

*The ICF* **Bugle**  
*Inspiring a Global Community*

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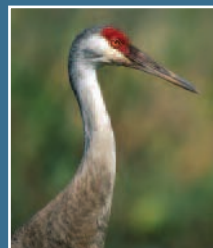
# Sarus-scape:

## A RICH TAPESTRY

*By K.S. Gopi Sundar, ICF Research Associate (India)*



Only the boy's head was visible amid the lotus leaves and grasses as he swam clutching his prize of five large lotus flowers. The rains had filled the village's community wetland, and several villagers roamed the waters, some astride their buffaloes. The Sarus Crane watched this activity warily from the nest as his partner stood beside him. Two eggs were being incubated, but all the human activity so close by did not warrant leaving the nest. Man and Sarus continued their individual existences – the other's presence was completely normal. *Continued on page 2*



A Sarus Crane pair at their nest in a community wetland in Uttar Pradesh, India.  
 Photo by K.S. Gopi Sundar

**Mark your Calendar!**

**Saturday, April 17**

Annual Midwest Crane Count

Visit [www.cranecount.org](http://www.cranecount.org) for details and Report Archive from previous years.





Continued from page 1

This idyllic setting in western Uttar Pradesh, India has remained largely unchanged for at least 100 years, and this area continues to have the highest number of Sarus Cranes in the world. I have been observing over 250 Sarus Crane pairs here since 1998, and have completed a detailed field survey in 26 rice-dominated counties of Uttar Pradesh. Our understanding of how Sarus Cranes and people co-exist in this region is vital for the conservation of the species.

In western Uttar Pradesh, Sarus time their nesting with the flooding of fields by farmers just before the Indian monsoons. Thanks to farmer tolerance, Sarus Cranes making nests in rice paddies are as successful as pairs that have natural wetlands for building their nests. Wetland habitat amid the fields improves chances of Sarus Cranes raising their chicks successfully. The wetland vegetation helps hide the chicks until they can fly, considerably reducing predation. When the monsoons arrive on time, the farmers reap a good rice harvest, and Sarus Cranes have a good breeding season. Sarus pairs do poorly either when rains are late, or the amount of rains is lower than necessary to flood the landscape. Many villages here maintain community wetlands, most farmers are tolerant of Sarus Cranes, and the monsoons have largely been on time. Flooded rice-fields during the Sarus' breeding season, nice wetlands scattered amid croplands, and friendly farmers seem to be ingredients for a healthy Sarus-escape.

In Uttar Pradesh, the lowest human density occurs in the western counties. Numbers of people increase as we move to the eastern counties. The situation for farmers and Sarus Cranes in these other rice-dominated counties is mixed. With growing human density comes greater need for farming land, more roads and towns, and more urban infrastructure. Strangely, amounts of wetlands are not necessarily reduced



Sarus landscapes provide a home for a wide range of species, like these jackal pups waiting for mum. Successful Sarus conservation includes both natural and human communities. Photo by K.S. Gopi Sundar



Two pair beats a pair! Both the Nilgai, India's largest antelope, and the Sarus, the world's tallest flying bird, benefit from farmer protection in Uttar Pradesh, India. Photo by K.S. Gopi Sundar

with growing human density – a strong indication of how valuable wetlands are to people in this floodplain. Sarus numbers, however, are the highest in western counties, and decline as we move east to more densely populated counties. Numbers of species of other birds also appear to have similar trends as Sarus numbers – more species occur in the west, and decline as we move east. Action to improve conditions for Sarus Cranes is likely, therefore, to benefit a range of other bird species. If the crop and wetlands across this region have not changed, then perhaps farmer attitudes towards crane have changed. My field work in 2010 will explore this aspect, and results will be reported in future Bugle articles.

