

The ICF *Bugle*  
*Inspiring a Global Community*

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## ICF AND RAMSAR: A Partnership That Gives Life to Cranes

By Jim Harris, Senior Vice President

Cranes standing with pine trees is a popular and ancient Asian art motif – a testament to the special significance cranes have held for millennia. Cranes and pine trees are both symbols of long life. Yet the life of cranes has little to do with pines. Most cranes cannot perch in trees. Cranes live only where they find the complex and fragile ecosystems that meet their needs for foraging, safety, and raising their young. Over the years, ICF has devoted major efforts to safeguarding the places essential to cranes, primarily wetlands where shallow waters and abundant nutrients lead to great biological productivity. Wetlands often support diverse assemblages of waterbirds and have also nurtured human civilization – the earliest cities grew up near or upon wetlands and to this day wetlands have extraordinary value for people.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (named for the city in Iran where the Convention began in 1971) now has 160 Contracting Parties that have committed to ensuring the conservation and wise use of the Ramsar Sites they designate, in order to maintain the full range of benefits that the *Continued on page 2*



With over 2,000 sites now designated as Wetlands of International Importance, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is having significant impact even for those widespread species that cannot be protected through action at a few key sites. The Demoiselle Crane, for example, has sizable populations across Eurasia from the Ukraine to Inner Mongolia, yet the species is in decline in many regions. Ramsar designation strengthens government commitment and protection for dozens of sites on three continents important to this smallest of the cranes. *Photo by Zhang Gangfang*

wetlands can provide for people (e.g., livelihoods, health, culture) and the environment (e.g., support to biodiversity).

While signatories to the Convention take on broad commitments to wetland management and protection, a central requirement is the designation by each country of at least one site as a Wetland of International Importance. Among the criteria for qualifying as a Ramsar site is the regular presence for some part of the year of at least 20,000 waterbirds or at least 1% of the population of a waterbird species or subspecies. Given the charisma of cranes, many Ramsar sites have been designated in large part for their significance to cranes. Ramsar designation has great significance in making protection efforts for a local place an international obligation. As migratory bird and human needs transcend national borders, so do Ramsar commitments.

We greet with joy and pride Vietnam's nomination and Ramsar's acceptance of Tram Chim National Park as the 2,000th wetland listed under the Convention. As with many sites, protection of Tram Chim is challenging as it lies in the midst of the heavily developed Mekong Delta, and only retains its water through dikes and manipulation of water gates that ICF helped to install two decades ago. For Tram Chim, the challenge has been to mimic natural cycles of flood and recession while avoiding catastrophic fires. Successful wetland management in recent years has led to the recovery of many species at Tram Chim.

Ramsar designation can be critical when countries evaluate major development opportunities. Thus ICF, together with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and other key partners in Mozambique, congratulate the Government of Mozambique for its recent wise decision not to allow the dredging of the lower Zambezi River and Delta for coal barging. The Lower Zambezi River is a key breeding ground for threatened Wattleed Cranes and a tremendous diversity of wildlife. It is also Mozambique's only Ramsar site, and that commitment proved highly significant in the decision against the dredging proposal and in averting other threats as well. ICF's President and CEO, Dr. Richard

Beilfuss, was deeply involved in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment and subsequent communications with the Mozambique Ministry of Environment concerning the need for a holistic, ecosystems approach to Zambezi River basin development. The Ecosystem Approach engages all institutions and stakeholders with an interest in the delta in working together to balance developing the delta with sustaining the ecosystems upon which that development depends.

China's designation of Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve as a Ramsar site has similarly brought international attention to proposals to build a water control structure across the outlet to Poyang Lake, winter home for 98% of the world's Critically Endangered Siberian Crane. Ramsar designation does not guarantee protection of a wetland, but does lead in many cases to far greater care in designing, developing, or sometimes halting projects that could change key components, like hydrology, that make any wetland unique and healthy.

After nearly 40 years of conservation action, ICF recognizes that the link between charismatic birds and the muds and ooze of wetlands works both ways. To have cranes, we must safeguard the fragile and dynamic places cranes need. Yet the cranes are often powerful as symbols and flagships, inspiring protection of major wetlands with immense benefits to other biodiversity and to humanity.

