

The Bugle

Saving cranes and the places where cranes dance!

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Forward!

This Sarus Crane chick was one of two baby cranes hatched from the nest their parents built on a rice field in the Ayeyarwady River Delta of Myanmar. During the first month after hatching, crane chicks often swim around their nest, learning to

find food from their parents. In the Ayeyarwady Delta, Sarus Cranes live on rice paddy fields that are flooded for a prolonged period, often planted with a variety of rice that can withstand deep and long flooding, called “floating rice” or “deep-water rice.”



These rice fields are rich in wetland biodiversity, but are currently under serious threat from modern, more intense rice farming.

*Photo by Dr. Myo Sandar Winn,
Yangon University, Myanmar*

Notes from the President

By Rich Beilfuss

Saving Cranes, Changing Lives



What does supporting girls to stay in school, marketing handicrafts, planting bamboo, or managing cattle have to do with our mission to save cranes and wetlands? Everything!

Everywhere we work, cranes inspire people with their cultural significance, visibility, extraordinary beauty, dramatic migrations, and striking behavior. But often the most threatened cranes occur in some of the poorest and most densely populated places on earth — places where poverty puts enormous pressures on their wetland homes. Wetlands are often converted to farmland, drained and ditched, over-grazed with livestock, burned too frequently, or unsustainably harvested for vegetation, soils, and wildlife. Land use changes in the surrounding watershed degrade wetlands further, altering water flows, reducing water quality, and triggering erosion. And our changing climate makes all of these challenges much worse.

Because we believe that a future with cranes and wetlands means a healthier and more liveable planet for all, we are focused on innovative ways to improve livelihoods for those who share their lands with cranes and other wildlife.

To prevent the conversion of Phu My wetland, an important home for Sarus Cranes in Vietnam, to intensive rice farming, we developed a profitable handicraft business that improves local livelihoods through the sustainable production and sale of handbags and baskets made from the dominant wetland sedge *Lepironia*. The project has tripled local employment in the community and increased household income by 400%. The Sarus Crane population using these wetlands has responded dramatically, increasing from fewer than ten birds to over 300. The provincial government, convinced by this alternative development pathway, formally protected the wetland from intensive agricultural development. For this work, we received the United Nations Dubai International Award for Best Practices, the UNDP Equator Prize, and the World Bank Development Marketplace Award.

In the Grey Crowned Crane lands of East Africa, we link wetland conservation with clean water, poverty reduction, climate change mitigation, and other sustainable development goals for the region. We provide training and mentorship to community members to encourage livelihood practices that incorporate climate-smart, biodiversity-friendly agriculture, such as bamboo cultivation, bee-keeping, goat milk, and fodder production.

At Rugezi Marsh in Rwanda, we are mentoring more than 1,000 farmers to produce fodder for their livestock and bean stakes for their vegetation gardens to reduce the impact of livestock grazing and vegetation removal on wetland breeding grounds. In Uganda, we are developing new strategic partnerships that incorporate family planning, public health, and education of girls and women into our community projects, with the understanding that population, health, livelihoods, and environmental quality are inseparably intertwined. Communities, in turn, commit to positive conservation actions such as creating buffer zones between their crops and wetlands, replanting degraded wetlands that were plowed and cultivated, and reducing disturbance to breeding cranes. Step by step, we are reversing the decline of this iconic species.

Further south on the enormous floodplains of Zambia, we are creating a new protected area model for the Kafue Flats, as a “working wetland for all” founded on the wealth of ecosystem services that healthy floodplains provide for people and wildlife. Working with community leaders and the Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife, we must find the elusive balance between the incredible biodiversity of the flats, including a third of the world’s Wattled Cranes, and the cattle grazers, fishers, and farmers who also depend on this amazing wetland.

Across Asia, Africa, and here at home, we are working through cranes to change lives for the better, and make our world a better place. Thanks for your support.