Of course, not everything is hunky-dory. Illegal conversion of wetlands to croplands, increased developmental activity around politicians' towns, changing rainfall patterns due to apparent global climate change, and possibly changing farmer attitudes are key challenges that Sarus Cranes face. But we are now armed with a rich array of information to begin combating these threats. We know where most cranes are, and can focus conservation efforts here. We know where the situation for Sarus Cranes is tenuous, and can focus restoration efforts here. And we know what aspects of these landscapes require immediate research – and are already working to fill in the lacunae. Like cranes elsewhere, the cranes of Uttar Pradesh are ambassadors of a much richer tapestry of life. More than 350 species of birds, a range of habitats, torrential monsoons, human livelihoods, and ancient traditions remain woven together in this incredible Sarus-escape.

This work was supported by the Bell Museum of the University of Minnesota, The Indian Cranes and Wetlands Working Group of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, The International Crane Foundation, The National Geographic Conservation Trust, The University of Minnesota, and The Waterbird Society.

Get closer to the Sarus-escape by reading Gopi's field journal blog at: <http://sarusscape.blogspot.com>

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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.

#### Editor: Betsy Didrickson

Bugle comments or questions? Please write Betsy at [Bugle@savingcranes.org](mailto:Bugle@savingcranes.org) or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI. 53913

Memberships are vital to ICF. Please join or give a gift membership to a friend at the following annual rates:

Student or Senior Citizen.....	\$25
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## Notes from ICF President Jim Hook . . .

### The Charisma of Cranes

The two cohorts of Whooping Cranes in the Class of 2009 have successfully concluded their ultralight-led migration to Florida, with ten birds now at St Marks National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on Florida's panhandle and the remaining ten birds at Chassahowitzka NWR, a few hours south in Citrus County. But the first 2009 Whooping Crane to reach Florida was Direct Autumn Release (DAR) #42-09 who arrived the old fashioned way, with an adult bird on January 7, 2010. With the remaining 85 adults and DAR birds throughout the southern portion of the flyway, we are thrilled to see the overall reintroduced flock has reached a population of approximately 105.

ICF's Dr. Tran Triet, representing the Phu My Lepironia Wetland Conservation Project in Vietnam, has been invited by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to participate in a panel discussion at the North American launch of the International Year of Biodiversity on February 10 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The panel includes prominent UN leaders, heads of international conservation organizations, high profile economists and local community representatives. A reception follows including statements from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. We are proud of Triet and the well deserved recognition for his work at Phu My and are pleased that he can

participate in this prestigious event.

In January, we hosted a visit by Rod Nilsestuen, the Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and our Representative to the Wisconsin House of Representatives, Fred Clark. Their visit to ICF was prompted by our new, energy efficient Africa Crowned Crane holding building which serves as a leading edge example for green building practices in Wisconsin. Secretary Nilsestuen and Representative Clark led us in a discussion of the prospective Clean Energy Jobs Act, Governor Jim Doyle's recently announced initiative to establish a new clean energy economy for Wisconsin. The bill will articulate clear objectives for curbing our dependence on imported fossil fuels, generating new jobs, cutting pollution and cleaning up the air. Our guests urged us to follow this legislation closely as it moves ahead.

As this issue of *The ICF Bugle* attests, ICF continues strong field programs in numerous parts of the world, with creative activities that have broad significance beyond cranes. We are very grateful for the strong support of our members this past year. The charisma of cranes continues to make investment in their welfare highly effective at promoting a vision we share... where diverse people work together to find solutions that maintain natural balances, promote human welfare, and safeguard the beauty of cranes and of the wild.

## Become a Volunteer Naturalist in 2010

ICF is looking for dedicated and passionate individuals to work with our Conservation Education Department as Volunteer Naturalists. Naturalists enrich the experience for our 25,000 annual visitors with the stories of cranes, conservation and ICF. You will learn new skills in environmental education, work with leading conservation professionals, and inspire people from all over the world. ICF's family of volunteers are invited to participate in special field trips, learning opportunities, behind-the-scenes events and social gatherings.

Join us for 2010 Volunteer Naturalist Training on Saturday and Sunday, March 27-28th. The sessions will take place at ICF from 9:00 am-4:30 pm. To register for training or for more information please contact Rob Carr, Interpretive Programs Manager, at 608-356-9462 ext.114 or [rcarr@savingcranes.org](mailto:rcarr@savingcranes.org).





