

The ICF **Bugle**
Inspiring a Global Community

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HARMONIOUS Coexistence in Nepal

By Julie Langenberg, Vice President – Conservation Science

Watching a family of Sarus on a foggy November morning near Lumbini, Nepal, I could only wonder how they were surviving and breeding in a village pond so close to honking trucks, bicycles, and noisy school children. They have clearly evolved strategies for identifying and evading threats in this chaotic landscape, but on this trip to Nepal I was able to see that their survival is also deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual traditions of the local people.

We think of cranes as creatures of the wide open skies, and associate them with large wetland expanses in remote, wild places. But cranes in many parts of the world are creatures of agricultural landscapes that are busy with people and livestock. Nowhere is this truer than in South Asia, home of the tallest crane, the Sarus (Status: Vulnerable), and the focus of ICF's program *SarusScape*. Program staff Gopi Sundar, Swati Kittur, and their team have confirmed through recent surveys that India and Nepal are the remaining stronghold for the Sarus Crane, whose range extends across Southeast Asia and into Australia. Sarus Cranes face increasing challenges

from reduced water flows, power line collisions, and from agricultural development. Studying the Sarus in places like Nepal, where there is much evidence of their ability to co-exist on intensively farmed lands, gives us hope.

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*Sarus in a blooming
mustard field in Nepal.
Photo by K.S. Gopi Sundar*



Grab your gear and go!

Have fun searching for feathered friends during ICF's 27th annual **Bird-a-thon!** Prizes generously donated by Eagle Optics. See page 4 for details.

Lumbini is a particularly special place for the mingling of spiritual beliefs and crane conservation. It is the revered birthplace of Buddha, with a large complex of temples, ponds, and gardens, and is a destination for thousands of pilgrims and tourists from around the world. Since 1992, ICF has been a leaseholder and caretaker for a portion of these sacred lands, the **Lumbini Crane Sanctuary**. The Sanctuary provides a tiny window into the past for this region south of the Himalayan foothills called the Terai, which was once dominated by marshy grasslands and savannahs. Over two decades ago, ICF's President Rich Beilfuss, working with a team led by Nepali colleague Rajendra Suwal, helped create wetlands in the Sanctuary to encourage Sarus to use the area and allow visitors to experience the sacred cranes in their native habitat. In the last decade, political unrest and development pressures have made the future of the Crane Sanctuary uncertain. Gopi, Swati, and I were excited to be able to visit the Sanctuary and talk with Raj and new local partners about its renewal as a place for pilgrims to contemplate the intersection of Buddhism and nature, for local children to learn about the environment, as well as a place to learn about the cranes and their

take continued landscape level studies and creative solutions to secure the future of these ancient lands for both people and Sarus.

importance as an ambassador for their beloved Terai. Research in this area is showing that it is the villagers of the Terai region who are safeguarding the future of Sarus through their traditional ways of life and farming. Traveling the narrow roads between diked rice, mustard, and grain fields, I learned from Kailash Jaiswal, a local farmer's son, hired and trained to be a field associate, how the farmers and the Sarus use this patchwork landscape. Kailash and students from a local university are monitoring populations of waterbirds and have identified larger numbers of birds than expected for both Sarus and several other species of concern such as the Lesser Adjutant Stork. The team is also interviewing villagers about their attitudes towards the birds, and studying how the traditional crop rotation practices, harvest of grasses and use of ponds are compatible with successful crane nesting.

But even in a land as ancient as the birthplace of Buddha, community traditions are changing, and 21st century development (including increased use of agricultural chemicals) is increasing the risks for cranes. It will



Monks and holy men at the birthplace of Buddha.
Photo by Swati Kittur



Sometimes people are just born to be conservation leaders. Venerable Metteyya Sakyaputta, a young Buddhist monk who now lives and works in Lumbini, Nepal, is one of those people. Metteyya grew up in the area, and has memories of planting trees at the Lumbini Crane Sanctuary when he was a boy – with George Archibald wielding the shovel! He has cherished the Crane Sanctuary lands and Sarus ever since, and is very concerned about the future of such a special place. He hopes to work with ICF's team in Nepal and the Lumbini monastic community to reinvigorate the Sanctuary as a place for local children and visitors to explore their connection to nature. He is pictured here with K.S. Gopi Sundar, ICF's program director for *SarusScape*.



