

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

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# Securing Grey Crowned Cranes in Africa

By *Kerryn Morrison, African Crane Conservation  
Program Manager*

## A Single Species Action Plan to Secure Grey Crowned Cranes

**E**ndangered Grey Crowned Cranes have declined by around 80% across their range over the past 45 years (see May 2013 issue of *The ICF Bugle*). Responding to its status as the world's fastest declining crane species, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) prioritized the Grey Crowned Crane for conservation action.

AEWA is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme under the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species. AEWA brings together countries and the wider conservation community to establish coordinated conservation and management approaches for threatened waterbird species and their habitats across the African-Eurasian region. Responding to an invitation from AEWA, the International Crane Foundation / Endangered Wildlife Trust (ICF/EWT) Partnership organized a *Single Species Action Planning Workshop for the Conservation of the Grey Crowned Crane* in Musanze, northern Rwanda in September.

*Continued on page 2*

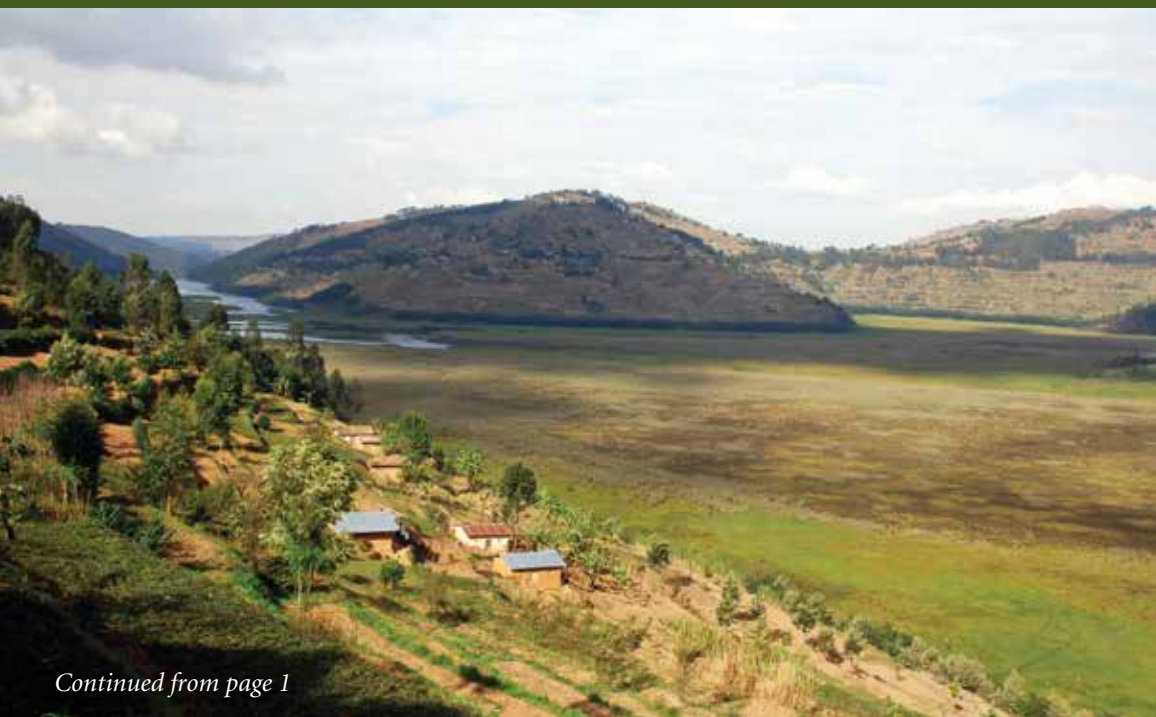


*The Grey Crowned Crane – for many an enduring symbol of the African wilds – has declined more rapidly than any other crane species. Working with the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, the International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust Partnership organized an Action Planning Workshop for this endangered species. We brought together 31 government representatives and specialists in northern Rwanda, as the beginning of a long-term process to recover this species and its wetlands. Photo by Sergey Dereliev*



