



International Crane Foundation

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INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

The ICF Bugle

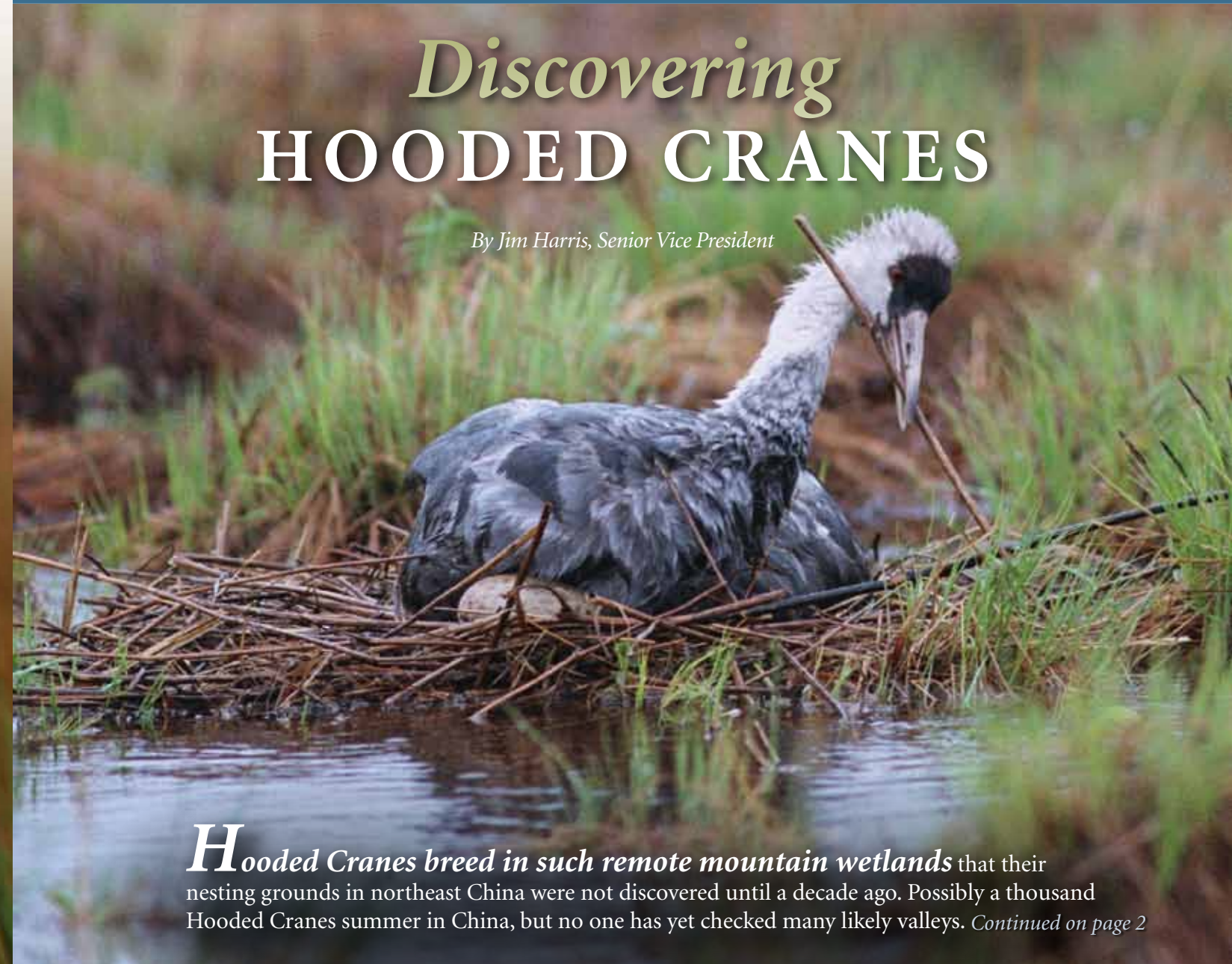
Inspiring a Global Community

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Discovering HOODED CRANES

By Jim Harris, Senior Vice President



Hooded Cranes breed in such remote mountain wetlands that their nesting grounds in northeast China were not discovered until a decade ago. Possibly a thousand Hooded Cranes summer in China, but no one has yet checked many likely valleys. *Continued on page 2*



