

The ICF *Bugle*
Inspiring a Global Community

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LIFE AFFIRMING CRANES!

By Betsy Didrickson, Bugle Editor



Our strategic plan states, “to save cranes, we must engage people in the conservation of landscapes that nurture cranes, ourselves, and the diversity of life on Earth.” No one engages people better, or with more gusto, than ICF Board Member and puppeteer extraordinaire, Heather Henson, and her traveling troupe of performers, IBEX Puppetry. Heather is the Founder and Creative

Director of IBEX and is the inspirational force in using artistic spectacle, educational outreach, and the fine art of puppetry to promote health and healing for our planet. IBEX programs feature puppets, kites, and creative movement to produce Heather’s original works, including environmental performances such as *Celebration of Flight*, *Endangered Species Parades*, and educational initiatives and workshops. *Continued on page 2*



Pictured here in a traditional Mongolian ger, Heather Henson creates a crane kite with a kind grandmother who invited her in for tea and snacks. Photo by Liz Smith



An Evening with the Cranes
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IBEX Endangered Species Parades present the environmental troubles of our world without negativity. They focus on healing, positivity, and the potential for restoration using kites, flags, costumed dancers and musicians to represent the elements, environment, and heartbeat of the planet. Approachable puppets of endangered animals such as the Whooping Crane, manatee, and Florida panther interact with spectators while sharing their message of hope. Heather shares her enthusiasm, "I'm inspired by the science of it all. I'm just as fascinated seeing trees or grasses move as I am with animals. It's that life force, whether it's a beating heart or the wind... I find it interesting. Lovely. Life affirming."

The goal of IBEX environmental workshops is to discover roles we can all play in creating a healthier planet by playful exploration of the connections between people and the natural environment.



Photos by IBEX Puppetry

Participants, both young and old, are challenged to see conservation issues in a fun and engaging way. As ICF's ambassador, Heather has taken her educational workshops and spectacles on the road to many faraway places such as Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and China – as well as crane hotspots throughout the United States. Most recently, Heather sponsored puppet kits and the performance

of a water puppet troupe at the Vietnam Crane Festival (see next page). Heather takes great care to research and include indigenous knowledge into her performances. Vietnamese water puppetry is traditionally performed in rice paddy fields, while kites perform in the air. Together, these elements are honored in a performance to which the local community can relate and enjoy. This respect for native customs and lore is the hallmark of Heather's creative expression. We salute Heather and IBEX Puppetry for the incredible energy, joy, and positive messages they bring to audiences around the world.



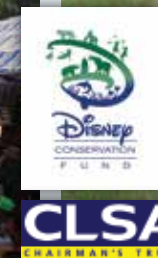
Make this quick and easy pipe cleaner finger puppet and create your own wildlife spectacle!

Kids and Adults: we challenge you to make all the crane species and post them on our Facebook page. Visit our website species guide for inspiration and photos of the cranes of the world. www.savingcranes.org/species-field-guide.html



First prize entry

In March 2015, as the Sarus Cranes returned to the lush wetlands in the Mekong Delta, a crane festival was held in Kien Giang Province, Vietnam at the site of the Phu My Wetland Conservation Project. Through our Phu My Project we protect remnant wetlands in the Mekong Delta by linking natural resources provided by the wetlands to the people who live



near that wetland. Native vegetation is sustainably harvested and used to manufacture woven goods. Proceeds from woven products support both good-paying jobs and wetland conservation of the native ecosystem.

At the heart of the crane festival was a children's art fair focused on wetlands and cranes. More than two hundred school children and teachers attended and ninety young artists enthusiastically completed their drawings or paintings for the competition. The art fair was one of the activities made possible by recent grants from the Disney Conservation Fund and CLSA Chairman's Trust

Vietnam Celebrates SARUS CRANES

Photos and update by Tran Triet, ICF Southeast Asia Program Coordinator



Fund to the International Crane Foundation. With additional support from ICF Board Member, Heather Henson, we were able to bring Vietnamese water puppet and kite flying shows to the festival.

In addition to the crane festival, we have begun implementing crane and wetland education for area children. Phu My is one of the poorest communities in the Mekong Delta. Children there do not have many opportunities for entertainment. Our idea was to combine education activities with entertainment opportunities for children in the village by offering a Disney movie time at 3 area schools each month. Before the movie, we presented a short slide show about Phu My wetlands, wildlife, and how to protect them. Learning about the environment while watching movies seems to work well! Eventually, a series of 10 slide shows will be developed, each approximately 5 minutes long. Stay tuned for future updates on this project!