For more than 25 years, we've teamed with the Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group in western Kenya to improve the lives of those who share their farmlands with nesting cranes.

Take your friends out into the marsh with you. Make new friends for our vanishing wetlands. Nothing can spark excitement more than the sight of a wild crane.

– Jim Harris



Family, friends, and colleagues are invited Sunday, June 16 at 10 a.m. to celebrate the life and legacy of Jim Harris, our former Director of Public Education, President & CEO, and most recently, Senior Vice President of Asia. Jim passed away on Sept. 19, 2018. During his 34 years with the International Crane Foundation, Jim touched countless lives. He inspired many with his fascination for the natural world, his passion for learning, and his selfless interest in the welfare of cranes and people around the world. The gathering will be held at our headquarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin. If you are unable to attend, please take a walk in a marsh or go birdwatching in memory of Jim. To learn more about this celebration of life or to share a tribute, visit our website www.savingcranes.org/celebrating-jim-harris-life-legacy/

Those who witness crane flocks discover an ancient creature's response to a crowded and changing world. Our challenge is to rediscover old balances and create new ones, linking cranes, the land, and people.

Those wishing to honor Jim with a gift may direct a contribution to the **Jim Harris Legacy Fund** by using the enclosed envelope with Harris Legacy in the check memo or donate online at www.savingcranes.org/jim-harris-legacy-fund/

Photo of Muravioraka Park, Russia by Jim Harris

Be the Messenger!

CHINA PROGRAM UPDATE

By Yu Qian, China Program Director

In March, we were invited to host the 11th **Faku International Siberian Crane Festival** in Shenyang Province, which is an important staging area for critically endangered Siberian Cranes. Nearly 2,000 Siberian Cranes were recorded in Huanzidong in March. Our China staff and volunteers from the Northeast Forestry University gave a well-attended environmental education presentation and a field birdwatching workshop for a primary school located next to the Huanzidong wetland. We were thrilled to have Shenyang Provincial Television and China Central Television reporting on these activities.



Our official social media accounts for WeChat (Chinese Twitter) and Weibo went live last month. These are the most widely used social media in China. We hope to reach a very wide audience and will be sharing our activities, news, and achievements in China through these two channels.



Expedition Ethiopia

The Faces of Conservation

By George Archibald, Co-Founder

Kerryn Morrison, ICF VP International-Africa, is thrilled by a close encounter with Wattled Cranes at Lake Boyo in Ethiopia. Photo by Hadis Tadele

In March of this year, I accompanied Kerryn Morrison, our VP International - Africa, to Ethiopia to work with the people of Lake Boyo in the Great Rift Valley on a conservation plan. Erosion at Lake Boyo is seriously affecting the Wattled Cranes there. Our Ethiopian crane colleagues, Dr. Hadis Tadele and Dr. Shimelis Aynalem also joined us.

The magnificent Wattled Crane is the largest and rarest of the African cranes numbering just over 9,000, with the majority living on the floodplains in the south-central part of the continent. Lake Boyo is considered a northern stronghold for the species, but threats are looming. A recent count tallied 154 Wattled Cranes and 11 Black Crowned Cranes at Lake Boyo.

When water levels peak in September, Lake Boyo is a huge triangle of water measuring about two miles at the base and ten miles in length. Then, as the water recedes and evaporates, vast shallows appear rife with lush vegetation. The lake once supported a large population of hippos until they were hunted to near extinction in the 1990s. Now, there are only a few left. The basin was uninhabited until around the mid-1700s when the hills surrounding the lake were forested. Now, there are approximately 200,000 residents. Trees were felled, hillsides transformed to support villages and farm fields, and domestic animals found an abundance of food on the grasslands.