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Events**  
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*Rugezi Marsh, Rwanda's largest wetland and most important habitat for Grey Crowned Cranes, has been strictly protected – note the fence of dark trees planted along its borders. Yet the wetland has no protected buffers and its catchment is intensively used by people and increasingly degraded. Such challenges for wetland management occur in all the range states for the species. Those attending the Single Species Action Planning Workshop visited Rugezi to better understand conservation needs and ICF's demonstration activities for research, education, and alternative livelihoods, all supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.*



*This nursery, developed by Maurice Wanjala and the Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group, has provided over a million seedlings to restore riverine corridors important to Grey Crowned Cranes in western Kenya. ICF is working to help Maurice expand his efforts to protect and restore wetlands.*

## You Can Help!

- Talk to your local zoo about participating in a Grey or Black Crowned Crane captive sustainability program.
- Ask your local zoo not to buy wild caught cranes or cranes of unknown origin.
- Encourage your school to “twin” with a school in rural Africa within crane habitat. This could include raising money for a wildlife club at an African school, collecting and sending environment educational resources across to the school, or swapping crane and wetland artwork.
- Collect unused binoculars that can be used by community members involved with crane conservation to support their monitoring efforts in Africa.

*For more information on any of the above, please email: [info@savingcranes.org](mailto:info@savingcranes.org)*

The Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) hosted the workshop for 31 participants from 9 of the 15 countries in East and Southern Africa where the cranes occur. Each country summarized the current situation and key threats for the cranes, providing the information needed for the development of a conservation plan for the species. Although varying in relative significance within countries, these threats were present in each of the countries:

- loss and degradation of suitable wetlands for nesting, and of the surrounding catchment for foraging
- illegal trade in cranes for local and international captive markets
- human disturbance primarily through wetland-based agriculture and livestock herding
- poisoning, in an attempt to reduce the damage that cranes can cause to agricultural crops
- collisions with overhead power lines and electrocutions

We worked together to develop a preliminary model of the species' population dynamics, a process which revealed the importance to stabilize populations of the percentage of adult pairs breeding, the number of offspring produced and adult mortality within the population. We prepared an outline and participatory process for developing an action plan. We hope to have the action plan endorsed at the AEWA Meeting of the Parties meeting in 2015. Once ratified, the plan will become binding on member countries. However, it is only through a committed, multi-stakeholder and coordinated approach that the future of Grey Crowned Cranes in Africa can be assured. AEWA too, will continue to support the implementation and evaluation stages of this ten-year process, with an inter-governmental working group guiding the effort.

*Thank you to the Swiss Federation Federal Office of the Environment FOEN, the Dohmen Family Foundation, The Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU) and Kölner Zoo for their support of this workshop.*

## Grey Crowned Crane Conservation in Kenya

As human populations increase, the competition for space and suitable agricultural land intensifies. Due to the degradation and transformation of habitat, the pressures on wildlife have greatly increased over the last few decades, threatening a large number of species with potential extinction. In East Africa, it is the rate and speed of transformation of the landscapes that is so alarming. The western parts of Kenya epitomize the situation. As recently as the 1970's the hills were completely covered by forests, with more lions than roads. Now, grassland and exotic eucalyptus trees dominate the parts of the landscape not yet covered by crops. Wetlands are being planted to eucalyptus to provide poles for supplying electricity to rural villages and homesteads, while commercial sugar cane is fast becoming the primary agricultural crop in the area. Unlike maize or small grains, sugar cane fields have very little value for wildlife.

This same area holds a significant population of Grey Crowned Cranes. They have lived in harmony with subsistence agricultural practices for decades, but now, suitable wetland breeding habitat is disappearing on a monthly basis. The ICF/EWT Partnership is working together with Maurice Wanjala and the Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group.

*Most crane chicks in Rwanda are taken from the wild and sold to restaurants, hotels, and private homes within the country, where they live under poor conditions. The Rwandan Government, working with a diverse team of conservationists, has launched a comprehensive program to stop illegal trade and to release captive cranes that are suitable for life in the wild.*

Maurice founded the Conservation Group out of deep concern over the transformation he was seeing in the Kipsaina district, and the decline in Grey Crowned Cranes, Sitatunga (swamp-dwelling antelope) and DeBrazza monkeys. Focused primarily around Saiwa Swamp National Park in the Trans Nzoia County, but also working in five additional counties in the western parts of Kenya, Maurice and his team have restored 6 km of the Saiwa Wetland. They have also managed a native tree nursery that has produced over one million seedlings since 2000, grown to restore the riverine forest vegetation, and implemented an education and awareness programme across ten counties.