Travel with ICF

Perhaps no other destination in the world inspires the spirit of adventure as much as Africa! ICF President Rich Beilfuss invites you to join him on a journey to Rwanda and Uganda in May 2016. The tour will give a generous sampling of the flora and fauna for which Africa is famed. ICF Program Manager Kerryn Morrison and other local research and project partners will join the group to provide an up-close and personal view of ICF project sites. Our tours are a truly exceptional way to see the world, and they fill very quickly. For more information, or if you would like to receive notice of travel opportunities before registration is opened to the public, please contact Kari Stauffer at 608-356-9462 ext. 115 or email travel@savingcranes.org.

Photo by Gopi Sundar

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Editor: Betsy Didrickson

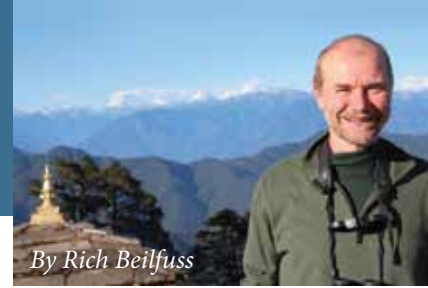
Bugle comments or questions? Please write Betsy at Bugle@savingcranes.org or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913

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
Associate.....	\$100
Sustaining.....	\$250
Sponsor.....	\$500
Patron.....	\$1,000
Benefactor.....	\$2,000
Cranemaker.....	\$10,000

Notes from the President

It's About More than Saving Cranes



By Rich Beilfuss

I love a good road trip. I've spent countless hours on airplanes flying to ICF projects all over the world, but there is nothing quite like traveling the highways with a fun group of people – and who better to travel with than a bunch of craniacs? Last month, I joined Julie Langenberg (VP-Conservation Science), Darcy Love (Visitor Program Manager), Kim Boardman (Assistant Curator), and Dave Chesky (Site Manager) on a trip to the spectacular Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska. For those who haven't visited the world-class Omaha Zoo, I highly recommend it – and you can stop there right off Interstate 80 on your next trip to see the marvelous springtime concentration of Sandhill Cranes on the Platte River.

Our mission was to meet with visionaries of the Omaha Zoo – including long-time Zoo Director (now retired) and mastermind Lee “Doc” Simmons, General Curator Dan Cassidy, and Assistant Curator Stephanie Huettner, who generously donated their time and creativity to help us think about the future of the ICF campus. For so many of us, ICF in Baraboo is our window to the world of crane conservation. We come face-to-face with all fifteen species of cranes, learn about their beautiful homes, and their increasing peril in the wild. It's here that we gain a better understanding of the who, what, where, when, why, and how of ICF's global efforts to secure a future for cranes – finding new pathways to sustain our water, land, and livelihoods.

Soon, we will be upgrading our public exhibits to make even stronger the important connections between cranes, our rich biodiversity, and ourselves. We will create a sense of “place” in each exhibit that reflects the cultural connections between cranes and people, showcases the spectacular wetlands and grasslands that cranes depend on in the wild, and reveals the unique ways in which people fashion livelihoods from these ecosystems. Especially exciting for me will be the possible addition of

some new creatures, great and small, that benefit from crane conservation.

I look forward to the opportunity to emphasize the inter-dependence between cranes and other species in the wild. I probably won't convince our aviculturists to add a Kafue lechwe antelope to our Wattled Crane exhibit anytime soon, but in the floodplains of Zambia these two are never far apart. Lechwe graze down the tall grasses, making the soil accessible for Wattled Cranes to probe for tubers and seeds. Maybe an Australian Magpie Goose can join our flock – they feed alongside Broilgas, taking turns churning the soil for spike rush tubers, wild rice, and other aquatic vegetation.



Blue Cranes in our “Spirit of Africa” exhibit transport ICF visitors into the Cape Region of South Africa—where the cranes thrive alongside sheep, ostriches, and abundant grassland birds.

In India, meticulous research by ICF's South Asia Program

Director Gopi Sundar has revealed that hundreds of bird species depend on the small agricultural wetlands that we are working to safeguard for Sarus Cranes. Our efforts to secure Poyang Lake in China, winter home to the entire world's population of Siberian Cranes, also benefit most of the world's oriental white storks, swan geese, Bewick's swans, and hundreds of thousands of waterbirds. And a commitment to healthy wintering grounds for Whooping Cranes in Texas supports a spectacular array of waterbirds like roseate spoonbills, tricolored herons, reddish egrets, and all who depend on (or like to eat) blue crabs, redfish, and oysters.