As the human population increased, soil erosion into the lake expanded leaving erosion pits on the hillside and smothered grasslands on the valley floor. Because there were no forests to absorb and hold rainwater, flooding caused farmers to abandon their homes on the lowlands. Deep channels were excavated across the lake bottom and at the outflow to remedy the flooding, but this resulted in the



The International Crane Foundation uses the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation to map conservation targets, outcomes, monitoring, and evaluation. We are a member of the **Conservation Measures Partnership**, a commitment of major conservation organizations to best practices for designing, managing, and measuring the impacts of our conservation actions.

conservations actions. Kerryn Morrison was brilliant in leading the meeting, carefully listening to each person during translations across three languages. We are fortunate to have such a gifted professional directing our work in so many African nations. Hadis, new to the Open Standards method, communicated to the participants with clarity and enthusiasm. They made a great team.

Our meetings ended with a commitment from leaders and locals to control an aggressive shrub in the wetland, expanded terracing, forests and grassland restoration on the uplands, and studying the basin hydrology to determine if a water gate might be effective. Working together, we now have a plan we can put into action.

We are grateful to the Walter Guinness Charitable Trust and Delight Gartlein for supporting the research of Hadis Tadele and the recent workshop.



Back left to right: Yossef Dobocho, George Archibald, Kerryn Morrison, Hadis Tadele, Yohannes Gifilo. Front left to right: Desse Hankebo, Dagna Abeyneh Aba, Dagna Botomo Ture, Tamirat Kibemo

almost total disappearance of the lake by the end of the dry season. Realizing the ecological crisis, the District initiated a restoration program in 2011 to reduce soil erosion by terracing hillsides, planting trees, and converting erosion pits into grasslands. But much more needs to be done.

During our visit, Hadis organized a workshop to develop a conservation plan for Lake Boyo. We were joined by the District Administrator of the Boyo Valley, Yohannes Jifilo, and soil scientist, Yoseph Dobocho. Participants also included two highly respected elders and two village leaders from Lake Boyo. A conservation planning method called Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation guided our progress. We initiated the workshop by asking each person for their visions for Lake Boyo. We discussed goals, threats, and

Even Cranes Get the Blues

In late 2011, a young male Blue Crane named Kito joined our *Spirit of Africa* exhibit at the International Crane Foundation. He quickly adapted to his new home. The following year, a young female named Periwinkle arrived. In the beginning, the only thing between their adjacent enclosures was a chain link fence. The cranes quickly took a liking to each other, and when Periwinkle was finally allowed into the larger exhibit area, Kito immediately welcomed her. Our Blue Crane exhibit has a beautiful, hand-painted mural around the entire enclosure that tells the story of the Blue Cranes' landscape in South Africa.

As Periwinkle raced into the new exhibit, Kito joined her and walked her over to meet the woman and her dog depicted on the mural. Then Kito took his new companion to meet some more familiar characters — a pair of painted Blue Cranes dancing in a field on the opposite wall. The new couple hit it off with these two-dimensional

friends on the wall. Each year, the artist visits and makes repairs to the mural. He can tell where Kito and Periwinkle like to hang out by the abundance of droppings in front of the painted cranes.

Because of our site renovation project, our exhibit cranes moved last fall to our off-exhibit facility where they are experiencing many new sights and sounds. Kito and Periwinkle were showing signs that they weren't settling in well, so our staff decided to try to incorporate a little bit of *home* into their space. We took pictures of the mural and printed the painted cranes on full-size stickers and affixed them to the walls of their temporary home. There was a short acclimation period, but the pair is now often found standing next to their old friends during daily checks. Our Behavioral Husbandry Program routinely provides novel enrichment to the entire flock and develops individualized behavioral modification or training programs to improve the management and welfare of the birds in our care.



Kito and Periwinkle in their *Spirit of Africa* exhibit. Photo by Deb Johnson



Kito and Periwinkle in their temporary home with their old friends during our renovation project.

The Excitement is Building!

Progress continues on our renovation as our laminated beams made their way to Baraboo. The elegantly curved beams will be installed to provide strength and support for the soaring spaces in our new visitor center.



