

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

*The*  
**Bugle**

*Saving cranes and the places where cranes dance!*

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# Hope for Peace and Renewal

*Cranes in the Korean DMZ*

*By Spike Millington, Vice President and Director of Asia Program*



"Farmers see more and more that sharing their fields with cranes brings not just the beauty of the birds, but also other benefits, and try to make the fields more welcome for the birds."

—Ms. Kim Myeong-ha

*Photo by Susan Carnahan*



# Hope for Peace and Renewal

## Cranes in the Korean DMZ



Photo by Susan Carnahan

By Spike Millington, Vice President and Director of Asia Program

Last October, North Korean fighter jets approached within a few miles of the border with South Korea, prompting the mobilization of South Korean jets along its northern border. As both sets of planes paralleled the border from east to west, they traversed a remarkable green ribbon, the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The pilots would have first seen the gleaming estuary of the Han River, and then the woods and marshes of the central DMZ. To the south, they'd see vast agricultural fields of the fertile Cheorwon Plain, contrasting with the less developed, volcanic soils of the north where agriculture is more challenging. Further west, they would rise over jagged mountains, largely covered by dense forest with few settlements.

Fortunately, the jets returned to their bases without incident, but the up-and-down tensions along the Korean border not only raise concerns about global peace and security---they have unintended ramifications for two species of endangered cranes, the elegant Red-crowned Crane and the stately White-naped Crane, that have made this area their winter home.

Running immediately south of the DMZ is a narrow band of land up to 15 kilometers across, called the Civilian Controlled Zone, which was established after the Korean war armistice in 1953. Here the military is in control. Farmers are let in to cultivate their fields, but no building is allowed, and farmers need to come back out before dark. Mostly they cultivate irrigated rice in small fields and the cranes come to feed on the fallen rice grains during the day, retreating to the marshes of the DMZ and nearby rivers and reservoirs to roost.

These cranes used to winter in North Korea but following the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the consequent loss of fertilizer subsidies to the country, food became scarce (for people and for cranes) and the birds shifted south. There, they found conditions to their liking and numbers have increased quite dramatically. Over the last ten years, Red-crowned Crane numbers have doubled to about 2,000 individuals. The rise in White-naped Crane numbers has been even more spectacular, from less than

2,000 to over 9,000 birds. This represents almost 90% of the global White-naped Crane population and possibly 80% of all migratory, Red-crowned Cranes worldwide. Some of the White-naped Cranes, especially in cold winters, leave the border zone and move south to Izumi in southern Japan, but in recent years the birds have tended to stay longer in Korea and numbers are increasing steadily every year.

Mapping the daytime distribution of cranes through surveys and satellite tracking shows that cranes in the Cheorwon Plain, which supports the highest number of birds, are found almost entirely within the confines of the Civilian Controlled Zone as habitat outside this area has become developed. Unfortunately, the area of the Civilian Controlled Zone is shrinking due to economic development, squeezing the cranes into an increasingly crowded habitat.



For many years, the International Crane Foundation has been working with Dr. Li Kisup, of the Waterbird Network Korea, to monitor crane numbers and distribution in South Korea. Dr. Li has fostered trusting relationships with local government, farmer groups, and conservation groups along the length of the Civilian

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Controlled Zone. This year, the International Crane Foundation began the implementation of a new project, based in Cheorwon, to engage with local and national stakeholders in the conservation of cranes in any potential development plans proposed in and around the Civilian Controlled Zone. Dr. Li is leading this effort and Ms. Kim Myeong-ha, a local educator from Cheorwon, has been engaged to lead communication and educational outreach programs. The Cheorwon County government has already created a state-of-the-art Crane Education Center and the project will be based there.



Photo of flooded rice paddies which provide roosting habitat for cranes, by Spike Millington

The project has four principal components. The first component builds on the growing interest and engagement of local people in crane conservation activities such as surveys and monitoring and providing supplementary food resources for cranes in periods of snow when existing food becomes difficult to access. A second component focuses on education and raising awareness of the importance of the area for cranes among local schools, schoolteachers, and community groups. Some materials have already been developed and these are being further enhanced and shared with educators, beginning around Cheorwon. A crane

festival is planned to strengthen hometown pride and bring visitors to the area – this will build on the International Crane Foundation's extensive experience organizing crane festivals elsewhere in Asia. A more policy-oriented component works with local and national governments to identify and promote activities that are more crane-friendly, such as flooding rice paddies as roosting sites and incentives to leave more straw

and fallen grain in agricultural fields. Finally, the network of crane conservation groups along the Civilian Controlled Zone and elsewhere is being supported and developed through increased communication and engagement in workshops. An example is the newly established, Red-crowned Crane Network focused on the Ganghwa coast at the eastern end of the Civilian Controlled Zone. This is strengthening the constituency for cranes and advocacy for their conservation as part of a long-term vision for the area.

