetland depends on mobilizing efforts for soil and water conservation and food security for

Ethiopia's burgeoning population. Ethiopia, a proud country rich in talent and tradition, will rise to this challenge. We look forward to a long and productive future working with Yilma to safeguard cranes and their ancient homes.

We are grateful to Lufthansa Airlines and Gordon Andersson for supporting this work.

Do svidaniya, Vladoka

By George Archibald, Co-founder

On March 23, having just celebrated his 80th birthday, Dr. Vladimir Flint, one of the great people in crane research and conservation, passed away in the company of his beloved family at their home in Moscow after suffering a brief illness. For three decades, he was one of ICF's staunchest allies. To the late co-founder of ICF, Ron Sauey, and to me, Vladoka (my nickname for Flint) was both a father and a brother. Our close friendship spanned a generation and penetrated the Cold War between the USA and the former USSR, as we joined together to help the Siberian Cranes.

Our work began with the import of hatching eggs to the USA collected from wild Siberian Cranes in east Asia, 10,000 miles away from Wisconsin. Vladoka, Ron and I worked with the governments to sanction the project and facilitate the export under the auspices of the US-USSR Environment Agreement. Of the seven viable imported eggs five hatched and four survived—three males and one female. It was this success that inspired Flint and his colleagues to establish a captive population at the Oka State Nature Reserve near Moscow. With Flint securing hatching eggs from wild Siberian Cranes and the late Dr. Vladimir Panchenko and his colleagues lovingly attending to the captive cranes, the world's foremost center for the propagation of Siberian Cranes was established in the heart of Mother Russia. In 2000, when a middle-aged and productive Dr. Panchenko passed away after a battle with cancer, Vladoka was deeply grieved. His eyes often filled with tears when we recounted fond memories of our dear friend.

Flint had a remarkable sense of humor. He called the Environment

Agreement the "engine" that plowed through many barriers. After an excellent graduate thesis was written about the project, Flint lamented that although the author had described with precision the various meetings and agreements that resulted in those successful hatches in Wisconsin, the main point had been missed. He asserted, "The reason for our success was because of our friendship!"

When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, relations froze



*ICF Photo Archives
In 1978, Vladimir Flint (left), the late Ron Sauey (center) and Iranian colleague, Ali Ashtiani, met at an international meeting in the former USSR. The poster in the background tells the story of the export of Siberian Crane eggs to the USA and our dream of returning American-produced Siberian Cranes to a flyway leading from Russia to Iran.*

and almost all collaborative programs were cancelled. With the hope that relations might improve, a few projects within the Environment Agreement continued as tiny tendrils of life between the giant countries. When I asked Flint his opinion on the Afghan situation, he inhaled deeply and released a great cloud of smoke. He looked me in the eye and retorted, "They didn't ask me." During the Cold War the tension in the USSR was palpable. It was illegal to visit the homes of Russian friends and without permission it was illegal for Russians to even speak with foreigners. But Vladimir and Tatiana

Flint's home was always a haven for me. We evaded the KGB by taking the subway or by providing our escort with a healthy portion of vodka. The Flints were reared during Stalin's reign of terror. Once he confided, "Sometimes I take chances. One day I will make a mistake and you will never hear from me again."

Vladoka and I dreamed of studying cranes together in the wilds of Siberia. But until the collapse of the USSR in 1989, most areas were absolutely closed to foreigners. Then the sky opened.

Perhaps the happiest month of my life was shared with Vladoka in June of 1990 at a camp in the wilds of western Siberia near the nest of a pair of Siberian Cranes. That delicious stillness of the wilderness, the plethora of wildlife, nearby indigenous people living as they had for thousands of years and the fellowship of beloved friends blended, despite frequent storms and millions of mosquitoes, to create a bit of heaven on earth. Vladoka and I took long walks searching for birds and their nests. He demanded silence while we walked slowly, looked and listened. Finding a comfortable place to rest with a lovely

view, spiritual batteries recharged by nature, we would make a small fire, boil water, then sit back and drink tea. Although we were somewhat limited by our language, we shared humorous and often profound conversation. He was a man of great class and perfect timing.

The Siberian Crane Project was ICF's first major project. Lessons learned helped prepare us for other major initiatives. Vladimir Flint was the father of the Siberian Crane Project and through it, an inspiration for other programs around the world. He will always be a part of my life.

Environmental Education from a Local Perspective

By Sara Gavney Moore, Field Ecology Program Assistant
Li Fengshan, ICF China Program Coordinator



Twenty elementary students participated in the first environmental education camp at Poyang Lake Nature Reserve in February 2004. Photo by Sara G. Moore.