# Ambassadors for Water



We are very pleased to report early success in ICF's 2009/2010 annual campaign *Ambassadors for Water*, celebrating the effectiveness of cranes at inspiring collaborations around the world to achieve water conservation solutions that benefit people, wild things and wild places.

The campaign is helping our efforts in Africa to use timed releases of water to restore Wattled Crane habitat and wetlands along the Zambezi River Delta; our work in China to better understand how changes in water management might impact wetlands and waterbirds at Poyang Lake, wintering site for the world's last migrating flock of Siberian Cranes and important to people who rely on the area's resources; and projects in Southeast Asia that strengthen livelihoods for Khmer ethnic minorities who sell products made from sustainably-harvested grasses from a wetland reserve where Sarus Crane numbers are increasing. These hopeful efforts and more – where cranes inspire unique partnerships that help people and nature – are supported through *Ambassadors for Water*.

We are very thankful to so many of you for helping make this campaign such a success during this period of economic recovery. For those who still wish to become involved, there is still time until

March 31. Please use the envelope in this issue to support *Ambassadors for Water* today.

**We recognize the following donors for their special generosity to this campaign:**

*George and Kyoko Archibald, The Bobolink Foundation, Boker Investment Management, Inc., Joseph and Karen Branch, The Buchanan Family Foundation, Leslie Coolidge, Dick and Jane Dana, in memory of Barbara Dennis, Derse Foundation, Wesley and Suzanne Dixon, Dohmen Family Foundation, The Donnelley Foundation, Reinhardt H. & Shirley R. Jahn Foundation Trust, Fisk Johnson, Paul King, Valerie Kitchens, Krause Family Foundation, Lannan Foundation, Mason Foundation, Inc., The Milwaukee Insurance Foundation, Inc., Margery Nicolson, The Oak Lodge Foundation, Phil and Joan Pines, Nancy Levi Ranney and David Ranney, Kathleen Ryan, Sand County Foundation Bradley Fund for the Environment, Margaret Seeger, The Gordon and Jeanne Shepard Family Fund of The Saint Paul Foundation, The Steeves Foundation, Stiftung Feuchtgebiete, Joanna Sturm, Geoffrey and Elizabeth Towell, Tim and Patricia Tuff, Sandi and David Whitmore, Winona Corporation, Wolf Creek Charitable Foundation.*

## Historic Landings

By George Archibald, Co-founder

During November 2009, I received a message from Hong Ryun Gi and Pak U Il of the Academy of Sciences in Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea:

*We are very pleased to inform you that at 12th November 22 red crowned cranes landed and were well harmonizing with the pair of borrowed crane in Anbyon Pisanri.*

*And 13th of Nov. the number of the cranes increased up to 41.*

*Farmers there have seen landed cranes first time for more than 10 years and very happy for that.*

*In the morning of 14th all cranes have fled away, and we are waiting for another landing.*

Since 2008, ICF has been working with these Korean colleagues and BirdLife International to help restore Anbyon as a wintering ground for the Red-crowned Crane.

Since times untold the Anbyon Plain had been a major wintering site for Red-crowned Cranes. Food shortages for humans during the 1990s, however, resulted in the hand-picking of gleanings (former crane food) from the rice paddies. The cranes shifted about 100 miles southwest to winter in the Chorwon Basin – a wide valley transected by the Demilitarized Zone. Here, an abundance of waste rice in the South Korea portion of the Chorwon Basin and secluded roosting areas along streams in the DMZ provide ideal winter habitat for the



*Danish ornithologist, Axel Hemmingsen, while impounded in a coastal town of China during World War II, studied cranes that migrated along the coast. He described the Red-crowned Cranes in blue autumn skies as "poetry in motion." This autumn, that poetry landed after a decade of absence on the Anbyon Plain of DPRK. Photo by Tsuneo Hayashida*

cranes. Approximately 1,000 Red-crowned Cranes, more than a third of the world population for the species, winters on or near the DMZ.