More rain, more cold – this Hooded Crane pulls new plant material under its eggs, building up the nest as water rises all around. If successful, the nest could hatch two chicks (right). A major portion of the world's Hooded Cranes nest within the Amur/Heilong Basin, one of the seven rivers you will read about in this issue. *Top photo by Guo Yumin, right photo by Wu Haifeng.*



Whooping Crane RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

by Tom Stehn, Whooping Crane Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

OCTOBER 2009 – SEPTEMBER 2010

The Aransas-Wood Buffalo population (AWBP) of Whooping Cranes rebounded from 247 present in the spring of 2009 to 263 in spring 2010. With 46 chicks fledging from a record 74 nests in August, the flock size should reach record levels this fall. Threats to the flock including land and water development in Texas, the spread of black mangrove on the wintering grounds, the long-term decline of blue crab populations in Texas, sea level rise/land subsidence, as well as wind farm and power line construction in the migration corridor all continue to be important issues.

A study by Dr. Ken Jones at the University of Georgia genomics lab to better describe the genetic composition of the captive flock got underway in September 2010. The new genomics technology will help captive managers with genetic decisions involving Whooping Crane pairings. Planning efforts continued for the proposed reintroduction of a non-migratory flock of Whooping Cranes at White Lake, Louisiana. White Lake is where the last Whooping Crane nest in Louisiana was found in 1939.

Production in the wild from reintroduced flocks in 2010 was somewhat disappointing, though better than last year. In Florida with improved water conditions, 8 of the 9 remaining pairs nested and

hatched 4 chicks, but only 1 chick survived to fledge. In Wisconsin, 12 pairs nested, with 3 first nests and 3 re-nests incubated full term and hatching 7 chicks. Two chicks fledged. Nest abandonment consistent with the presence of black flies continued to be a major hurdle for the reintroduction at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

The world total of Whooping Cranes at the time of this report is 574, up 38 individuals from one year ago. There are 167 birds in captivity at 12 North American institutions, and 407 birds in 3 wild populations (Aransas/Wood Buffalo 263, Wisconsin/Florida migratory 119, Florida non-migratory 25).

The 11 Class of 2010 ultralight-led Whooping Cranes departed Necedah NWR on October 10th. An additional 11 Whooping Crane chicks will be released later this fall as part of the DAR (Direct Autumn Release) method. The chicks will be released into the company of older cranes from whom they will learn the migration route. Their migration will likely begin mid to late November.

Photo by John Ford



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Forests surround these narrow wetlands. If you enter, August flowers grow above your head, rooted upon sedge tussocks, those wobbly towers, and your feet plunge easily into the peat below. Permafrost lies just inches below the dark, seeping water. These places exhaust people who dare to walk after cranes.

The Heilongjiang Xinqing Hooded Crane Nature Reserve, covering 62,567 hectares, is managed by the Forest Industry Bureau. To replace income no longer available from logging in this region, the Bureau seeks to combine forest and wetland protection with nature tourism.

Local photographers have caught the passion for cranes and have become strong allies for wetlands and the reserve's protection efforts. We find similar crane friends in many parts of China. They are hardy – out early and late – and generously share their photographs for conservation. Not all find it easy to buy fancy cameras and long lenses. One Xinqing Photographers Association member took out a bank loan for his gear, while the “card woman” can only afford to buy a variety of digital camera media cards used in cameras. She waits patiently beside her fellow photographers until one takes a break; she borrows the camera, inserts the proper card, and shoots away.

The Amur/Heilong Basin has immense wetlands, six crane species, and growing numbers of people ready to act upon their enthusiasm. We continue to discover the remarkable places where cranes thrive.