As a real conservation hero and champion for cranes and wetlands in Kenya, Maurice will work with the ICF/EWT Partnership to secure at least three wetland complexes vital to cranes and people. Kenya Wildlife Services are in the process of finalizing an Act that will allow for the development of Community Conservation Areas. These areas will form part of the country's protected area network, managed in collaboration with local communities. Our strategy for cranes in Kenya involves working collaboratively and legally securing areas important to cranes within landscapes, while also providing important benefits to people.



*Maurice Wanjala has worked with dozens of schools near crane wetlands of western Kenya, teaching students about the values of wetlands and recruiting them (and their teachers) to help protect cranes and their nests. Some students have been trained to help with crane counting in their local area.*

## ICF Annual Report is Now Available

The International Crane Foundation works worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend. ICF conducts its business in an open and transparent manner by performing annual, independent audits and by making our financial statements readily available. Our



most recent Annual Report, covering fiscal period April 2012 to March 2013 with our program highlights and financial performance, is now available for your review.

You may view and download the pdf document at [www.savingcranes.org/annual-report.html](http://www.savingcranes.org/annual-report.html). If you would prefer we send you a print copy through the mail, please call (608) 356-9462 or email [info@savingcranes.org](mailto:info@savingcranes.org).

# Notes from the President

Inspiring Conservation Through the Connection Between People and Cranes



By Rich Beilfuss

Midway along our journey from New Delhi to Bharatpur, we pulled our bus off the highway and leapt out to scan for birds and other things that might flash in our binoculars and cameras. At first glance, these intensively farmed lands, flush with people everywhere, didn't seem a good prospect for wildlife viewing. But as the small wetlands dotting this landscape came deeper into focus, species after species appeared – a wealth of ducks, cormorants, ibises, spoonbills, storks, herons, kingfishers, and shorebirds. A herd of seven Nilgai, the largest antelope in Asia, grazed peacefully on an adjacent pasture. And then, as if following some cosmic cue, a pair of Sarus Cranes flew in and landed, with an enchanting little dance, in the center of our scene. Welcome to the *SarusScape*!



Children take flight in celebration of Black-necked Cranes.

This fall I had the pleasure of guiding a terrific group of ICF members and supporters on a tour of Bhutan and India to share in the remarkable cultural connections between people and cranes. Bhutan, best known as the small Himalayan kingdom where “Gross National Happiness” is the measure of prosperity, is winter home to about 500 Black-necked Cranes. Every year in November since 1998, when ICF helped start a new tradition, the Bhutanese celebrate the return of their cranes from breeding grounds in Tibet with a colorful festival on temple grounds that overlook the crane landscape below. Adorned in crane costumes, Bhutanese school children of all ages celebrate the life of cranes through song, dance, and drama. We laughed as young boys – in one of those universal experiences that transcend all cultures – blushed through crane dances with their graceful female counterparts. The temple walls were lined with children's paintings, each depicting the importance of protecting cranes, and the great benefits – healthy water, healthy wetlands, healthy communities – that come with that protection. In a country that may be as

pristine as any found on this earth, the elegant cranes are a poignant symbol for preserving sacred places.

It was hard to imagine a starker contrast when our intrepid group of craniacs traveled from Bhutan to India, often described as an “assault on the senses” for its exotic flavors and colors, prostrating Sadhus, and increasingly, its pollution. But the passion for cranes, and their importance for landscape-level conservation, is every bit as powerful in India, and the stakes are much higher. The *SarusScape* – home to the world's stronghold of threatened Sarus Cranes – supports some of the richest biodiversity and highest human densities of any agricultural landscape in the world. ICF SarusScape Director, Dr. K.S. Gopi Sundar, is

working with local communities to safeguard traditional agricultural practices and village uses of wetlands that sustain many resident and migratory birds as a key part of a regional conservation strategy. Sarus Cranes, venerated in Hindu culture much as their Black-necked cousins are in the Buddhist culture of Bhutan, are the flagship species for these small wetlands. The strong desire to save Sarus Cranes in this landscape presents a wonderful opportunity to trace the public mind from the cranes to their wetlands to the watersheds that sustain them both.