The challenges of running a project in this zone of tense political division are daunting. While the stakes are high for the future of these two threatened crane species, the International Crane Foundation is committed to shaping a better future for this historic and fascinating part of the world.

## Protecting Birds Inside and Out

AT THE INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

Do you know that nearly ONE BILLION birds are killed each year by collisions with windows?



One billion. It's a shocking number, and all of us have an important role in reducing this needless loss. The latest State of the Birds report from the North America Bird Conservation Initiative shows that 50% of songbirds in the U.S. are in decline, and one of the biggest causes of songbird death is window collisions. At the International Crane Foundation, we are committed to ensuring that all our new and old windows are bird safe. The showpiece of our beautiful new George Archibald Welcome Center is a large sheet of glass allowing intimate views of Sandhill Cranes on exhibit. We applied a bird safety film to the entire window, which appears to the cranes and other birds as frosted parallel horizontal stripes and helps them distinguish the clear glass from an area that they can fly through. Not one bird strike has been recorded since we installed the treated window. Thanks to the Arthur J. Donald Family Foundation, our Ron Sauey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation also received a much-needed upgrade this year with a new bird safety window film, helping assure that the glass can be easily seen by birds living just outside this prairie-style building. There are many new products available to help. If each of us commits to applying bird safety film to windows in our homes and businesses where birds are most likely to strike, we can go a long way toward reducing the number one killer of our songbirds.





# Notes from the President

By Rich Beilfuss, President & CEO

## Going Big, Together—Courageous Acts of Crane Conservation

Saving cranes is about **so much more** than saving cranes. Don't get me wrong, I'm an incurable craniac. I cherish these ancient, endangered birds—our symbols of wisdom, peace, good fortune, and grace from the Anishinaabe Crane Clan of Lake Superior to the aboriginal peoples of Australia, from the Buddhists and Hindus of Asia to the diverse cultures of Africa.

But the past 50 years have taught us many things about what it really takes to save cranes. It takes a deep, long-term commitment to healthy wetlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands, and the people who share them. It takes sound science and plenty of creativity to solve problems in those places, and along the flyways that link them together. It takes strong partnerships among nations, regions, communities, and all who care. It takes passionate and effective leadership in the places that matter most.

We have also learned that when we work together to save cranes, many other species benefit. Our effort to restore the Kafue Flats of Zambia for Wattled Cranes helps endangered Kafue Lechwe antelope, buffalo, hippo, zebra, and more than 450 bird species. We've helped create six national crane reserves to protect the last remaining wetlands of the Mekong Delta and its endangered wildlife in Southeast Asia. Our efforts to promote crane-friendly agriculture supports farmers who support the abundant wildlife that depend on healthy farmlands.

And people benefit too. Across Africa and Asia, our projects support sustainable livelihoods, safe water, health access, family planning, and other basic human needs for the marginalized communities that share their lands with cranes. We help communities adapt to global warming with climate-smart agricultural practices and improved water supplies during drought. And when cranes damage crops, from Wisconsin to Kenya, we work to find lasting solutions for the farmers who share their lands with cranes.

As I look out on the horizon to the next 50 years, I see enormous threats to our land, water, and livelihoods, exacerbated by our changing climate. I see enormous challenges to sustaining wildlife in our shared landscape. But I am encouraged knowing that when we work together to save cranes, we can do big things that will make a real difference for our future.

### Combatting climate change through wildlife conservation

The wetlands, grasslands, and farmlands that sustain cranes store extraordinary amounts of carbon that help prevent the

accumulation of global greenhouse gases...if managed well. Wildlife-friendly farming and rotational grazing, not just pristine lands, can serve as important sinks for carbon to stabilize our climate. The Drakensberg project in South Africa is our first foray into the complicated world of carbon offsets and co-benefits, in a landscape that supports endangered Blue, Wattled, and Grey Crowned Cranes. This is an enormous opportunity to generate long-term financing for wetland and grassland conservation that not only incentivizes the expansion of protected areas and best-practice management activities but also provides seed funding for community livelihood co-benefits. If successful, this approach could be vital to the future of many crane landscapes in Africa, Asia, and North America, and to the global fight against climate change.



Big Crane Petroglyph photo, by Betsy Didrickson

### Securing wildlife by making a real difference for the people who share their lands

The wetlands and grasslands that sustain cranes and other wildlife are often on private lands owned by farmers, ranchers, and other community members. In many places where we work, rapid population growth, chronic poverty, and food insecurity are fueling the conversion of these lands for settlements, agriculture, and livestock. In East Africa, we are betting that the future of Endangered Grey Crowned Cranes and other wildlife is best secured by providing tools to communities to empower themselves through improvements in family planning, public health, safe water and sanitation, livestock fodder, fruit trees, and other alternative livelihoods. Can we improve human well-being enough to make a real difference for wildlife in such a rapidly changing region? We don't know but the future of cranes and wildlife here, and in many impoverished areas of Africa and Asia, hangs in the balance.