Thus Wattleed Cranes helped provide impetus for establishing Ramsar sites for six magnificent wetlands: the Zambezi Delta, Kafue Flats, Okavango Delta, Bangweulu Swamps, Busanga Swamps, and Liuwa Plain. Likewise, a major accomplishment of the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetland Project, a six-year, \$23-million effort implemented through ICF, was securing protection of the most important breeding, migratory, and wintering sites along the Siberian Crane flyways. Twelve of the 16 project sites have been designated as Ramsar sites including four new sites in Kazakhstan, and the expansion of a Caspian Sea site in Iran. Thus Ramsar designation has become significant at the flyway scale for this long-distance migrant and many other waterbirds.

*Tram Chim National Park in Vietnam has been designated the 2,000th Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. ICF has worked intensively at Tram Chim since the late 1980s, helping to restore natural hydrological cycles and vegetation to what is now the largest national park for wetlands in Southeast Asia and critical habitat for the threatened Sarus Crane. Photo by Tran Triet*

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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.

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Bugle comments or questions?  
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## Notes from the President

### Lessons from the Proposed Sandhill Crane Hunt in Wisconsin



By Rich Beilfuss

This past February, Wisconsin legislators introduced an assembly bill that would authorize the hunting of Sandhill Cranes in Wisconsin. The bill was defended as a necessary measure to reduce crop depredation caused by Sandhill Cranes, and to enable farmers to apply for wildlife damage abatement assistance and claim payments. News of the proposed crane hunt spread rapidly in Wisconsin, and ultimately became a national news story. ICF was interviewed more than 20 times in the weeks that followed, appeared on Wisconsin Public Radio, and our social media team was abuzz with Facebook, Twitter, and web site postings.

No action was taken on the bill by the time the legislative session ended, and any future Sandhill hunt in Wisconsin will require new legislation. Nonetheless, hunting of the eastern Sandhill Crane population was approved in Kentucky, is under consideration in several other states, and will no doubt be proposed again for Wisconsin in the future.

We learned many valuable lessons from the stir that was created by the proposed hunting of Sandhills in our own backyard. These lessons will guide us as we seek to engage most effectively on this issue with our members and our broader community of hunters, farmers, environmentalists, and all concerned citizens.

Legislators and other decision makers must be fully informed about the important work ICF is doing to solve crop depredation by Sandhill Cranes. ICF played a key role in developing a chemical deterrent (Avipel) that offers a much better alternative for reducing crop damage than a limited crane hunt could ever achieve. The total area that farmers have chosen to treat has grown every year since we first received permission to deploy the technique from the U.S. EPA in 2006, and more than 76,000 acres of corn in Wisconsin were successfully treated in 2011.

We are increasingly aware of serious concerns about the impact of Sandhill Crane hunting. We know that hunting, if not properly controlled, can harm crane populations. We are painfully aware of how hunting led to the demise of the western and central Asian populations of Endangered Siberian Cranes. We believe that hunting of the Mid-Continent population of Sandhill Cranes in Ontario and Minnesota has likely led to overharvest of the Greater Sandhills that nest on the northeastern prairies. We are concerned that hunting of the Eastern Population of Sandhill Cranes could limit their dispersal and re-colonization of the northeastern United States. We are worried about how states will limit accidental shooting of reintroduced, endangered Whooping Cranes if more widespread hunting is approved throughout the eastern migratory route shared by Sandhill and Whooping Cranes. And we have argued that proposed harvest rates for the Eastern Population are too high. Although their population has expanded rapidly over the 60+ years since Aldo Leopold penned his requiem for the species in *Marshland Elegy*, Sandhills do not share the rapid reproduction rates typical of game bird species and

must be carefully managed to avoid the over-harvest of long-lived adults.

Finally, ICF has long maintained three strong positions relative to crane hunting, which are deeply aligned with our organizational mission and desired conservation impact:

- Cranes need help from everyone – including hunters, wildlife enthusiasts, farmers, and other landowners – especially to conserve the wetlands on which cranes and other waterbirds depend for their survival.
- Any decisions about hunting should be based on the best scientific information available.
- It is crucial for individuals to participate in public discussions on the subject. As experts in crane biology and as managers of a long-term database on an eastern U.S. Sandhill Crane population, our role is to provide information and assessment relevant to issues, such as hunting and crop damage, considered by states as they make management decisions on Sandhill Cranes.