During chilly April nights, artist Jay Jocham projected the outlines of his beautiful paintings to our new mural walls. The projected images are best visible when it is very dark with no moon. This mural shows a Sarus Crane tending a nest in the wetlands of Southeast Asia.

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The Bugle is the quarterly newsletter 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? Please write Betsy at Bugle@savingcranes.org or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913

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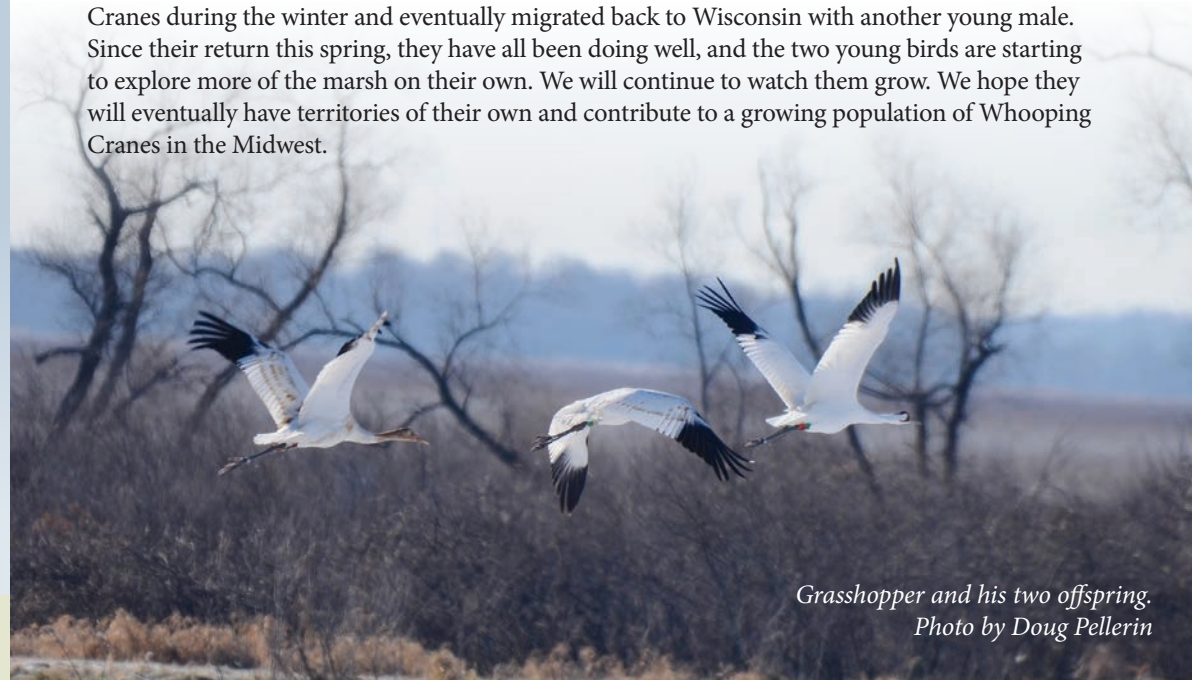
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A Unique Family of Whooping Cranes

By Hillary Thompson, Crane Analyst

Last fall, a unique family of Whooping Cranes was released at Horicon Marsh in Wisconsin. Grasshopper, or 16-11 as he's known to scientists in the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, is a male Whooping Crane who occupied a territory at Horicon after he was raised and released there in 2011. When he was unable to find a Whooping Crane mate, we brought him back into captivity to try our hand at matchmaking. Our partners at White Oak Conservation in Florida successfully introduced Grasshopper to Hemlock, a female Whooping Crane. The two became a pair and nested in captivity, where they raised two chicks. We then brought the family group back to Grasshopper's territory in Wisconsin, at Horicon Marsh.