“Bai He!” These simple words, “White Crane” . . .

were excitedly called out by students and their teachers as they viewed a small flock of birds during a recent field trip to Poyang Lake Nature Reserve in southeastern China. The students were participating in the first ever environmental education camp held at the reserve, which is a critical wintering habitat for nearly all of the world’s endangered White or Siberian Cranes. As they viewed the birds through binoculars, the students took careful notes on the cranes’ physical appearance and behavior, noting their dramatic black wing tips and necks outstretched in flight.

For many of the students, these were not the first cranes that they had seen, for they live within the boundaries of the reserve and use the same resources as the thousands of migratory cranes and other wintering waterbirds. But the excitement behind their recognition of

the White Crane was perhaps new, as they had just completed two days learning about the significance of the area’s wetlands to both birds and people. During the three-day camp, the reserve staff and teachers emphasized to the students that these birds,

although a common sight while their families fish or tend water buffalo near

their homes, are special — they, the students, are in part responsible for their survival.

Critical to preserving Poyang Lake and other wetland areas in China is the involvement of local people in the management of these resources, for their actions will help to determine the future of these areas. An important tool in achieving this goal is the development of education programs that promote a sense of pride and respect for nature and that convey the critical importance of protecting these resources for the health of both human and wildlife populations. With the aid of The Henry Luce Foundation, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) has partnered with educators and nature reserve staff in China and Russia to achieve this goal through the development of environmental education programs at six nature reserves and surrounding communities in China and Russia. Through these programs students learn about basic principles of ecology and environmental stewardship, while their teachers and local nature reserve staff are trained to con-



ICF is partnering with educators in China and Russia to develop environmental education programs based on the needs of local populations at five nature reserves in China and a sixth protected area in Russia (project locations are indicated by red circles). Map by Dorn Moore.

tinue these efforts.

The two-pronged educational project combines an initial summer or winter environmental camp at each site with the development of a site-specific curriculum to be implemented in local schools. The educational materials are developed with and by local reserve staff and teachers to ensure that the unique perspectives and challenges faced by local communities are addressed in the camp and classroom materials. At the same time, ICF is working with all six sites on management planning, field research, and community-oriented activities that address the significant resource issues faced by each site and its vicinity.

Twenty students and six teachers from four local elementary schools participated in the winter camp at Poyang Lake Nature Reserve. The camp was led by educators from the Beijing Brooks Education Center, a non-profit organization based in Beijing that is leading the education component of the project. The educators worked closely with the Poyang Lake Nature Reserve staff, who assisted in leading activities and facilitating communication between the camp organizers and local communities. The camp laid the foundations for a local

environmental education program, which it is hoped will grow to include several area schools and offer future environmental camps and school field trips to the reserve. Tied to the camp

are plans for the school curriculum that include basic ecological concepts linked to environmental challenges relevant to the region, such as poaching, pollution, over fishing, and fires that destroy wet-

lands and the student’s role as stewards of these important natural resources.

In 2004, additional summer camps and corresponding school curricula are planned for the neighboring Zhalong Nature Reserve and Changlindao Nature Reserve in northeastern China. Russian students and teachers will travel to China to participate in the Changlindao summer camp. This international camp is designed to foster increased cooperation and understanding of environmental issues that affect the border region of eastern Russia and China, which is an important breeding and migration corridor for the Red-




Hu Yabin, a member of the project’s education team, leads students in an activity to demonstrate the interdependence of people with the natural environment. Photo by Li Fengshan.

land habitat and affect area wildlife such as cranes.

The winter camp at Poyang Lake Nature Reserve was the second camp completed during the first year of the three-year project. In July 2003, this project sponsored the environmental education camp at Muraviovka Park for Sustainable Land Use in Far East Russia. The summer camp was the 10th environmental education camp held at the Park, whose education programming has reached over 1,500 students and teachers from China, Russia, South Korea, and the United States since the Park’s creation in 1994. Over 40 Russian elementary and middle school students participated in the 2003 camp, which focused

on the region’s wildlife and wetlands and the student’s role as stewards of these important natural resources.

Through this project, we will build capacity for local schools and reserves in environmental education, and create linkages, not only between neighboring countries, but also among communities and local nature reserves that protect important crane areas in China. By increasing awareness of the significance of wetlands to both people and wildlife, we hope to develop a shared vision for protecting these resources. In addition, we hope to give local populations within these reserves the tools to accomplish this vision themselves, by continuing these efforts into the future. 