Unfortunately, the long-term future of natural landscapes around the DMZ is threatened by urbanization. Many Koreans dream of reunification of the divided peninsula. If those dreams materialize, the Chorwon Basin is destined, in the eyes of many, to become Reunification City. Our project on the Anbyon Plain aims to help the

farmers, and to create conditions that will attract cranes. The local people are receiving much-needed farming equipment and also training in sustainable farming techniques. Winter food crops have been planted for the wild cranes and two live captive cranes – on loan from Pyongyang Zoo – have been established in a large aviary on the rice paddies to attract the wild cranes. From late October through mid November of 2008, more than 200 Red-crowned Cranes migrated over the valley, circled and called to the captive cranes but did not land. Likewise in March of 2009, more than 400 cranes migrated north across the valley but did not stop. The landings on 12-13 November are a major step forward. White-naped Cranes have also been seen.

The Red-crowned Cranes are treasured birds to Koreans as symbols of happiness, marital bliss, good luck and long life. Conservationists from the two Koreas now have opportunities for collaboration through the ICF-BirdLife International restoration project, a project we hope leads to a secure future for Red-crowned Cranes and, through the auspicious cranes, to goodwill between DPR Korea and the Republic of Korea.

## Become Involved with Crane Conservation in 2010!

- February 25-28:** *Annual Celebration of Whooping Cranes and other Birds.* Port Aransas, Texas. George Archibald will lead afternoon boat tours on Feb. 26 and 27. Rich Beilfuss, ICF Vice President of Programs will present "Water, Wetlands and Cranes" at 9:00 am on Feb. 26. George Archibald will present "Helping Cranes Along the Korean DMZ and in North Korea" at 9:00 am on Feb. 27. Visit [www.whoopingcranefestival.org](http://www.whoopingcranefestival.org) for more information.
- March 21:** ICF Volunteer Exhibit Gardener Training, 1:00–4:00 pm. Help plan and maintain native plantings throughout ICF's exhibits. Contact Rob Carr at 608-356-9462 ext. 114, [rcarr@savingcranes.org](mailto:rcarr@savingcranes.org).
- March 27 & 28th:** ICF Volunteer Naturalist Training, 9:00 am–4:30 pm. Please plan on attending both sessions on Saturday and Sunday. Advanced registration desired but not required. Contact Rob Carr at 608-356-9462 ext. 114, [rcarr@savingcranes.org](mailto:rcarr@savingcranes.org).
- April 15:** ICF site opens. Visit our website for program, tour and event information. [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org)
- April 20:** George Archibald presents, *The Reintroduction of the Whooping Crane to Eastern North America*, Northland College, Ashland, WI. 7:00 pm.
- May 8:** Celebrate *International Migratory Bird Day* at ICF. Join us for a special birding hike at 9:00 am. Contact 608-356-9462 ext. 127, or visit [ICF@savingcranes.org](mailto:ICF@savingcranes.org).
- June 19:** *An Evening with the Cranes.* 5:00–8:00 p.m. Enjoy our exhibits and meet ICF staff and George Archibald while sampling hors d'oeuvres and wines from around the world. Advance registration and fee required. Contact 608-356-9462 ext. 121 or to register and purchase tickets online go to: [www.savingcranes.org/craneevening.html](http://www.savingcranes.org/craneevening.html)
- July 17 & August 2:** Wildflower Walk, 9:00–10:00 am. Explore ICF's prairie with Restoration Ecologist, Alison Duff. Contact 608-356-9462 ext. 127 or visit [ICF@savingcranes.org](mailto:ICF@savingcranes.org)
- September 18:** *10th Annual Whooping Crane and Wildlife Festival*, Necedah, WI. [www.whooping-crane-festival.com](http://www.whooping-crane-festival.com).
- September 25:** ICF's *Cranes of the World Festival* and member's banquet. A full day of activities at ICF open to the public, followed by an evening member's banquet. Advanced registration required for the banquet. Watch for details in the August issue of *The ICF Bugle*.
- October 31:** ICF closes for the season. See you next year!