As a small conservation organization with a global mission, we often face the challenge of deciding how best to prioritize and invest scarce conservation dollars for threatened cranes. Our trip showcased those diverse opportunities – preserving unspoiled wetlands of Bhutan, or managing the rich agricultural wetlands of India. Both reap great rewards. I hope you will join us on a future trip to explore the deep cultural bonds between people and cranes, and the great acts they inspire!

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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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# Calling All Bird Enthusiasts!

No matter your skill level, you can participate in the ICF Bird-a-thon and help support the programs that protect cranes and the habitats that they, and a multitude of additional species, depend upon. There are several ways to be part of the fun:

- Bird on your own or assemble a team. Identify species for as long as you wish within one 24-hour period between April 1st and June 30th.
- Make a flat-rate gift toward ICF's Bird-a-thon.
- Support ICF's Co-founder, Dr. George Archibald, and the *Craniac Team* out in the field by pledging an amount per species spotted. George has high hopes this year!

All donations are tax-deductible and can be made using the envelope included in this issue or at [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org). For more information or to download your Bird-a-thon packet, please visit [www.savingcranes.org/bird-a-thon.html](http://www.savingcranes.org/bird-a-thon.html) or contact Merith Adams at [info@savingcranes.org](mailto:info@savingcranes.org) or (608) 356-9462 ext. 149.



Prizes for the most funds raised and most species observed are generously donated by Eagle Optics. Thank you!

# Membership Matters

At the heart of the International Crane Foundation (ICF), you will find nearly 8,500 members. Our 40th year was monumental, and we'd like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you. Since ICF's humble beginning on a small farm in rural Wisconsin, our dedicated members have been and will continue to be essential to achieving ICF's mission of conserving cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend.

We would like to share this heartfelt note written by a long-time member to ICF's Co-founder and staff:

Dear George Archibald and ICF Staff,

*My name is Catherine Egenberger. I have been a member of the International Crane Foundation since its founding 40 years ago. I was a teenager at the time, with very little income; however, I was so interested in the cranes and your work that I joined in spite of my limited finances and my distance from the ICF (I am from Minnesota).*

*Of course, this turned out to be one of my better decisions at that young age! I don't believe I have ever let my membership expire over the past 40 years. I think I retained my membership even during the ten years I lived out of state (I lived in New York 1982-1992). ICF is the first organization I joined and it is the only membership I have kept continually throughout my life.*

*So it is with great sentiment that I send you my heartfelt congratulations.*

*Congratulations to you and your colleagues for the vision you had over four decades ago. Congratulations to you and all the staff at ICF for the hard work and successes you have had over the past 40 years. You have enriched my life and also the lives of my family members, including my now grown children. Because we live nearly three hours from ICF, we only visit once a year, but we love doing so and we treasure our annual visits. Every time we visit ICF, we leave thinking the world is a little bit better, a little more beautiful.*

*Thank you so much and congratulations on your 40th Anniversary!*

*Catherine Egenberger and family*

As an organization that attributes its success to its flock of members, there is nothing that brings us more joy than knowing that you believe in us, too. Here's to growing together over the next 40 years!

Visit ICF's website at [www.savingcranes.org/membership.html](http://www.savingcranes.org/membership.html) to join the flock, renew your support, or give a gift of membership.

From left: George Archibald (ICF Co-founder), Paul Halverson (Catherine's husband), Colin Halverson (son), Annaliese Halverson (daughter), and Catherine Egenberger.



## 2014 Calendar: Save the Date!

Our world headquarters, located in Baraboo, Wisconsin offers visitors a unique opportunity to see live cranes from five continents, and to learn about the people who dedicate their lives to save them.

### April 15: Visit the Cranes of the World

ICF opens for the season daily from 9 am – 5 pm. Learn about cranes and ICF's global conservation programs on a guided tour with a naturalist. Enjoy exploring our nature trails, visit our unique gift shop, and discover our interactive exhibits.

### May 11: Mom gets in FREE on Mother's Day

Treat your mom to a relaxing day in nature with guided tours and nature hikes. (\$9.50 value)

### June 21: An Evening with the Cranes

ICF will host *An Evening with the Cranes* from 5-8 pm. Enjoy a magical evening with wine, Port Huron Brewing Company, food from local restaurants, live music, and of course – cranes! Tickets: \$50 per person for ICF members and \$60 per person for non-members. Tickets go on sale April 15, 2014.