From the tiniest whirligig beetles and frogs of our coastal marshes to the great ungulate herds on African floodplains, saving cranes is about so much more than saving cranes. It is about the landscapes that all of us depend on. I hope you will take a road trip to ICF, or the great places where we work, to learn more about the world of crane conservation.

THE UNFINISHED STORY

W of the Whooping Crane

Like a Whooping Crane sounding a guard call, scientists warn that the future of the species is in peril. The work that the International Crane Foundation is doing to protect Whooping Cranes – work that is only possible because of your support – has never been more important.

You know the story of the Whooping Crane. The tallest birds out there. Snow white. Dancing beauties. Devoted parents. Symbols of hope. *Endangered.*

Since reaching critically low numbers (just 15 in the wild in 1941) Whooping Cranes have slowly recovered to about 600 total birds in the wild and in captivity. Whether we are breeding them in captivity, releasing them back into the wild, protecting their critical habitats, or reducing threats along their long flyways, the International Crane Foundation has been able to play a lead role in the comeback of Whooping Cranes because of your support. We are so grateful for your commitment to this effort!

Unfortunately, our experts tell us that the rebound is still not enough to safeguard the species from extinction. **The story of the Whooping Crane is far from over.**

Fresh water shortages, power line collisions, habitat destruction, and even senseless shootings – each day, Whooping Crane families such as this one in Texas, must face a gauntlet of challenges just to survive. A single run in with any one of these threats could mean the end for an individual. And with each individual lost, we are one crane further away from the recovery and long-term security of their population in the wild.

But like the mother crane looking out for her chick, the International Crane Foundation is looking out for this family...and every other family of Whooping Cranes... every step of the way.

We are calling for your support now because the threats facing this beloved bird – fresh water shortages, power line collisions, habitat destruction, senseless shootings, and more – have never been more numerous or severe. Far too frequently, another one of our precious Whooping Cranes falls victim to these threats. The International Crane Foundation has ramped up efforts to save Whooping Cranes on every front to meet these escalating threats.

Right now, we are:

- Boosting Whooping Crane numbers through our innovative breeding and reintroduction programs.
- Protecting critical habitat in collaboration with conservation partners across the country.
- Eliminating threats by engaging in policy development, outreach, and advocacy initiatives.

And very importantly, *we are spreading the word.* We are building public awareness, support, and pride across the continent for an iconic species whose story so desperately needs to be told.

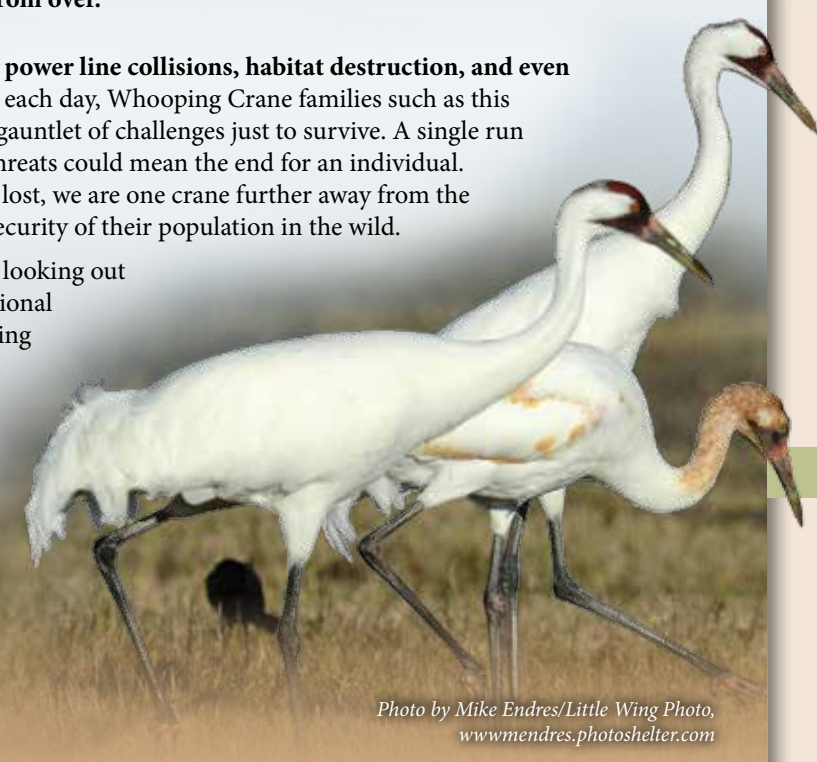


Photo by Mike Endres/Little Wing Photo, www.mendres.photoshelter.com

A Whooping Crane pair trumpets a “guard call,” a sharp, single call expressing alarm. Photo by John Ford

Our work is

science-based, strategic, and urgent. We are confident that the end of this story will be a happy one. But we can't do it without you. Please consider making a donation to the International Crane Foundation to support our work.