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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 Saucy, 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
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Notes from the President



By Rich Beilfuss

Can you imagine seeing seven of the world's 15 species of cranes in one morning? There is only one place on earth where this has ever happened, a most remarkable, and most threatened, place – the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that divides the hostile Korean peninsula.

This past December, ICF Co-founder George Archibald and I guided a wonderful group of ICF Directors and other supporters across East Asia to visit three extraordinary places that are vital to the future of cranes, and so much more. We started our travels at Poyang Lake of China, winter home for almost the entire world population of critically endangered Siberian Cranes as well as large numbers of Oriental Storks, Swan Geese, and many other waterbird species. ICF's Jim Harris, Li Fengshan, Jeb Barzen, James Burnham, and others, have been working for more than a quarter century to maintain natural water level fluctuations – the key to the lake's rich biodiversity and immense productivity – as



Photo by Susan Carnahan

the lake basin undergoes transformative land use changes. We finished our tour in Japan with the spellbinding dances of Red-crowned Cranes -- half the world population lives on the snowy fields of Hokkaido in northern Japan. It was here, more than 40 years ago, that George first studied cranes in the wild.

The middle part of our tour focused on the DMZ, one of the last strongholds for cranes and other wildlife on the Korean peninsula. Cheorwon Basin, part of the "Civilian Controlled Zone" of the DMZ, is renowned for its large concentrations of wintering Red-crowned and White-naped Cranes that feed on waste grain in agricultural fields– one of the very best places to see these two threatened species. Flocks of Hooded Cranes are regularly seen as they pass through on their way to wintering grounds in Japan. But Cheorwon also attracts a smattering of vagrant East Asian cranes that are not regular winter visitors to Korea. And on one chilly morning last December, thanks to our Korean colleague Dr. Lee Kisup, our group had the amazing good fortune of observing Siberian, Eurasian, Demoiselle, and even one of our own Sandhill Cranes feeding among flocks of Red-

Crowned, White-naped, and Hooded Cranes. What a thrill!

The abundance of cranes that grace Cheorwon feed in the midst of one of the bloodiest battlefields of the Korean War. Many thousands died there, and haunting memories of the war are everywhere. Ice Cream Mountain is so named because it was bombed so heavily during the war that the land just "melted" to oblivion. Bloody Ridge and Pork Chop Hill loom just beyond. Nearly every piece of elevated land is cordoned off with barbed wire and mine field signs, and the eerie sounds of artillery fire and detonating bombs echo all day across the plains from nearby military bases that have remained on high alert for six decades of tenuous cease fire.

Today Cheorwon faces a very challenging future, brought by the

opportunities of peace rather than horrors of war. Development pressure is intense and everywhere palpable, as the nearby Seoul metropolitan area and its 24 million inhabitants push northwards. Industrialization and commercial greenhouses are slated to replace the farm fields. North Korea likewise aspires to massive settlement of these lands when reunification is someday achieved. Our Korean colleagues are a passionate voice for their beloved cranes, and we are committed to helping them find a lasting conservation solution for Cheorwon through new alliances with those who own and farm these lands, and land-use policies and practices that are compatible with the cranes and preserve the important memories held in this special place. The DMZ and other critical sites in East Asia are among our very highest priorities worldwide.

From these wondrous crane lands of East Asia to the spectacular concentration of Sandhill Cranes on the Platte River in Nebraska each springtime, our ICF tours explore some of the most amazing wildlife shows on earth. I look forward to the day when we can experience the winter gatherings of cranes together in a united and peaceful Korea.

Double your Donation



Strengthening our Commitment

Photo by John Ford

We are so thankful for the tremendous support received for our 2014/2015 campaign, *Strengthening Our Commitment* that develops our capacity to address the health of the landscapes that sustain not only cranes, but also people and a wealth of biological diversity. While we are very close to our \$600,000 goal, there is still time to be involved and to **double the impact of your gift**. Through commitments from our Board of Directors and several generous supporters, your gift will be matched 100% until we reach our goal.

Please use the envelope in this issue to make a gift today. Together, we can ensure cranes – revered symbols of long life and fidelity – grace healthy wetlands well into the future. Thank you for your continued support.

Dr. Rich Beilfuss
President & CEO

WAYS TO GIVE

Call: (608)356-9462 ext. 103

Donate at: www.savingcranes.org/donateonline.php

Or, use the envelope in this issue!