### Travel Opportunities with Dr. George Archibald

**BHUTAN**, November 2010: Experience Black-necked Cranes, a unique culture and traditions and some of the most exotic and rare bird species in the eastern Himalayas.  
**SOUTH AFRICA & BOTSWANA**, January 2011: See three species of cranes, wildflowers, and the mega fauna of the Okavango Delta.  
*For information on these expeditions contact Julie at 608-356-9462 ext. 156 or [julie@savingcranes.org](mailto:julie@savingcranes.org).*

### Tea for Two

These quality porcelain crane tea mugs will enhance your tea experience. The mugs come with a lid and an internal porcelain filter that allows enough room for tea leaves to expand and provide full infusion. The mugs are about 4 inches tall, hold 13 ounces and come in two styles. They are boxed and ready for delivery to you or a crane lover you know.... Price \$15.99. Free shipping in the Continental U.S. until March 15, 2010. Shop for these and other crane items at: [www.craneshop.org](http://www.craneshop.org) or call Barb for personal attention at 608-356-9462 ext. 117.





# A String of Pearls Across Asia

## Conserving Flyway Wetlands for the Siberian Crane

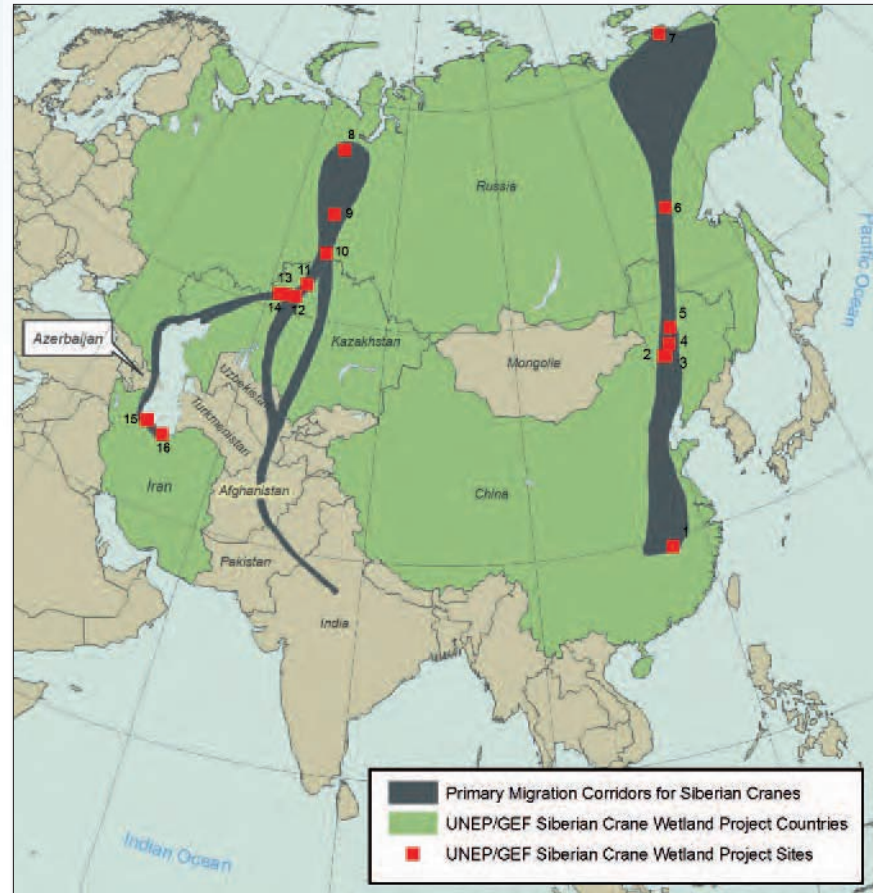
By Crawford Prentice, International Technical Advisor (UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project)

Autumn is the time for harvesting, for some reason that simple phrase resonated like a Tang Dynasty poem, summing up my mood more than many other weighty words spoken that same day last October. The occasion was the Project Completion Workshop for the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project, and the speaker was Ma Jianzhang, Honorary Dean of the College of Wildlife Management of North East Forestry University in Harbin, China, host for the workshop. This gathering marked the culmination of more than a decade's effort, involving hundreds of people and spanning a substantial part of the globe. In some ways it was a strange event, in that so few of us were in the room to celebrate the conclusion of such a monumental effort, but that is perhaps a reflection of our modern times, which allowed such a dispersed program of activities to be coordinated remotely from different corners of the planet.