Unfortunately, Hemlock didn't survive long enough to migrate with the family, but Grasshopper wrangled his two kids on his own. The trio stuck together as he showed the youngsters how to find food and avoid predators in the marsh. They migrated together, although not very far, to their wintering area in northwestern Indiana. The three encountered a few other Whooping Cranes during the winter and eventually migrated back to Wisconsin with another young male. Since their return this spring, they have all been doing well, and the two young birds are starting to explore more of the marsh on their own. We will continue to watch them grow. We hope they will eventually have territories of their own and contribute to a growing population of Whooping Cranes in the Midwest.



Grasshopper and his two offspring. Photo by Doug Pellerin

Journey of the Whooping Crane

is now available for download and rental on Amazon, Google Play, and iTunes.

Featuring International Crane Foundation Co-founder George Archibald, *Journey of the Whooping Crane*, produced by Rhett Turner of Red Sky Productions, presents a natural history of the Whooping Crane and the uplifting success story for an endangered species. To learn more about this one-hour natural history documentary, visit <http://whooping-crane.org/>



Our Dreams Take Flight through Your Gifts

Sandhill Crane research informs Whooping Crane recovery

One hundred years ago, the future for Sandhill Cranes was grim. So grim that in his essay, *Marshland Elegy*, Aldo Leopold lamented the possibility of their extinction in Wisconsin. He wrote, "The sadness discernible in some marshes arise, perhaps, from their once having harbored cranes. Now they stand humbled, adrift in history."

By the 1930s, as few as 25 pairs of Sandhill Cranes remained in Wisconsin, making them all but extirpated in the state. But, thanks to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the protection of more than 50 percent of Wisconsin wetlands, today Sandhill Cranes are a fantastic conservation success story. The International Crane Foundation is charged with writing the next chapter.

With your support, we are conducting new research with Sandhill Cranes to help determine the viability of new Whooping Crane release and breeding sites in Wisconsin. One such site is Horicon Marsh, the largest freshwater cattail marsh in the United States. One current study analyzes breeding densities for Sandhill Cranes at Horicon Basin to measure nest success, area ecology, and chick survival rates to fledging. The study will inform decisions on future habitat for releases of Whooping Cranes.

Your gifts help us achieve our dreams for Whooping Cranes!

We are working toward a future of:

- At least 25 Whooping Crane nesting pairs and a self-sustaining wild flock in the Eastern Flyway, from Wisconsin to Florida.
- At least 1,000 Whooping Cranes and 250 bonded pairs in the Central Flyway that extends from Canada to Texas.

Help us write the next chapter in the story for Whooping Cranes and all crane species threatened with extinction.

SEND A GIFT TODAY BY USING THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE or donate online at www.savingcranes.org. We thank you for fueling our dreams!



Photo of Whooping and Sandhill Cranes by Ted Thousand

Shop for a Cause!

Purchase one or both of these lovely puzzles created exclusively for the International Crane Foundation! The 54-piece puzzle, *Waders*, measures 5 x 7 inches. The 300-piece puzzle, *Spring Arrivals*, measures 12 x 16 inches. Both puzzles come in their own tin. **Warning: Small parts pose a choking hazard for children under three.**

To order, visit www.craneshop.org or call 608 356-9462 ext. 171. \$12.50 (54 pieces) and \$18.50 (300 pieces)





International Crane Foundation

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Join us for An Evening with the « CONSTRUCTION » Cranes

**Saturday, June 15, 2019
5 to 8 p.m.**

This year only, guests will see a special glimpse of our much-anticipated transformation – a sneak peek at the **major renovations** to our visitor experience. We are deeply grateful to our \$10,000 lead sponsors Tom and Kathy Leiden and an anonymous donor.

» To purchase your tickets or to sponsor this event, call **608-356-9462 ext. 807**, or register online at www.savingcranes.org/ewtc/

\$75 for members and \$100 for non-members.
Admissions and memberships support our work!



*The Excitement
is Building!*