Planet of Cranes Sweatshirt

Our new sweatshirt design was created to celebrate the beauty and diversity of the crane family. Get yours today and show the world how much you care about a secure planet for cranes. 100% Cotton, pigment dyed sweatshirt is a boxy style with side vents at the bottom. The ICF logo is on the sleeve. Available in adult sizes Small – XXLarge. The color is washed plum. **Price:** \$64.99. Shop online at www.craneshop.org, email: giftshop@savingcranes.org, or call (608) 356-9462 ext. 135.



ICF Bird-a-thon

Put your binoculars and skills to the test by signing up for our 27th annual Bird-a-thon. Gather a team of one or more and hit the outdoors anywhere in the world for as long or short as you like within any 24-hour period between April 1 and June 30, 2015. Remember to ask your family, friends, and co-workers to support your efforts for the benefit of crane conservation. Funds raised strengthen community-based programs to reduce threats and restore some of the world's most valuable and ecologically rich crane landscapes. Anyone who pledges \$25 or more to your bird-a-thon will receive an ICF membership!

ICF Co-founder George Archibald and his team, *The Craniacs*, will be out in full-force this spring. You can support them in their mission to spot the most birds and raise the most dollars by making a gift with the enclosed envelope, or by making a gift online at www.savingcranes.org. For more information about how to participate in the Bird-a-thon, you may visit www.savingcranes.org/bird-a-thon.html, or contact Merith Adams at (608) 356-9462 ext. 149 or info@savingcranes.org. Happy Birding!



Conservation Strategy for the World's Cranes

By Kerry Morrison

The Wetlands International – IUCN SSC Crane Specialist Group currently has over 250 members from 50 countries. We are now updating the Crane Action Plan developed twenty years ago. The final Crane Conservation Strategy will include updates on all 15 crane species, updated distribution maps, information on each of the key threats to cranes and an action plan to address these threats.

In November of 2014, 18 participants from thirteen countries (four continents) met at Weltvogelpark Walsrode in Germany. We developed the vision and goals for the Crane Conservation Strategy, and initiated development of objectives and actions for each of the major threats. We experienced an incredible three days of discussions toward understanding the threats cranes face around the world. ICF's Jim Harris and Claire Mirande, who serve as Chair and Program Officer respectively for the Crane Specialist Group, facilitated the workshop.



The Steering Committee and members of the Crane Specialist Group gather at Weltvogelpark Walsrode in Germany, the largest bird park in the world. Our deep appreciation to Kris Carrein, Geer Scheres and Weltvogelpark for sponsoring the workshop and international travel for six participants, and for long-term commitment to crane conservation.

Photo by Simone Ostermann.

Calling All Craniacs to Our 2015 Events



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.

Volunteer Naturalist Trainings

Saturday, March 21 and Friday, March 27

Have you ever considered volunteering with ICF? Our volunteer naturalists help share the story of ICF with visitors at our headquarters. If you are interested, volunteers are required to complete a formal training. For more information about ICF's volunteer opportunities or to register for the training, please contact Cully Shelton at info@savingcranes.org.

ICF Opens for the Season!

Wednesday, April 15

Daily from 9 am – 5 pm. Learn about cranes and ICF's conservation programs on a guided tour. Enjoy exploring our trails and discover our interactive exhibits.

40th Annual Midwest Crane Count

Saturday, April 18

Join over 2,000 volunteers spanning the upper Midwest for the 2015 Annual Midwest Crane Count as we monitor the return of Sandhill and Whooping Cranes to their northern breeding grounds. Visit www.cranecount.org for more information.



Mother's Day at ICF

Sunday, May 10

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).

An Evening with the Cranes

Saturday, June 20

Enjoy a magical evening with refreshments and food from local restaurants, live music, and of course – cranes! Tickets will be available for purchase on-line beginning 4/15/15.

Cranes of the World Festival

Saturday, August 8

ICF's day-long, family-friendly Cranes of the World Festival offers guided nature walks and special programs.

Member Appreciation Day and Annual Member Meeting

Saturday, September 26

Join us for an event dedicated to you!

Good Neighbor Day

Saturday, October 17

Bring a non-perishable food item donation for the Baraboo Food Pantry and receive FREE admission to see the world's cranes.

ICF Closes for the Season

Saturday, October 31

Visit www.savingcranes.org or call 608-356-9462 to learn more about opportunities throughout the year.