Hooded Cranes arrive in spring at Xinqing wetlands in northeast Heilongjiang Province, China (top left photo, by Wu Haifeng). Adults spend their summer dispersed among breeding sites (bottom photo, by Zhao Zhiping).



Visit Russia and China in May 2011 Amur/Heilong Basin

Wetlands here are home to more crane species than anywhere else on earth, and rank among ICF's most important conservation priorities worldwide. Join ICF Co-founder Dr. George Archibald, ICF Senior Vice President Jim Harris, and ICF Research Associate Su Liying, during the height of spring in northeast China as Siberian Cranes migrate north, and Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes are nesting. The trip will run from May 6-18, and includes Momoge and Zhalong National Nature Reserves in northeast China and then a visit to Muraviovka Park just across the border in far eastern Russia. You'll see the extraordinary differences in culture and life in these giant countries, with visits to Beijing and Blagoveshchensk.

We hope to see four to five crane species, Oriental Storks, and many other waterbirds. For details, please contact Elena Smirenski at elena@savingcranes.org, or call 608-356-9462, ext.130.

Light changes hour by hour over wetlands of Muraviovka Park. The group will stay three nights beside the cranes and storks. Photo by Jim Harris

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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 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
Individual.....	\$35
Family.....	\$50
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Sponsor.....	\$500
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Cranemaker.....	\$10,000

Notes from the President

Seven Rivers: Vision, Science and Action

By Rich Beilfuss



I am often asked why I remain so passionate about the International Crane Foundation after all these years (now 22 and counting). When I first came to Baraboo, the amazing charisma of cranes captured my imagination. I was fascinated by the rich cultural tapestry of people and cranes, found in the lessons of Buddha, the folklore of Africa, and the wedding kimonos of Japan. Over time, I was drawn into the magnificent places where cranes occur, the remarkable diversity of life that shares these landscapes, and the intricate ways in which the fates of cranes and people are intertwined. I began to understand that cranes, beloved by so many, could help us save some of the most important places on earth. Today, everywhere we work, ICF is connecting passionate people – teachers, students, governments, scientists, communities – to chart a different future for cranes and ourselves.

Our Annual Campaign this year features seven world-renowned river basins where ICF is making a real difference for people and wildlife, through the charisma of cranes:

The Zambezi River Basin is the lifeline of southern Africa, and sustains some of Africa's largest wildlife concentrations. ICF, together with the World Wildlife Fund and other partners, is engaging dam managers and government decision-makers in a pioneering project that is incorporating “environmental flows” into the operation of large hydropower dams to benefit Vulnerable Wattled Cranes and Grey Crowned Cranes, African buffalo, and a wealth of other species, as well as thousands of farmers, fishers, and others who depend on Zambezi waters (see *ICF Bugle*, Nov. 2009).

The Amur-Heilong River Basin is home to some of the world's outstanding wetlands – including Zhalong, Momoge, Xianghai, and Dalai Lake National Nature Reserves in China; Muraviovka Park and Dauriski Nature Reserve in Russia; and Daguurun Nature Reserve in Mongolia – that provide the most important breeding grounds for the Endangered Red-crowned and Vulnerable White-naped Cranes, as well as vital migration staging

areas for the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane and Vulnerable Hooded Crane. ICF is developing water management plans to address the greatest threat to these wetlands – water shortages caused by the diversion of river inflows to thirsty cities, the conversion of floodplains to agriculture, and other developments (see *ICF Bugle*, Nov. 2009).

ICF has worked since 1985 at Poyang Lake, the largest lake in the **Yangtze River Basin** and winter home to 400,000 waterbirds, more than at any other location in East Asia. Poyang provides winter habitat for almost all the world's Siberian Cranes, but is threatened by hydrologic changes brought by a multitude of dams and water diversions, as well as declining water quality that could impact the aquatic food plants on which the cranes and other species depend. ICF is collaborating with Poyang Lake Nature Reserve to study the links among cranes, these aquatic plants, and water levels, and provide vital information for water development projects and lake management issues.