### Managing protected areas so that wildlife and people thrive together

Many of the world's poorest countries have made enormous commitments to protected areas, havens for many endangered cranes and a rich diversity of other wildlife. Public support for these protected areas is essential as conflict grows over limited natural resources. Our Kafue Flats Restoration Partnership in Zambia is about rethinking this protected area as a "thriving floodplain for all" that promotes healthy wetlands for endangered cranes and diverse wildlife, for the well-being and resilience of local communities, and for the regional and national economy. Our successful invasive species removal project engaged local people in the restoration of a national park for the first time in Zambia, and now we are taking a big leap forward with our 20-year co-management partnership with the Government of Zambia to engage local communities in supporting law enforcement,

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sustainable land use and livelihoods, ecological restoration, and science-based adaptive management. Finding a sustainable balance between wildlife habitat and human needs on the Kafue Flats won't be easy, quick, or cheap, but the future of Africa's diverse, productive conservation lands (and cranes) is at stake.

### Solving crop depredation to find lasting peace between farmers and wildlife

Crop damage from cranes is a major problem in many places where we work. Sandhill Cranes in the U.S. (and their cousins, the Eurasian Cranes, in Europe) are a great conservation success story—thanks in large part to conservation on agricultural lands—but their growing numbers are giving rise to increasing crop depredation that creates a costly challenge for farmers. In poor countries of Africa and Asia, where crop depredation by cranes can threaten food security, we are seeing an increase in poisoning and shooting of cranes and other birds. Our research in Wisconsin led to the development of Avipel®, a natural bird deterrent that helps prevent crop damage to corn, and now we are working to ensure this product is applied correctly and broadly across the U.S. and made affordable for farmers while developing new deterrents for other crops. These and other solutions will help us better support farmers who are so important in our efforts to save wildlife.

Elegant and inspiring, cranes demand courageous conservation solutions, and they bring us together to take action. We will carry many valuable lessons of the past 50 years with us long into the future, as we grow and expand our programs and impact. Thank you so much for your continued support and partnership as we seek a healthier planet for cranes, ourselves, and all life on earth, together.



Photo of Black Crowned Cranes with nomadic herders in Chad, by Rich Beilfuss



## Craneshop.org

Visit us for all the crane lovers on your gift list this season.

Your purchase always supports our worldwide work to save cranes and the places where cranes dance!

Want to talk to a person? We are always happy to assist you at 608-356-9462 ext. 171



## Celebrating Our Members

On Saturday, September 17, we celebrated you, our members, with our annual Member Appreciation Day! More than 350 members enjoyed special tours of the cranes, our prairie, and of course, Crane City. This is a day our staff looks forward to because it gives us the opportunity to meet the people that support us and share our passion for saving cranes. Our annual Good Egg Award winners embody this same passion, and we were thrilled to present the 2022 awards to Emeritus Board Director Kathleen D. Ryan who leads every conversation with "Have you heard of the International Crane Foundation?" and to our Baraboo, WI conservation partners Dan and Cathy Holzman, who keep a watchful eye on a pair of Whooping Cranes that chose their land as their breeding territory.



George Archibald and Kathleen D. Ryan



Rich Beilfuss, Cathy and Dan Holzman, and George Archibald

Save the Date for the International Crane Foundation's 50th Anniversary Celebration on the evening of Saturday, September 16, 2023, following our annual Member Appreciation Day!



# Stepping Up Together, for Crane Conservation

Dear Craniac,

The liftoff of the International Crane Foundation in 1973 barely registered in the noisy awakening of the environmental movement. That same year, the Endangered Species Act became law in the United States, and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species brought nations together in cooperation to protect endangered plants and animals from depletion due to trade. Laws and treaties are important, but they aren't enough to save the world's crane species. Bold action is required. Today, the International Crane Foundation is even more committed to conservation action!

## Thank you for responding to the call to action.

Throughout the last 50 years, our impacts continue to multiply through the actions of volunteers, interns, staff, and members like you. Some of the most important wetlands for crane breeding, wintering, and migration stopovers are now protected in China, Mongolia, Vietnam, and the United States. Critically Endangered Siberian Cranes and Endangered Whooping Cranes are increasing in numbers. Two national parks on the Kafue Flats of Zambia, the most important wetland on the continent for Wattled Cranes, are now under our co-management. Together we are taking great leaps forward for cranes, and in doing so are saving wetlands, and grasslands and improving human livelihoods.