Photos by Ted Thousand and Gopi Sundar

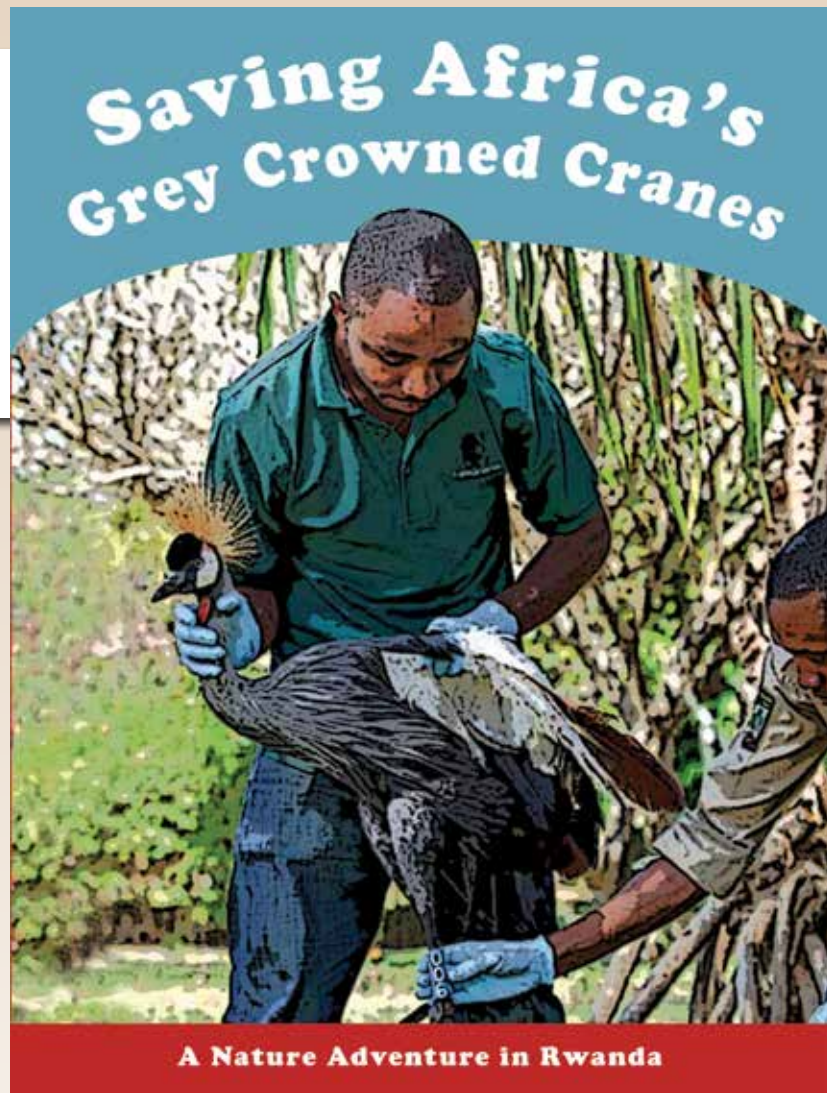
Olivier Nsengimana: CONSERVATION SUPER HERO IN RWANDA!

By Darcy Love, Visitor Program Manager

Find a comfortable chair, relax, and clear your thoughts. Now let every shade of green flood your mind's eye. You are sitting on a hillside in Eastern Africa. The air feels warm and moist on your skin. Small birds sing to each other as they land on the branches above. A small boy skips down the hillside carrying a water can. Now you are beside him – your destination is the marsh below to gather water. As he dips the can into the wetland, an unfamiliar sound punctuates the air – o-wan, o-wan... You look up to see two large birds dancing through the marsh. As they open their wings, the colors of their plumage are multiplied – from shades of grey, white, and rust to ocher and black. A spray of golden feathers sits atop their heads and a bright red pouch inflates beneath their beaks each time they make a sound. They are Grey Crowned Cranes and they live among these verdant wetlands – dancing, calling, nesting, feeding, and raising their young. The boy and the crane chicks will grow up together on this lush hillside.

This scene is one that Olivier Nsengimana experienced frequently as a young boy in rural Rwanda. But that was two decades ago and, since then, the birds have disappeared from the marsh. Genocide devastated his country in 1994 and drove Olivier from his home. For the cranes – poaching and illegal trade dramatically reduced their numbers to fewer than 500, maybe even fewer than 300, left in the wild in Rwanda. In 2012, the ICF/EWT Partnership identified a growing crane trafficking problem in Rwanda through Claudien Nsabagasani's research at Rugezi Marsh, a critical site for Grey Crowned Cranes in northern Rwanda. Conversion of land to agriculture and development has left Grey Crowned Cranes with few options, forcing them into areas shared with people. As a result, chicks are easily stolen from nests, and sold to private collectors, hotels, and wildlife traffickers who smuggle them outside the country. For every ten cranes taken from the wild in Africa, only one will survive to adulthood. Today the wild population is in critical decline and the species may soon disappear from the Rwandan countryside.