The Han River flows from the south-central mountains of the Korean peninsula, through Seoul, and then marks the DMZ between North and South Korea before emptying into the Yellow Sea. The estuary of the Han is guarded by tall chain link fences topped with rolls of razor wire that separate 23 million people in the greater metropolitan area of Seoul from the extraordinary mudflats and meadows that are home for the Endangered Black-billed Spoonbill and many other breeding waterbirds of international concern, and provide critical wintering habit for White-naped Cranes and Swan Geese. When reunification comes to the divided peninsula, the estuary is slated for seaport development. ICF is working with Korean colleagues toward a different future, in which the DMZ becomes an international Peace Park that permanently secures these lands for biodiversity conservation and world heritage.

continued on page 4



SEVEN rivers

Vision, Science and Action

Supporting Sustainable Development in the Mekong

By Jeb Barzen, Director of Field Ecology and Tran Triet, Southeast Asia Program Coordinator

continued from page 3

Called the “Last Living River in India,” the **Chambal River** forms important headwaters of the Ganges, the Holy River of India. ICF’s work in the Upper Ganges region, home to most of the world’s Indian Sarus Cranes, brings new attention to a substantial region that has been neglected by conservation agencies. Despite being one of the most intensively farmed and populated areas in the world, this “Sarus-scape” retains over 400 species of birds, including a wealth of threatened species, the rare Gharial crocodile, and the Ganges River dolphin. Our efforts focus on retaining the multiple benefits that the region provides, including food and water for millions of people whose habits are compatible with biodiversity conservation (see *ICF Bugle*, Feb. 2010).

Bathing coastal marshes of the Gulf of Mexico with fresh water essential for Whooping Cranes and their main food source, blue crabs, the **Guadalupe River** and associated marshes are now threatened by excessive water diversions during drought years. ICF works with diverse partners in Texas, including coastal municipalities, businesses, and community groups, to protect the fragile gulf ecosystem, its precious wildlife, and the vital coastal economy. Together with our partners, we are identifying and protecting critical habitat areas for Whooping Cranes under current and projected sea level conditions (see *ICF Bugle*, May 2010).

In this issue, you will read about our long-term conservation program in the **Mekong River Basin** of southeast Asia, where ICF has been deeply involved in the establishment and management of Tram Chim National Park, the largest wetland conservation area in the Mekong Delta, and where our successful community conservation project at Phu My has captured the attention of the United Nations. ICF also provides wetland training for wetland management and decision-makers across a network of 18 universities in 6 countries.

The vision, expertise, and energy we bring to each of these projects require long-term commitments of time and funding. **We hope our passion is contagious, and you will join us by making a special gift to the Seven Rivers campaign.** Together we will seek lasting results that benefit people and wildlife in areas where human needs are expanding, and in the years to come, the future for cranes will be determined.

The International Crane Foundation’s *Seven Rivers* campaign celebrates the cranes, people and broader biodiversity of these globally-significant river basins by investing in strategic actions to achieve sustainable water management, restore and maintain valuable services provided by ecosystems, and improve human livelihoods.

Along the Gulf Coast of Texas, where the situation for the endangered Whooping Crane and the need for sustainable water management are urgent, *Seven Rivers* allows for the addition of a key new staff member, Dr. Elizabeth Smith, who will work for solutions to these challenges as our Whooping Crane Conservation Biologist.

Dr. Smith is a professor and researcher at Texas A&M University and serves on the environmental flows stakeholder committee for the Guadalupe River Basin. She will lead efforts to secure water resources that sustain freshwater inflows to the coastal bays of Texas for Whooping Cranes and other species, by conducting critical research, advancing stakeholder outreach and participating in water planning meetings within the Guadalupe basin. She will also work with partners to secure important habitats for Whooping Cranes in the buffer lands surrounding Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. As a lifelong resident of Corpus Christi, Dr. Smith understands the vital importance of freshwater inflows for the coastal municipalities of Texas as well as for Whooping Cranes.