Even as we celebrate our shared achievements, *we can't let up*. Climate change, economic and geopolitical instability, and grinding poverty in historic crane strongholds require even greater innovation, investment, and courageous action. We aren't backing down. With defiant optimism, we face the challenges already visible while scanning the horizon to stay ahead of new threats. Can we count on you to step up with us?



Gratefully,  
*Kari Stauffer*  
 Kari Stauffer  
 Vice President of Development

P.S. Please use the enclosed envelope or visit [savingcranes.org/donate/](https://savingcranes.org/donate/) to send in your year-end contribution today. Your role is crucial to the future we envision for cranes and for all of us.

Photos by Zheng Zhongjie and Tom Lynn

## WAYS TO GIVE

Consider helping crane conservation projects grow by signing up to become a monthly giver at: [savingcranes.org/monthly](https://savingcranes.org/monthly) Or call 608-356-9462 ext. 807.



# Betsy Didrickson

December 22, 1961 – October 4, 2022

## Remembering the Voice of the Cranes

By Rich Beilfuss, President & CEO



For nearly 25 years, Betsy Didrickson added quality, beauty, and inspiration to everything she touched at the International Crane Foundation.

Betsy was the third and longest-serving librarian at the International Crane Foundation's Ron Sauey Memorial Library for Bird Conservation. Betsy managed and shared information on saving endangered cranes and their critical habitats in key projects around the world. In 2002, Betsy became editor of the International Crane Foundation Bugle, and I was honored to work with her on the cover story of her first Bugle. We joined together to

produce more than 50 articles over the years. Betsy understood our readers better than any of us and knew just how to tweak a story to provide deeper meaning and connection.

Betsy loved to collect facts, folklore, and fanciful tales about the rich cultural connection between cranes and people worldwide, and published a magical book of her favorites, *The Quality of Cranes*. Betsy turned George Archibald's rich collection of memoirs into *My Life with Cranes*, a delightful collection of stories and photos from the founding days of the International Crane Foundation. She also applied her creative talent to our dry 10-year strategic plan to create the stunning "Cranes: Symbols of Survival." From managing the library to improving our exhibit signage to sharing resources and information with fellow Craniacs in more than 60 countries, to finding the perfect photo to tell a story, Betsy's dedication to the International Crane Foundation's mission, and her magical glow, always shined through.

On behalf of your entire family of staff, volunteers, interns, partners, and past and present Directors of the International Crane Foundation, thank you, Betsy. Whoop! Whoop! to you. We will miss you dearly.



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The Bugle is the triannual newsletter of the International Crane Foundation. ICF was founded in 1973 by Ronald Sauey, Ph.D. (1948-1987) and George Archibald, Ph.D.

Interim Editor: Hannah Field

Bugle comments or questions? Please email [Bugle@savingcranes.org](mailto:Bugle@savingcranes.org) or P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913 To become a sponsor of this publication, please contact the editor.

Memberships make our work possible. Please join or give a gift membership. If you have questions about your membership, please email [membership@savingcranes.org](mailto:membership@savingcranes.org)

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## International Crane Foundation

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*Address Service Requested*

# Gathering of the Crane Heritage Society

*By Hannah Field, Planned Giving Coordinator*

**O**n a crisp October day, dedicated crane enthusiasts gathered as one to celebrate their shared passion and investment in crane conservation as members of the *Crane Heritage Society*. The George Archibald Welcome Center in Baraboo resonated with crane stories as President & CEO Rich Beilfuss, and Co-Founder George Archibald shared their visions for the exciting years ahead.



*Photo by Darcy Love*

The *Crane Heritage Society* is a special group of members, who are supporting crane conservation for future generations by including the International Crane Foundation in their estate plans. The action they take now, to support cranes and the places they dance, are inspiring and will have a lasting impact long into the future through their legacy plans.

As the wind and rain overtook the prairies outside, members engaged with each other inside over a cup of coffee, sharing their conservation knowledge and crane experiences. From farming solutions to wildlife recovery tactics, to time spent in public crane education, members from diverse backgrounds, across many states, took part in the conversation. As the event wrapped up, many walked away with a feeling of camaraderie and inspiration for the future.

As we watch new generations engage in the outdoors and conservation, consider protecting your shared family values and philanthropic interests by

including the International Crane Foundation in your estate plans. If you are interested in joining the *Crane Heritage Society* or learning about planned giving options available to you and your family, you may contact Hannah Field at 608-356-9462 ext. 117 or [legacy@savingcranes.org](mailto:legacy@savingcranes.org), or for more information go to [savingcranes.org/donate/make-bequest/](http://savingcranes.org/donate/make-bequest/)