### August 9: Cranes of the World Festival

With a family focus, ICF's one-day Cranes of the World Festival from 9 am – 5 pm offers guided nature walks and live animal shows with humorist and educator David Stokes.

### September 27: Member Appreciation Day and Annual Member Meeting

Your membership makes a difference for cranes worldwide and we want to thank you for your support. Join us for an event dedicated just to you! Check our website later in the season for an updated schedule of the day's activities.

### October 26: Good Neighbor Day

ICF offers free admission to anyone with a non-perishable food item donation for the Baraboo Food Pantry.

### October 31: ICF Closes for the Season

Stay in touch with ICF year-round. Sign up for our email newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Visit [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org) or call 608-356-9462 to learn more about our on-site and on-line opportunities throughout the year.

Visit [www.baraboo.com](http://www.baraboo.com) to learn more about the area and all it has to offer.



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# Cranes Are My Passport: THE TRAVEL WRITINGS OF GEORGE ARCHIBALD

*Editor's Note:* In amongst the over 1,200 pages on ICF's content-rich website – is an unassuming little gem we like to call, *Travels with George*. George Archibald, ICF's Co-founder, is a world traveler many times over. He is a gregarious sort and a prolific writer. He chronicles each adventure for ICF's online travel blog and shares the photos he snaps along the way. Below is an excerpt from one of last year's entries. We invite you to visit our website to read more of George's travel stories, and sign up for a subscription to forthcoming posts.

## Zambia: Spring 2013

Together with ICF's excellent colleague, Griffin Shanungu of the Zambia Wildlife Authority, I recently had the privilege of spending four days in Lochinvar National Park (LNP) in central Zambia, major habitat for Wattled Cranes. Despite hydrological and invasive plant problems, the plains still supports a plethora of wildlife, and it was our pleasure to drink in the beauty. At 5:30 a.m. in first light, Griffin and I were stationed on an eroded termite mound from which we had a commanding view of a portion of a floodplain created by the Nampongwe River, a tributary that flows north to the Kafue River. Through our telescope we could see the white necks of an army of Wattled Cranes standing in the shallows of their nocturnal roost. We made two counts, the first by Griffin (whose eyesight is much better than mine), and second by me when there was more light. When ten birds were counted, the counter said "crane" and the recorder made a dot in his notebook. Our highest count was 780.

And what an assemblage of wildlife flourished within view. The waters of the Nampongwe were rife with crocodiles and hippo, while herds of about 800 Burchell's zebra and more than 1,000 Kafue lechwe (an endemic aquatic antelope) nosily splashed through the shallows when alarmed. Spur-winged geese, and white-faced tree ducks flew

to feeding areas, an army in white – African spoonbills, marched in close formation through the shallows with splayed beaks probing the mud for food. They were accompanied by hundreds of black egrets that benefited from food brought into view by the spoonbills. But rather than walking with the spoonbills, the egrets flew short distances to keep up with the grand march. Dozens of huge pink-billed pelicans, a pair of noisy fish eagles, and a few Grey Crowned Cranes, perched in nearby trees. It was a wildlife spectacle perhaps enacted for eons before humans walked into the scene. Although humans have recently created problems for the remarkable ecosystem of the Kafue Flats, the actions of man also hold promise for restoration. Consequently, Griffin and I are looking forward to discussing next steps with ICF's President and CEO, Dr. Rich Beilfuss, who has spent many years helping to conserve and restore wetlands in Africa.



*A termite mound makes a good vantage point for observing endangered Wattled Cranes in Zambia. Photo by Griffin Shanungu*

## Travel Opportunity

Registration is now open for George Archibald's camping adventure **Under the Big Sky of Mongolia** in June of 2014. For more information call Jen Stewart at (608) 356-9462 ext.119, or email [travel@savingcranes.org](mailto:travel@savingcranes.org).



To read more *Travels with George* entries, visit our website at: [savingcranes.org/whats-new/category/travels-with-george/](http://savingcranes.org/whats-new/category/travels-with-george/)

While you are there, please take a moment to join ICF's email list to receive our monthly **What's New?** updates, which include our popular *Travels with George* posts.