Olivier is now writing the next chapter in his story – as the boy who grew up to become a wildlife veterinarian. Inspired by the challenges discovered by ICF/EWT, Olivier



This year, ICF's Education Department will work with Olivier to create a graphic novel for Rwandan schoolchildren. The story? It's an inspiring one – about a young boy, who grew up watching beautiful cranes dance in the marsh they shared – and the future they inspired.

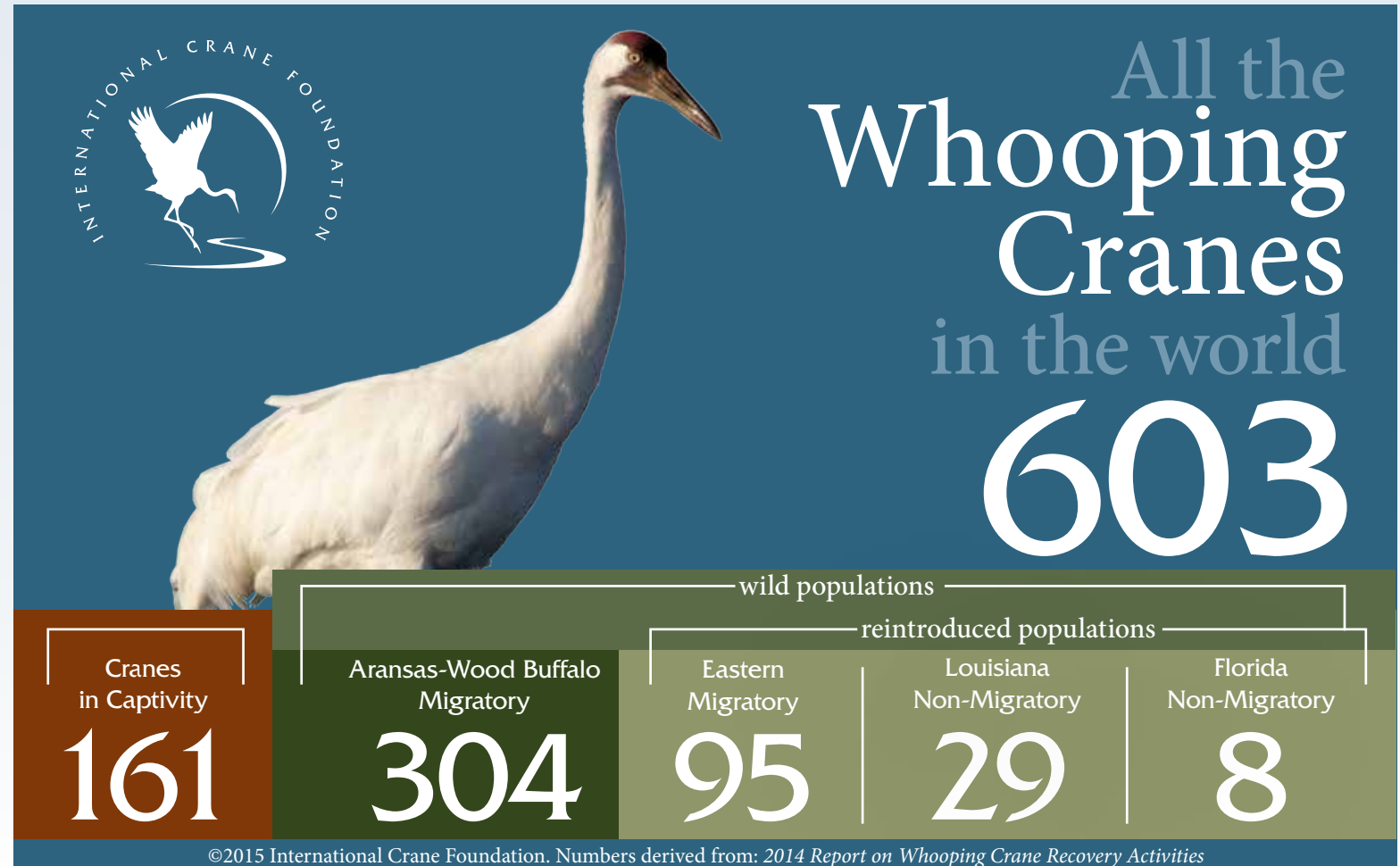
designed a creative, even unorthodox, program to reverse the trend for the cranes he loved from his childhood. This year, with the cooperation of the government, he implemented an amnesty program. People who illegally possess Grey Crowned Cranes can turn them in without fear of penalty. Before the program began, anyone caught with such a bird faced fines up to 5,000,000 RFW (approximately \$7,250) and 5-10 years in prison. Already, more than 150 cranes have been surrendered. Olivier and his team evaluate their health, attach permanent identification bands and collect information. A map of the captive population will be developed to quickly reveal cranes that have been recently poached. Some are rehabilitated and released back to the wild. Those with broken wings or injuries need legal captive homes, as educational ambassadors for their species.