We recognize that these positions do not reflect the strong emotional and spiritual connection many of us feel towards cranes. Cranes have drawn us together as a family. Around the world, cranes have an ethereal, almost transcendent value. Red-crowned Cranes, Sarus Cranes, Brolgas, and Black-necked Cranes are revered in their regions' cultures. Black Crowned, Grey Crowned, and Blue Cranes are honored as national birds in Nigeria, Uganda, and South Africa, respectively. And every year, tens of thousands of tourists flock to the Platte River in Nebraska, Bosque del Apache in New Mexico, and other locations to experience spectacular congregations of Sandhill Cranes.

ICF could adopt a position against Sandhill hunting based on these emotional and spiritual values, which do matter. However, the benefit of ICF's approach to the issue of crane hunting is that we can do more for crane and wetland conservation by maintaining our balanced position, especially in the long-run, than we can accomplish by directly opposing hunting at this time. Inclusiveness is vital to achieving our mission, as polarization of ideas and values is often divisive and counterproductive. As a result of our approach ICF has, for example, direct working relationships with many farmers in many parts of the world, all of whom share a commitment to a future for cranes and wetlands on their lands, but also want to feel ICF is doing all we can to help them.

We live in a complex world, and there is no easy solution, no simple statement that will light the way forward. ICF is located in rural Wisconsin, and our community is steeped in Wisconsin's rich conservation traditions, including hunting. I hope we can maintain the difficult but very real balance that allows ICF to continue to draw together environmentalists, hunters, farmers, and all who care deeply about the land.

# Conserving Wintering Sandhill Cranes and their Habitats in California

By Gary Ivey, Western Crane Conservation Manager

A major threat to the Sandhill Cranes who migrate along North America's Pacific rim states appears to be loss of winter habitat to development and expansion of crop types that are incompatible with the way Sandhills use agricultural landscapes. Because Pacific Flyway cranes only use a few discreet wintering sites, it is important to maintain quality crane habitat in these areas. California is host to wintering populations of both Greater Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*) and Lesser Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis canadensis*), with both subspecies identified by the state for conservation action. Because Greater Sandhill Cranes have threatened status, land development that destroys crane habitat cannot be done without mitigation measures. To develop effective mitigation measures, it is important to understand how cranes use their winter landscapes.

My study, a partnership between ICF, Oregon State University and USGS's Western Ecological Research Center, compared how the two Sandhill Crane subspecies moved around and used sites and croplands in the Sacramento Delta region of central California. Though both Greater and Lessers returned to winter in the Delta year-to-year, the Greater showed much stronger fidelity to specific areas and made significantly shorter flights between roost and foraging areas (averaging 2.1km while Lessers averaged 5.0km). In contrast, 43% of the Lesser Sandhill Cranes in the study used at least two separate wintering areas. The faithfulness of Greater to roost sites in the Delta indicates that conservation planning should be targeted at maintaining and managing for adequate resources around their traditional roosts, and that any mitigation done by developers should occur as close as possible to where habitat is lost. This study also underscores that the scale of effective conservation measures can differ by subspecies. We recommend that conservation activities consider all habitats within 5 km of a known Greater Sandhill Crane roost. This radius encompasses 90% of the foraging flights made by California

wintering Greater. However, for the Lesser Sandhill Cranes in this area, a conservation radius of 10 km would be needed to encompass over 90% of their foraging flights.

Attention also needs to be paid to changing agricultural practices that impact the availability of the wintering Sandhill Cranes' favorite foods. While most crane roost sites were on protected wildlife refuges and natural areas, much of their feeding is done on adjacent private farmlands. Cranes used both seasonally flooded wetlands and flooded crop fields. Though seasonal wetlands provide a greater diversity of foods to cranes than flooded croplands, flooded croplands are a more likely option for building crane habitat into a working farm. As with their movements, there were also differences in how the Greater and Lesser Sandhill Cranes used the various croplands and other habitat types available in the landscapes surrounding their roost sites. The Greater Sandhill Cranes focused on cereal grains (primarily corn and rice) while Lessers focused on corn, even where corn was much further from roost sites than rice. The Lessers also used alfalfa fields significantly more than the Greater. The cranes were never located in orchards, vineyards, blueberry fields, turf farms, or nursery croplands even though these crops were common in the study area. These crops which do not provide good habitat for the cranes are increasing within the landscape of the Delta, and this is cause for concern.