Celebrating 25 Years of Crane Conservation in China

In November 1979, ICF Co-founder George Archibald traveled to China for the first time as a guest of the Chinese Academy of Science’s Institute of Zoology in Beijing. During his six-day visit to Beijing, George met with prominent Chinese ornithologists and discussed developing a collaborative crane conservation program between ICF and the Institute of Zoology. These initial discussions laid the foundations for ICF’s China Program, which today is an important component of ICF’s international programs that span five continents and over 20 countries. The diversity of crane species found within China’s borders – nine species in total – and the significance of cranes in Chinese culture are unique factors that have made China one of the critical geographic regions for ICF’s activities.

Today, ICF’s environmental education work at Poyang Lake and other nature reserves is one of eight active projects that ICF coordinates in China. Along with public education, ICF’s China Program focuses on research, professional training, and poverty alleviation and rural development programs. To learn more about these projects, visit the new China Program section on ICF’s website at www.savingcranes.org/China or contact ICF’s China Program Coordinator, Dr. Li Fengshan at fengshan@savingcranes.org.

Contributions List, January – March 2004

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Ginny Wolfe

10 Years and Growing !

By Harry Parrott, ICF and Friends of Muraviovka Park Member

Muraviovka Park For Sustainable Land Use in Far Eastern Russia is 10 years old and continuing to expand opportunities for international awareness of environmental education and organic farming. Under the guidance of ICF and Sergei Smirenski, park director, programs that began with Russian and American teachers leading ecology camps for children during the summers have expanded to include international language schools and camps in China for school children and teachers. Guests from Russia, China,

Japan, South Korea, and the United States at this summer's 10th anniversary celebration at



Muraviovka will see how cabins have replaced tents, farm equipment has been upgraded, and a bus now transports children and visitors. The Friends of Muraviovka Park invite you to visit ICF's website for more information or <http://zhuravl.freeshell.org> to read the 2004 newsletter *Zhuravl* and to see opportunities for involvement.



Photos by Sergei Smirenski.



Leopold Workshops

The Leopold Education Project is an interdisciplinary environmental education curriculum based on the classic writings of Aldo Leopold. The LEP teaches students and adults about humanity's ties to the natural environment in the effort to conserve and protect the earth's natural resources. The workshop involves participants in hands-on, minds-on activities that demonstrate how students can be involved in responsible decision making that will help them to become ecologically literate citizens. Lessons are coordinated to Wisconsin Academic Standards.

▶ June 15, 2004 at Aldo Leopold Nature Center, Monona, WI 8:30 - 3:30, Fee: \$20 includes lunch (a few scholarships available) Contact: Gail Epping, 608-221-0495, <gepping@naturenet.com>

▶ June 16, 2004 at the International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI 9:00 - 3:00, Fee: \$20 includes free trip to Leopold's Shack Contact: Korie Klink, 608-356-9462 ext. 127, korie@savingcranes.org

For more information contact: Treva Breuch, 608-238-3212, email: wabreuch@wisc.edu

Travel with George Archibald

This year there are two special opportunities to travel with George Archibald

1 Celebrate Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin at the Whooping Crane Festival in Necedah, Wisconsin on **September 18** with George Archibald as your guide. Contact Julie Zajicek at 608-356-9462 ext. 156, julie@savingcranes.org

2 High in the mysterious and majestic eastern Himalayas, nestled between Tibet and India, lies the small Kingdom of Bhutan. From **November 4-21** you have the opportunity to travel to Bhutan with ICF co-founder George Archibald. Welcome the wintering Black necked Cranes and experience the rich culture and tradition of the Bhutanese. Please go to our website for more information: www.savingcranes.org/Travel/George_Future_Bhutan_Trip.asp or contact Julie Zajicek at 608-356-9462 ext. 156 or julie@savingcranes.org

Wish List

- ICF's Crane Conservation Department is in need of a 27" screen (minimum) for use in viewing Whooping Crane pairs and chicks via video.
- Low mileage four-door sedan
- Microwave for the library

Please contact Bob Lange at 608-356-9462 ext. 140

The ICF Bugle is the quarterly newsletter for members of the International Crane Foundation. ICF was founded in 1973 by Ronald Sauey, Ph.D (1948 - 1987) and George Archibald, Ph. D. Bugle comments or questions? Please write Kate 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 Senior Citizen	\$25
Individual	\$35
Family	\$50
Associate	\$100
Sustaining	\$250
Sponsor	\$500
Patron	\$1,000
Benefactor	\$2,000

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- Robert Bateman and Owen Gromme prints
- Wide variety of adult and children's books on cranes, wetlands, prairies, nature conservation, wildlife gardening and birds, and much more!
- Terrific Kids section! Stuffed animals, books, origami paper, crane dolls, posters, t-shirts, postcards



Please be sure to visit our online gift store at www.savingcranes.org and click on "Shop". New items are being added continually so be sure to check back frequently.

Remember ICF membership includes 10% discount!