In the Guadalupe, as in the Zambezi, Mekong, Yangtze, and other key river basins, *Seven Rivers* allows the International Crane Foundation to strengthen its efforts to achieve sustainable water management practices to help cranes, people and other wildlife for now and generations to come.

We invite you to make a special gift to this important campaign by using this envelope.

Double your investment! Through commitments from ICF’s Board of Directors and an anonymous donor, your gift to the *Seven Rivers* campaign will be matched dollar-for-dollar until we reach our goal of \$1,000,000.

The Mekong evokes a sense of mystery – of untamed, biologically rich wilderness. Although the Mekong is the 10th longest river in the world, it is still relatively wild – with few major dams – and teeming with wildlife. Yet this unharnessed past contrasts with the vigorous economic growth envisioned for Southeast Asia. Extensive development will continue. Fortunately, the four countries that comprise the Lower Mekong Basin have signed an international treaty to share the resources of the Mekong River with an emphasis on sustainable development. The future for the Mekong, and all the species its waters nurture, will depend on how these countries implement that shared vision.

Since the 1980s, ICF has been helping to define and implement sustainable development in the Mekong region on behalf of Sarus Cranes, the ecosystems they need, and the people who also depend on these critical regions. As such, the Mekong exemplifies the watersheds to benefit from ICF’s *Seven Rivers* campaign.

ICF’s first project in the Mekong was at Tram Chim, a relict wetland wilderness in Vietnam which, at the time, held the only known population of Sarus Cranes in Southeast Asia. This large floodplain had been damaged by canals dug during the war and then expanded during the period of intensive agricultural development that followed. With remnant plant and animal populations still existing, the goal for Tram Chim was to restore the Plain of Reeds by re-establishing the natural hydrology.

At first the waters of Tram Chim were managed for the maximum production of a single resource, trees, such that other native species and ecosystem services were compromised. We worked with park staff and other groups for 16 years until a true ecosystem restoration effort for Tram Chim could be realized. In part because of ICF’s support and commitment to this area, Tram Chim became a national park. Now hundreds of native species are flourishing, including cranes, fish, and trees.

One lesson that surfaced from our work at Tram Chim was that addressing people’s needs cannot be secondary to addressing wildlife needs. Since many conservation challenges are caused by people, sustainable solutions can only happen when local people’s needs are integrated into solutions from the start. Often those who live near the wetland areas where we work are poor. Though they may depend on the services and resources

of a healthy wetland ecosystem, their basic needs, such as food security, must be met before they can take action in support of their future.

ICF extrapolated these lessons from Tram Chim to a remote village called Phu My where we began our second major project in the Mekong by engaging local people in the wise use of wetland resources. Their centuries-old tradition of harvesting reeds (*Lepironia articulata*) from native wetlands for weaving mats was under threat from shrimp pond development. Shrimp ponds, even though harmful to the wetland, were a lucrative business relative to mat weaving. To encourage a sustainable model of wetland use, ICF purchased equipment and trained people to convert their weaving expertise into a more profitable business that exported woven products of higher retail value. Since the project began, incomes of families in Phu My have tripled, giving them true alternatives to shrimp pond development. The wetland at Phu My is now more secure and Phu My products are available worldwide, including at ICF’s gift shop.

Ecosystem restoration and genuine community development projects take time – even decades – to become truly sustainable. Though we still have important work to continue at Tram Chim and Phu My, how can we reach new conservation areas if each project takes so long to succeed? Our answer has been to establish a training program for students and professionals of the Mekong Basin in wetland ecology and management and, at the same time, build the capacity of universities within the region to teach these subjects. Working with 8 founding institutions, ICF’s other major project in the Mekong has created the University Network of Southeast Asia. Over the past 8 years, this network has grown to include 18 member universities and has trained 186 students in wetland management.

Will the Mekong Basin be developed in a sustainable way? With real models of sustainable wetland management like Tram Chim and Phu My, and with a cadre of well-trained wetland managers, we believe the answer can be yes! Please join us in realizing this vision.