Your donation ensures that we mount the historic effort needed to protect Whooping Cranes for the long term.

Thank you!

Dr. Rich Beilfuss,
President & CEO

WAYS TO GIVE

Call: (608)356-9462

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

Or, use the envelope in this issue!

OUR JOURNEY AMONG CRANES IN ETHIOPIA

By Dr. George Archibald, ICF Co-founder and Senior Conservationist

Ethiopia, just 1.6 times the size of Texas, has more than 850 species of birds. It is home for three species of cranes, including the statuesque Wattled Crane. The Wattled Crane range extends from the highlands of South Africa north to Ethiopia, with a stronghold in the enormous floodplains of Zambia, Botswana, and Mozambique, where their population is estimated at 8,000 birds. Little is known about the tiny population of Wattled Cranes in Ethiopia. ICF's Research Associate, Shimelis Aynalem, has observed as many as 36 Wattled Cranes near Lake Tana, and has confirmed breeding along the little Blue Nile that flows into the southwest corner of the lake. Lake Tana, the largest lake in Ethiopia, is the source of the Blue Nile and is located in the northwestern highlands. In 2012, far to the south of Lake Tana in the Rift Valley, we observed about 150 non-breeding Wattled Cranes in flocks. In February, I returned to Ethiopia to join Shimelis to learn more about the cranes in southern Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is a country of mountains, including the Bale Mountains, which border the Rift Valley on the east and boast peaks at almost 15,000 feet tall. Just below the highest peaks, the Sanetti Plateau provides nesting habitat for at least three pairs of Wattled Cranes. They arrive in July during the rainy season, and nest after water levels in the wetlands peak in September, before the onset of a long dry season. After the chicks fledge and many of the wetlands are completely dry, the cranes leave. We don't know where they go, but we suspect they descend to the Rift Valley. That mystery will be explored during the next few years by doctoral candidate, Hadis Tadele Desta, of Addis Ababa University. Hadis joined us to visit the Bale Mountains and the Rift Valley. In the mountains, we were able to see where nests were



ICF Research Associate in Ethiopia, Shimelis Aynalem, showing children his book, *The Field Guide to the Birds of Lake Tana*. Photo by Jonathan Patz

located in recent years. We then descended to the Rift Valley about 140 miles away, and observed 133 Wattled Cranes, including a large group at Boyo Lake.

When water levels peak in September, Boyo Lake becomes a huge triangle of water measuring two miles across at its widest and extending 10 miles in length. As water drains and evaporates in the dry season, there are vast shallows with abundant emergent vegetation – crane food! Black Crowned Cranes breed here as water levels subside, but we don't know if the basin also provides breeding habitat for Wattled Cranes. That's another mystery for Hadis to solve. The 94 million inhabitants of Ethiopia are primarily subsistence farmers. The wetlands in the Bale Mountains and at Boyo Lake are heavily grazed by domestic animals when water levels recede. We believe that overgrazing and trampling of nests may limit crane productivity. Interaction between domestic animals and cranes will be another topic for Hadis.

To my amazement, Ethiopians do not hunt birds. Species that are able to adapt to human-disturbed habitats thrive. The cranes frequently forage on waste grain in farm fields, and search for insects in and around animal droppings in grazed areas. Farmers do chase cranes from the fields sometimes when there is newly-germinated corn, but generally there is harmony between traditional farmers and the cranes. Unfortunately, industrialized agriculture is now increasing, taking arable lands and grazing areas away from subsistence farmers. When wetlands are drained by huge machines to create more arable land, less water is available for people, farm animals, cranes, and other biodiversity.

Resident Black Crowned and Wattled Cranes, and tens of thousands of wintering migrant Eurasian Cranes have flourished in harmony with humans in fascinating Ethiopia for thousands of years. Now through the excellent efforts of our colleagues, a more complete picture of the lives of Ethiopia's cranes is being discovered, a critical step in planning conservation actions that will help safeguard the cranes in the challenging future.