This initiative was conceived far away in the Iranian town of Ramsar, perched above the southern shores of the Caspian Sea in November 1998, when delegates to the Convention on Migratory Species Memorandum of Understanding (CMS MoU) on the Siberian Crane realized that a major project was needed to secure a future for this critically endangered species. The Siberian Crane has had a special place in ICF's history, with Ron Sauey's Ph.D. focusing on its range, status and winter ecology, and George Archibald's tireless efforts to energize networks of people to take up the cause of its conservation, including clandestine meetings with Vladimir Flint on park benches in Cold War Moscow – more like something out of a John le Carré novel than conservation work. The combined dedication of ICF staff and researchers across Eurasia led to the establishment of the CMS MoU. Therefore, in many ways, the GEF project was the fruit of these earlier efforts.

Conservation of migratory birds is a complex business. It involves working on multiple scales, with all manner of stakeholders, on many issues. The sheer diversity of our 16 project sites, spanning the breeding, staging and wintering areas in four countries across two flyways of the Siberian Crane in West/Central and East Asia, was incredible, including pristine Arctic tundra and Siberian bogs, steppe lake systems, huge open marshes, the ricefields of the Caspian lowlands, and the countless "winter" lakes in Poyang's vast basin. The five

Siberian Crane. Photo by I. Gavrilova



Locations of project sites. Map by Zoë Rickenbach

sites in China were especially challenging for the huge human pressures and the critical need to address water supply issues. For ICF, this was the largest and most complex international project ever undertaken. It has significantly raised the organization's profile.

The project aimed to conserve a network of sites critical for the Siberian Crane and other waterbirds, wetland biodiversity and local communities dependent on these same wetlands. Its wide range of achievements is summarized in two final outputs – the project completion workshop proceedings and the publication *Safe Flyways for the Siberian Crane* (available for downloading from the project website [www.scwp.info](http://www.scwp.info)).

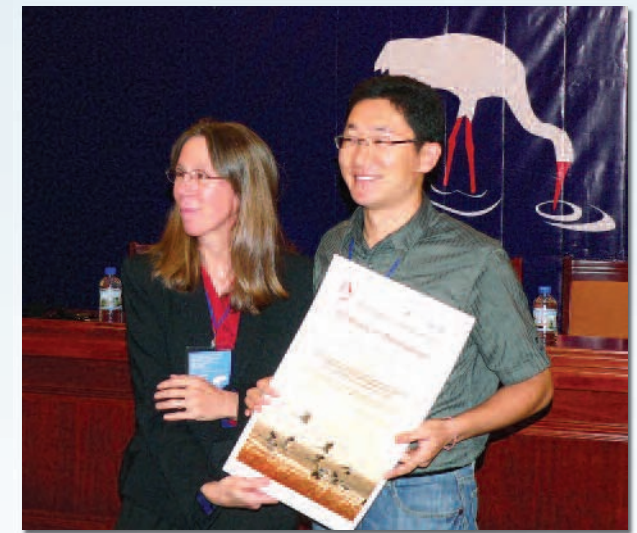
- A few of the most significant results include:
- improved protection of over 1.8 million hectares, through the establishment of four new reserves, expansion of three and upgraded legal protection at three;
  - Naurzum Nature Reserve in Kazakhstan was included in a new World Heritage Site, and five new Ramsar sites were designated;
  - management plans for most sites and management capacity improved through training, technical assistance and stakeholder participation;
  - water management plans for reserves in northeast China and



This spectacular image of Siberian Cranes, pausing on migration at Huanzidong Reservoir in northeast China, is now the cover of a beautiful ICF publication *Safe Flyways for the Siberian Crane*, written by ICF Vice President Jim Harris as the final report for the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project. Photo by Zhou Haixiang

- Naurzum in Kazakhstan, while ecological research at Poyang Lake provided a strong basis for evaluating impacts of a proposed dam;
- a flyway environmental education program including *Crane Celebrations* at over 120 sites in 9 countries;
- launch of the *Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and Other Waterbirds* under the CMS MoU in 2007.