This study of how the two subspecies of Sandhill Cranes are using their winter landscape helps wildlife managers who are working with farmers. Managers could provide incentives for crane-friendly practices such as production of grain crops, reduced or delayed tilling of waste grain into the soil, flooding of grain fields, and providing irrigation to some crop types to increase crane use. Working with farmers to encourage crane-friendly agriculture is crucial to keeping crane populations healthy in this wintering landscape.



Cranes roosting in flooded corn field in the Delta. Photo by Caroline Herziger



Stone Lakes NWR roost site and recent habitat loss (housing) from expansion of the City of Elk Grove. Photo by Gary Ivey

## A FIRE FOR Whooping Cranes

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. —William Butler Yeats

Down to fewer than 20 birds in the 1940s, the Whooping Crane represents one of conservation's greatest success stories. But despite enormous efforts and great accomplishments to achieve security for this species, nearly three-quarters of a century later Whooping Cranes remain endangered. Just 600 or so remain in the wild and in captivity.

While efforts to save this species continue to expand, so do the threats along the cranes' annual migration routes to and from wintering grounds in the southern United States. From overhead power lines to disappearing habitat, Whooping Cranes continue to face growing and new impediments, including increasing incidents of shooting and harassment.

To conserve Whooping Cranes and the ecosystems on which they depend, the International Crane Foundation (ICF), along with diverse partners, continues its major commitment to two vital conservation programs: breeding and reintroducing Whooping Cranes along the eastern flyway from the upper Midwest to southeastern states, and protecting essential wintering habitat in Texas for the world's last self-sustaining population.

In the eastern flyway, ICF has conducted extensive field research to understand how biting black flies are causing nest abandonment and to evaluate the Whooping Crane's complex habitat needs. Based on results from that work, last summer ICF moved its Whooping Crane release location from Necedah National Wildlife Refuge to Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. Many of the cranes released in 2011 have already returned to the upper Midwest this season, and the Wisconsin wild Whooping Cranes' nesting season has already begun. Captive breeding efforts are ongoing at ICF's headquarters with plans to rear and directly release 6 to 8 young cranes this fall, adding to the over 100 birds that now comprise the reintroduced population.

In Texas, at the close of 2011, ICF's Dr. Liz Smith and I provided data and expert testimony in a court case examining whether or not Whooping Cranes have been harmed by the state's over-allocation of fresh water permits in the Guadalupe River watershed. A verdict in this monumental case – seeking sustainable water management that balances needs of humans and wildlife – is anticipated this summer. A complete winter count of Whooping Cranes in the affected flock was not possible, but transect flights estimated lower than usual numbers at the Refuge. The unseasonably warm winter, following the worst drought in Texas history, seemed to encourage the birds to select alternate wetlands, and cranes were observed wintering in Oklahoma, Kansas, and even as far north as Nebraska. ICF is a partner in monitoring these birds as



Photo by Joel Sartore

they migrate to breeding grounds in Canada, and we continue research and direct actions to help the cranes and their coastal habitats.

Adding to the challenges of parched habitat and a complex reintroduction, this past winter included more troubling incidents of Whooping Cranes being shot – at least seven birds have now been killed during the past two years in Indiana, Georgia, and Alabama. To address these concerns, ICF is dramatically expanding our education and outreach efforts for Whooping Cranes. We are partnering with Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education to develop and launch an interactive, multimedia educational initiative targeting grades 4-8, families, hunters and the general public across the central and eastern flyways. Delivered live in classrooms, over the Internet and through mobile applications, the program will include teacher trainings and workshops; school, community and stakeholder presentations; and assessment and data-gathering to gauge users' pre- and post-knowledge and attitudes toward Whooping Cranes and wetlands. The goal of these efforts is to increase participant awareness, understanding and appreciation for Whooping Cranes – their beauty, history, threats, and opportunities for conservation – and to reduce obstacles for their recovery.