There is another piece of Olivier's plan that is important to long-term success – engaging and educating children. They are not only the conservation leaders of the future, but sadly, they are often enlisted in the unlawful activities that result in Grey Crowned Cranes being taken from the wild. Poverty is prevalent, especially in rural Rwanda. Grabbing crane chicks can be easy money and eggs provide meals to those who are hungry. "Involving and engaging children who live near the natural habitat of the cranes in the fight against illegal trade and poaching," says Olivier, "will ensure that we create a new generation of conservationists and sustain the population of cranes in the wild."

Introducing Our New Whooping Crane Infographic!

At ICF, we are frequently asked, "How many Whooping Cranes are there right now?" As scientists, we tend to launch into convoluted answers about natural, wild, and reintroduced populations. Then we talk about mortality and recruitment rates and that chicks aren't counted until they fledge... The bottom line is that recovering species are difficult to count, especially if they are migratory, and the numbers can change on a daily basis. But sharing a visual representation of the number of Whooping Cranes is important to

us because it quickly and clearly conveys complex information. One look at this infographic and you can see that there are less than 1,000 Whooping Cranes on the planet. We hope this knowledge inspires people to act on behalf of Whooping Cranes. We will update the graphic at the beginning of each year and we hope to see the numbers increase! Follow ICF's Whooping Crane updates on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/savingcranes or by joining our email list at www.savingcranes.org.



News from Crane City

By Bryant Tarr, ICF Curator of Birds

Construction in Crane City on Phase 2 of the renovation continues throughout the winter – requiring coordination of birds to avoid disturbance from the work. We hope to move birds back in before February 1st. Shown here are the new buildings on 2nd Street (right side), where none were before!



We lost our oldest male Whooping Crane, Ulysses, in December at the age of 45. Ulysses hatched from an egg collected in 1969 at Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada and was transferred to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland. Twenty years later, he arrived at ICF, one of 22 cranes transferred from Patuxent to ICF in 1989 to form our breeding flock. During his lifetime, Ulysses fathered over 40 chicks, including at least 14 of the surviving

Whooping Cranes in the reintroduced eastern migratory flock, along with four offspring remaining in captivity at ICF. Additional offspring have been sent to Patuxent and the San Antonio Zoo for their captive flocks. ICF now maintains a total of 34 Whooping Cranes.



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Travel with ICF to the Cloud Kingdom

If you have ever longed to go back in time to see forests unspoiled by development and a human culture untainted by technology, then Bhutan is a destination you must experience! Nestled between India and China, the Kingdom of Bhutan has a tradition of respect for the environment, with a quarter of the country preserved in national parks and sanctuaries. ICF Co-Founder Dr. George Archibald will lead a group tour of Bhutan from **November 2 – 17 in 2015**. This magical journey will take you through deep valleys and towering mountain passes, and provide opportunities to observe more than 100 species of birds including the most endangered of

herons, the White-bellied Heron, as well as hornbills and gorgeous pheasants. A highlight will be the Crane Festival at the beautiful temple monastery in the Phobjikha Valley. The festival celebrates with music and costumed dance the return of the Black-necked Cranes to their winter home. Throughout the excursion you will be delighted by the timeless culture, and the matchless hospitality of the Bhutanese people. Trips to Bhutan fill quickly. If you would like more information about this trip, please visit ICF's website or contact Kari Stauffer at 608-356-9462 ext. 115 or email: travel@savingcranes.org.