Our work will be evaluated in terms of its sustainability. Both site and national activities should continue through national agency programs, while, for its part, ICF is preparing new programs in East Asia, with a strong focus on securing water flows for wetlands under climate change conditions. Flyway level actions for the Siberian Crane, in particular to strengthen site networks and address hunting threats are planned through the CMS MoU. A UNEP publication summarizing the lessons learned from this and another flyway project



Claire Mirande (Project Director) presenting a site certificate for Poyang at the Project Completion Workshop, Harbin, China. Photo by Crawford Prentice

is now informing policy discussions at the Global Environment Facility, the major international funding mechanism for biodiversity conservation projects.

Participants of the field trip after the Harbin meetings were rewarded with a spectacle few will forget, 2,000 Siberian Cranes scattered across wetlands at Momoge National Nature Reserve that had been re-flooded as a result of our project. Our elated spirits and grateful hearts that evening were quite fitting for a Harvest Thanksgiving.

ICF and Russian researchers at the Siberian Crane breeding grounds in Kytalyk, Yakutia. Photo by Crawford Prentice





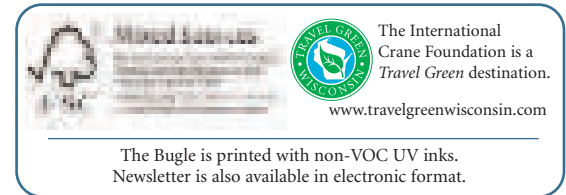


## International Crane Foundation

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# Think Spring! *Bird-a-thon 2010*

*By Ann Burke, Director of Public Relations*

As the snow remains piled around crane pens at ICF's World Headquarters, I find myself wondering if spring will ever return to the Midwest. However, Great Horned Owls singing their starry love songs under February skies reminds me that spring is not that far away. In celebrating thoughts of warmer days, ICF announces its 22nd Bird-a-thon.

This annual event is designed to tease out the bird watcher in all of us – novice or expert – while sharing a fun day with family and friends and raising essential support for crane and wetland conservation. Whether you are interested in establishing your own Bird-a-thon team, joining or supporting someone else's, or sponsoring ICF's "Craniacs" led by our Co-founder George Archibald, we invite you to join in this exciting tradition.

This year's Bird-a-thon will run from April 1 – June 15. You may select one day (a full 24-hour period) during this date range to conduct your bird watching. A team can

be composed of one or as many people as you prefer. Your birding may take place anywhere in the world – we've had teams count birds as far away as India and China. You may want to consider conducting your count on Saturday, May 8 beginning at ICF as we are hosting an early morning bird hike in celebration of International Migratory Bird Day.

Once you form or join a team, please invite as many family members and friends as possible to sponsor your day with a tax-deductible gift or per-species pledge to support ICF's global conservation efforts. All donors will receive our quarterly newsletter *The ICF Bugle* and contributors of \$25 or more will receive a one-year membership to ICF, including free entry and tours of our campus in Wisconsin – the only place in the world to see all 15 species of cranes!

Prizes will be awarded to the top three teams or individuals for most dollars raised, and to the top individual and team for most number of species found.



## Participate as an individual or form your own team:

- Create your own, personalized fundraising page to email to your family and friends. Visit [www.firstgiving.com/ICFBirdathon](http://www.firstgiving.com/ICFBirdathon)
- Request an information packet by mail. Contact Ann Burke at 608-356-9462 ext.147 or [aburke@savingcranes.org](mailto:aburke@savingcranes.org). To learn more, visit [www.savingcranes.org/birdathon.html](http://www.savingcranes.org/birdathon.html)

You may also make a gift or pledge to the Bird-a-thon using the enclosed envelope.

**Thank you and happy birding!**

*Cedar Waxwing. Photo by Steve Patterson*