With your help, we seek to fuel an educational "fire" for these birds, to spread awareness and concern across their flyways, to inspire and inform citizens and champions to actively protect the endangered Whooping Crane and the wetlands on which they – and so many species – depend. Because of your generosity, ICF is able to address challenges for Whooping Cranes through strong field conservation programs and now a major educational initiative that will help many more people make meaningful differences for North America's tallest bird.

Advancing this work will be possible with your continued support. We ask you to consider making a special gift of any amount – \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500 – to help in the continued recovery and protection of Whooping Cranes. Please use the enclosed envelope to make a gift today, and thank you for your help to ICF and the cranes.

Warm wishes always,

George Archibald  
Co-founder, Senior Conservationist

**P.S.** – For a gift of \$1,000 or more, we will recognize you as a **Whooper Keeper**, and as a token of our thanks, provide a recognition plaque bearing your special message affixed to a bench in ICF's celebrated Whooping Crane exhibit on our campus in Wisconsin. Please use the enclosed envelope to craft your inscription.

Participate in the 2012 Bird-a-thon!



See enclosed envelope for details or visit:  
[www.savingcranes.org/bird-a-thon.html](http://www.savingcranes.org/bird-a-thon.html)



# Lights, Camera...Action!

**I**CF is launching a new Crane Chick Cam this spring! The web cam will provide a behind-the-scenes look into the lives of Whooping Crane chicks as they are raised at our facility in Baraboo for reintroduction into the wild. The web cam will follow our Whooping Crane chicks as they are cared for by costumed staff at ICF's Chick Rearing

Facility. We will first view the young cranes in their runs, where they are kept warm and safe with heat lamps and a brood model to snuggle up to for security. As the chicks get older, we will follow the chicks to their outdoor enclosure, or "chick yard," where they strengthen their leg and flight muscles, learn about wetlands, and maybe even encounter their first grasshopper or two! These months of dedication prepare the chicks for release on the wetlands of central Wisconsin, to join other cranes through our Direct Autumn Release (DAR) program.

We have been working through the winter with local contractors to design and install the video system, which integrates with Ustream.com and our website to bring this exclusive video to you. We expect our first chicks to hatch by late May, but of course the chicks will determine this schedule for us, so check in often for updates. Thanks to the Antonia Foundation's support over the past six years, ICF has been able to enhance our technology infrastructure at our campus to benefit both crane reintroduction science and outreach through video. We look forward to sharing this next chapter with you!

How do we raise Whooping Cranes for reintroduction? We dress for success! Researchers raising young Whooping Cranes at ICF wear full-length crane costumes to disguise the human form and use crane hand puppets to feed and interact with the chicks. Illustration by Darcy Love

Watch us live on the web - [www.cranechickcam.org](http://www.cranechickcam.org)

## Dress for Success

**"Hey Mom!"** Whooping Crane chicks bond with the first big object they see after they hatch. This is how we dress to make sure our captive-reared chicks know they are Whooping Cranes when they are released into the wild. Remember...no talking!

Adult Whooping Cranes have a red, white and black pattern on their heads, and so do our hand puppets. This will help the chicks recognize other Whooping Cranes in the wild.

Parent Whooping Cranes make contact calls to keep their chicks close by. We play the same calls with an Mp3 player hidden in a secret pocket of the costume.

A screened window hides our faces from the chicks. We can see out, but the chicks can't see in!

We cover ourselves from head to toe with a loose white costume so chicks can't see the person inside.

Black "wingtips" are just like the primary feathers of adult Whooping Cranes.

Sturdy boots are needed for trudging around in marshes.

Watch us live on the web - [www.cranechickcam.org](http://www.cranechickcam.org)

## Escape to Africa with George Archibald!



January 20 – February 5, 2013

**J**oin ICF Co-founder George Archibald on an expedition to South Africa and Botswana to experience both the Big Five (elephant, rhino, buffalo, lion, leopard) and the Big Three (Blue, Wattled and Grey Crowned Cranes) and the glorious wild flowers of the southern African summer. There will be four major stops: a big game park, the grasslands of the Karoo, Cape Town in South Africa and the Okavango Delta in Botswana. For information contact Jen Stewart at 608-356-9462 ext. 119 or email: [info@savingcranes.org](mailto:info@savingcranes.org).