## International Crane Foundation

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**Bird-a-thon 2014:** See details on page 5

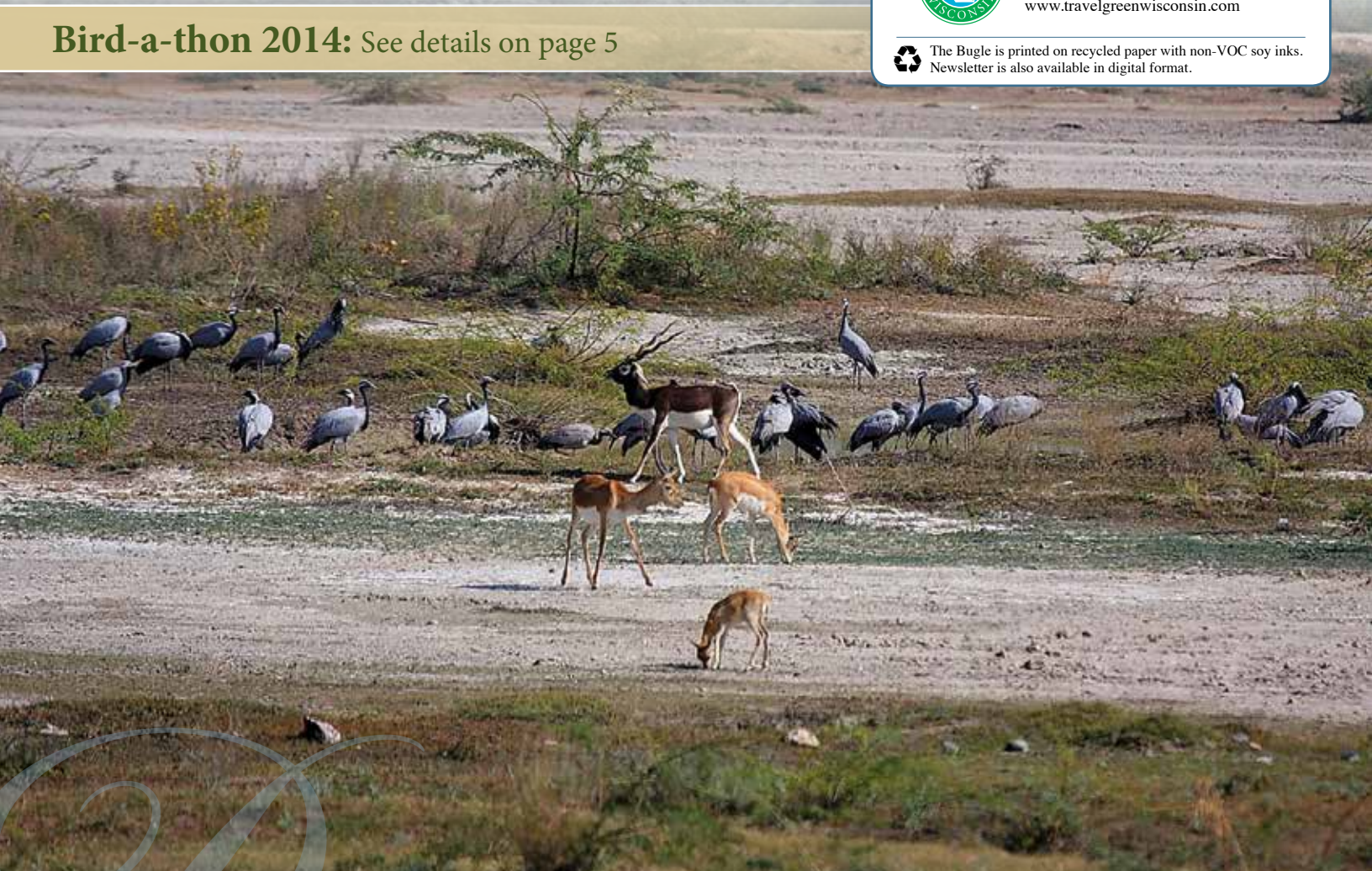


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Newsletter is also available in digital format.



*Demoiselle Cranes and Blackbucks feed beside a village reservoir in Churu district of Rajasthan, India.  
The people of this desert state are famous for the protection they provide for all animals. Photo by K.S. Gopi Sundar*