Two Sarus Cranes at Tram Chim National Park. Management of wetlands, where good science guides restoration of historic water flows, helps long-lived cranes and other wetland species thrive. ICF banded the bird on the right as an adult in 1998. Photo by Doan Hong

Emmy Feick of Baraboo, WI is captivated by Heather Henson's crane puppet.



Cranes of the World Festival!

On Saturday, September 25, 2010, ICF's world headquarters was teeming with over 500 people – members, guests, visitors, volunteers and staff – to celebrate ICF's work around the world. During our annual *Cranes of the World Festival* visitors enjoyed birding and prairie hikes, guided and behind-the-scenes tours, as well as talks from staff about their global field work. In addition, we had special guests wildlife humorist David Stokes entertaining all ages, and Heather Henson, daughter of the late Jim Henson creator of the Muppets hosting an activity where children made puppets and kites and met one of Heather's "star" puppets from her *Panther and Crane* theatrical spectacular. Mark your calendars for **September 24th 2011** and flock over for our next *Cranes of the World Festival!*



To end the day, Dr. George Archibald, Co-founder of ICF, opened *George & Tex*, a new exhibit that will be on display at ICF through 2011. The whimsical exhibit tells the story of his unique work with a very special Whooping Crane named Tex. George (foreground) stands next to the "shack" he lived in with Tex.

Bhutan Goes Underground

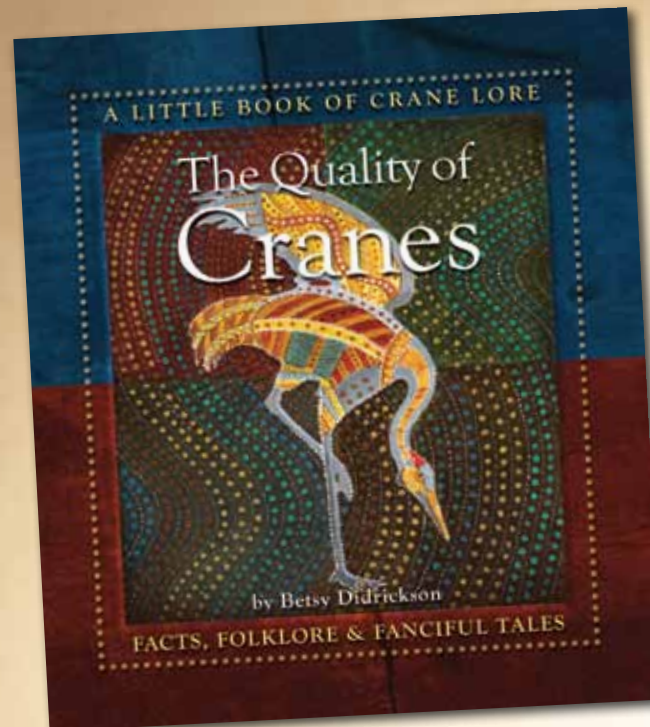
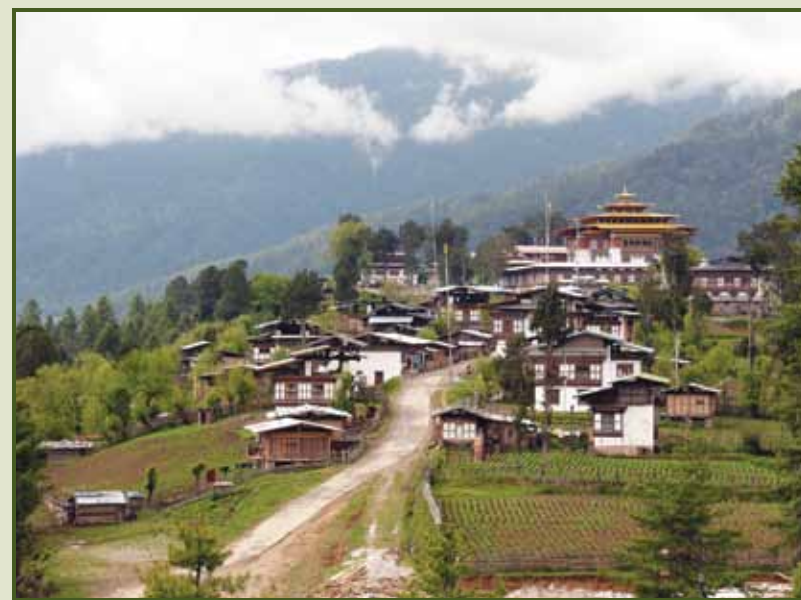
By Dr. George Archibald, ICF Co-founder