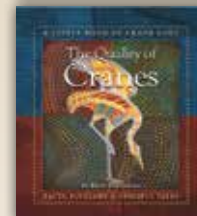
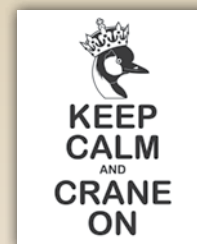
A special thanks is extended to Joe Branch and Denny Geiler for supporting and participating in the 2012 and 2015 expeditions. The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust and the Pensthorpe Conservation Trust generously supported the crane research in Ethiopia. We are grateful to our Ethiopian hosts for making our journey among the cranes of Ethiopia so productive.

While a family washes clothing, Wattled Cranes forage in the mud for tubers as the sun sinks into the horizon behind Boyo Lake. Photo by George Archibald

An Evening with the Cranes

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2015

Enjoy a magical evening on our beautiful grounds in Baraboo, Wisconsin. Explore the exhibits and cranes while strolling our trails and sampling local gourmet food, craft beer, and wines. Live music mixed with crane calls make it a truly unique evening. We hope you will join us! *An Evening with the Cranes* will be held rain or shine on **Saturday June 20, 2015** from 5-8 pm. **Tickets are now available.** (Member price: \$50, Non-member price: \$75 per ticket). Click or call to purchase: (608) 356-9462 ext. 171, or savingcranes.org. Photo by Stacey Meanwell, meanwellphotographics.com



Created with Cranes in Mind!

Turn heads with this new **Keep Calm** t-shirt sporting our interpretation of the popular slogan – a “must-have” for craniacs! The ICF logo is printed on the sleeve. Available in adult sizes in a variety of colors, \$17.99.

Read the folktale detailing how crowned cranes received their golden crowns from a great king in this comprehensive collection of facts, folklore, and tales for all ages, *The Quality of Cranes: A Little Book of Crane Lore*, hardcover: 152 pages, \$15.95.

Heralds of spring, our **Calling Cranes** earrings are framed by a textured rectangle with a colorful patina. Sterling silver with a faceted glass bead in two colors, \$52.99.

Shop online at www.craneshop.org, email: giftshop@savingcranes.org, or call (608) 356-9462 ext. 135.

New Crane Trunks Available for Classrooms

Our Whooping Crane trunks offer a variety of activities and information for the classroom to help students understand past and current efforts to save a species on the brink of extinction. The trunk empowers educators to share the concepts of crane biology, ecology, conservation, captive breeding, and reintroduction. The curriculum consists of



a series of activities that are thoughtfully paired with hands-on learning tools, including a crane skull, bird flight diverters, and a captive-rearing crane costume.

Crane Trunks are available year-round and are appropriate for students from kindergarten to 12th grade. Reservations will

be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Please plan to request trunks at least one month in advance. Trunks can be picked up and dropped off at ICF's headquarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin at no cost, or materials can be shipped to you for a fee. To request a trunk, please complete the Crane Trunk Request Form on our website. If you need additional assistance call us at (608) 356-9462 ext. 127 or email naturalists@savingcranes.org.



International Crane Foundation

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www.savingcranes.org

Address Service Requested



Participate in the 2015 Bird-a-thon! Awesome prizes courtesy of Eagle Optics. Click or call for more information: (608) 356-9462 or www.savingcranes.org/bird-a-thon.html



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The Bugle is printed on recycled paper with non-VOC soy inks. Newsletter is also available in digital format.

A Photo to Ponder...

Editor's note

On a recent study visit to ICF, Mongolian researcher Iderbat Damba, shared many of his excellent photos of beautiful panoramas, wildlife, cranes, and happy children on horseback – but this is the image that made a lasting impression on me. At first glance, I didn't realize what I was looking at – and then, the meaning of the photo hit me. I could imagine the expansive landscape of the Khurkh Valley, and the farmer slowly plowing along as he prepared to plant wheat, and then happening upon a crane nest. I wondered why he chose to plow around the nest – giving the exposed eggs a wide berth with a generous buffer zone. I assumed it was due to local beliefs or taboos about breaking eggs – but it brought to mind the famous quote that our character is defined by our actions when we think no one is watching. For me, the image symbolizes the hope that people can and will make the difference for safeguarding the natural treasures and wild places we all love.