### NEW GIFT SHOP ITEM!



## Crane Duet

What happens when 15 of the world's most charismatic birds meet the memory game Concentration?

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~ A Day with the Prairie, An Evening with the Cranes – June 23, 2012 ~

# BLOOM!

The Story of Ecosystem Restoration at the International Crane Foundation

Photography Exhibit

Every week from April to September there are, on the average, ten wild plants coming into first bloom. In June as many as a dozen species may burst their buds on a single day. No man can heed all of these anniversaries; no man can ignore all of them.

– Aldo Leopold, Prairie Birthday, A Sand County Almanac



**P**rofessional photographer, Tom Lynn, has been photographing acres of magnificent native plants and panoramas at ICF since May of last year. He is a storyteller with a lens — helping us tell the story of ICF's connection to ecosystem restoration — efforts that began back in 1979 to restore prairie, savanna, wetland, and woodland communities at our headquarters site in Wisconsin. It is a landscape perched near the terminal moraine of the last glaciation where decades of arduous work have resulted in over 100 acres of native beauty.



Tom's captivating photos will be on exhibit at ICF's Donnelley Family Education Center from June 23 to October 31, 2012. Join us for the official opening on Saturday June 23rd from 3:00 to 3:30. View the exhibit, meet Tom, and walk our beautiful trails. And then, after a day with the prairie – you can spend an "Evening with the Cranes!" See article at right for information about purchasing tickets for this very special evening event.

Tom Lynn is an award-winning staff photographer for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. He has also been featured in many internationally recognized publications, including: National Geographic, New York Times, Newsweek, TIME, and Sports Illustrated.



**An Evening with the Cranes** will be held at ICF's headquarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin from 5:00 to 8:00 pm on Saturday, June 23, 2012.

Inspired by the regions where cranes live, guests can expect delicious food and wine pairings created by The Little Village Café in Baraboo. Ignite your senses with exotic flavors and crane calls. During the evening you will have the opportunity to meet ICF Co-founder Dr. George Archibald, ICF scientists, educators, and of course, cranes!

Purchase tickets for this special event: **\$60 per single/\$100 per couple.**



As a special thank you for your support, all attendees to An Evening with the Cranes receive free admission to our site both Saturday, June 23rd and Sunday, June 24th, 2012!

For more information or to purchase tickets by phone please call 608-356-9462 ext. 121, or purchase online at [www.craneshop.org](http://www.craneshop.org). This event is rain or shine. All proceeds benefit ICF's global conservation programs.



Photos by Christina Beam



## International Crane Foundation

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

*Address Service Requested*



# Ready for the Nineteenth Journey North

*By Su Liying, ICF Research Associate*

**W**ithin a flock of Siberian Cranes at Dahuchi, a sub-lake of Poyang Lake in China, one crane had a blue band on her right leg. After several tries during misty February weather, photographer Yu Huigong finally got pictures that show the number “08” clearly on the band.



The excited photographer and birder passed the news to friends and posted the picture on the Internet. These days, more and more Chinese photographers post gorgeous bird photographs online. People commented on the photo – who banded the crane, and where? Nikolai Germogenov at the Institute of Biological Problems of Cryolithozone in Yakutia (northeast Siberia) replied to the query. The Institute had banded this crane as a chick on the tundra in 1993 – nearly 19 years ago. People rejoiced to see the bird healthy with her mate and chick after so many years. This is the 19th trip she has made to Poyang Lake from the tundra and each trip she has flown nearly 3,000 miles!

Every migration, the critically endangered Siberian Crane crosses eastern China where human pressures on wetlands are intense. ICF has long been committed to the conservation of these vital stopover locations. We are grateful to the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation for a generous three-year grant that will allow us to expand activities on behalf of Siberian and other cranes and their wetland habitats. This new funding marks major growth in our China program, which is in turn a significant priority of ICF's newly adopted Strategic Plan. Please look to future issues of *The ICF Bugle* and our website for updates on China, and news on the ICF Strategic Plan.