Bhutan, a tiny country on the south slope of the Himalayas between China and India, is a wintering ground for approximately 500 Black-necked Cranes. This handsome crane is on the logo of Bhutan's primary non-government conservation organization, the Royal Society for the Preservation of Nature (RSPN). For many years researchers from RSPN have studied the cranes and promoted the welfare of both the cranes and the local people that share valleys.

Power lines are a major hazard to cranes. Fatal collisions sometimes happen when darkness or fog diminish visibility or when cranes are alarmed and fly up quickly. Marking wires with various devices, to make them more obvious, helps. For example, in the early 1970s after wires were marked near the feeding stations and roosting areas for Red-crowned Cranes that live in northern Japan, a population that had stabilized at about 170 birds, started to increase to more than 1,200 today.

For thousands of years, the Black-necked Cranes that wintered in Bhutan did not see electric lights at night. In the Phobjikha Valley where about two-thirds of Bhutan's cranes winter, just eight years ago more than 500 households in the valley depended on light from burning pine wood resin and kerosene. To help the farmers, from 2003 to 2005, RSPN provided 198 homes and 22 institutions with solar light. But a stronger power source was needed. Bhutan's Power Corporation agreed to bring the grid to Phobjikha. But they lacked funds to accommodate the needs of the cranes. Through the generosity of the Austrian government, funds were secured in 2007 to bury the power lines in open areas used by cranes and other birds, and to place other lines along rows of trees and beneath the level of the canopy to eliminate or minimize collisions.

Since times untold the Bhutanese have lived in harmony with a pristine environment. Although Bhutan is developing rapidly, nearly half of their 700,000 people live on less than \$1 a day. Subsistence farming still sustains about two-thirds of the population, and many villages can only be reached by foot. Some years ago agricultural advisors from abroad suggested that the bamboo wetlands of the Phobjikha Valley be drained and planted with potatoes. The government frowned on the proposal. "Phobjikha Valley is the winter home of our treasured cranes." Now in the wake of development, the farmers, RSPN and the government with the kind assistance of Austria, are again standing firm for the welfare of the cranes. The power lines are underground!



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"Once, long ago, Rabbit thought it would be nice to go to the moon to have a look around. But how would he get there?"

"This delightful little book is a comprehensive collection of facts, folklore and tales for all ages about a most remarkable family of birds. Compiled over the past decade by our gifted librarian, Betsy Didrickson, many stories are accompanied by heart-warming illustrations by artist Jay Jocham. It's a treasure."

– George Archibald,
 Co-founder, International Crane Foundation



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A New Book on Cranes is Now Available!

The Quality of Cranes:

A LITTLE BOOK OF CRANE LORE

by Betsy Didrickson

Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins, as in art, with the pretty. It expands through successive stages of the beautiful to values as yet uncaptured by language. The quality of cranes lies, I think, in this higher gamut, as yet beyond the reach of words.

– Aldo Leopold (1886-1948)
A Sand County Almanac



The Quality of Cranes Water Bottle

This beautiful painting was created by artist Jay Jocham exclusively for the cover of ICF's new book, *The Quality of Cranes*. Use this refillable stainless steel 24 oz. water bottle wherever you go. A meditative haiku by 13th century Zen master and poet Dogen, graces the reverse side of the bottle. Quality of Cranes Water Bottle: **\$19.95**

*The world?
 Moonlit drops shaken
 From the crane's bill.*