

INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

The **Bugle**

Saving cranes and the places where cranes dance!

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Community Conservation in Uganda

*Photo of Grey Crowned Crane by
Jodi Legge/International Crane Foundation*



Learn about the surprising connections between public health, family planning, livestock fodder, food security, sustainable livelihoods...and the future of Endangered Grey Crowned Cranes in East Africa. *Article page 4.*



Field Notes from the President

By Dr. Rich Beilfuss, President & CEO

What a party! It was a joy to celebrate our 50th anniversary gala together with all of you, in person and in spirit, who made possible our past 50 years of conservation impact for cranes and so much more. Thank you! Back in 1973, who could have believed we would evolve into a global conservation leader with staff and programs in the places that matter most for endangered cranes. Who would have predicted that we would have such a beautiful headquarters and Cranes of the World visitor experience in Wisconsin, offices in China, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia, South Africa, and Texas, regional programs and partnerships with local communities, organizations, governments, universities, and businesses in 25 countries across North America, Asia, and Africa—and a network of craniacs in more than 50 countries worldwide.

One of the big challenges we'll focus on is the conservation of cranes on agricultural lands. When we started our journey together back in 1973, most of the world's crane species depended on natural wetlands and grasslands, often far from human settlements. In subsequent decades, the intensification of agriculture worldwide and loss of natural habitats has pushed all 15 species of cranes into farming landscapes for all or part of the year. Cranes and farmers are in conflict in many of these places. In East Africa, endangered Grey Crowned Cranes now depend on the croplands that replaced the wetlands and savannas where they once thrived, and farmers beat, stone, and poison cranes that feed on

their newly planted crops. In China, endangered Siberian and White-naped Cranes that venture onto farmlands eat poison-laced grain set out to deter geese and rats from feeding on crops. There are important exceptions—Sarus Cranes continue to thrive on the densely populated agricultural landscapes of India, where they are held sacred by Hindu farmers—but we urgently need solutions that foster a lasting peace between farmers and cranes on five continents.

This August, I traveled to Estonia with several ICF staff and more than 80 colleagues from 20 countries across Europe, Asia, and Africa for the 10th international meeting of the European Crane Working Group. Thanks to the great leadership of our host, Dr. Ivar Ojaste of the Estonian University of Life Sciences, we enjoyed a wonderful week of sharing and fellowship with colleagues new and old.



We were especially interested in learning about the different European strategies for reducing crop damage caused by Common Cranes (also known as Eurasian Cranes) and how we might increase our collaboration and lesson-sharing with the European Crane Working Group members.

The Common Crane and Sandhill Crane are the two most successful crane species in the world and share many similarities. Both species are recovering from overhunting and habitat loss during the 19th and early 20th centuries and are highly dependent on wetlands and croplands in the agricultural landscapes that displaced their

natural habitats. Both species are increasingly in conflict with farmers over damage to crops. Anne Lacy, ICF Senior Manager - North America Program, shared our experience with developing Avipel, a non-toxic chemical deterrent that tastes terrible to cranes and other birds when applied to crop seeds, and our efforts to make it affordable, convenient, and effective for the farmers who use it. Our impressive colleagues from Germany, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Hungary, and elsewhere shared their ideas and experiences from across Europe to help us solve this global challenge. Farms with a more diverse mix of crops,

fields with lure crops, affordable deterrents, and better support programs for farmers who support cranes and other wildlife are all part of the solution.

I returned to Wisconsin with renewed energy and enthusiasm. The future of cranes on farmlands is just one of the many conservation challenges we will solve together through the innovative work of our staff, our deep and wonderful partnerships, and all of you who've made this work possible for so long. Another 50 years, wow! We can't do it without you.



Stephanie Shanks/International Crane Foundation

ICF Global Retreat Global Staff Get Together in Baraboo

International Crane Foundation staff from our offices across Africa and Asia, Europe and North America met at our headquarters in Baraboo in June. A packed week of retreats and workshops included time for early morning hikes and family fun in the area as well. This was the first meeting of global staff since the pandemic. Our

Board of Directors met during this time as well, bringing even more of us on site. The global staff retreat was a wonderful way to kick off our 50th anniversary celebrations and to reconnect and recommit to the global challenge of saving cranes and the places where they dance.

Photo of Common Cranes in a new sown field by Günter Nowald.



Photo by Jodi Legge/International Crane Foundation

Community Conservation in Uganda:

Latrines, Family Planning, and Climate-Smart Agriculture to Save Cranes and Habitats

By Jodi Legge, Director of External Affairs

The children at the Kabirizi Annex Primary School ran down the hill, with big smiles, to greet the visitors from the International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust (ICF/EWT) Partnership. It was going to be an exciting day for the community, and everyone had dressed for a celebration. The school in the Rukiga District of Southwestern Uganda had just gotten a new latrine, built by ICF/EWT Partnership. The girls were excited to start using it. They had watched construction for months and understood that after today, they no longer had to share a bathroom with the boys.

In the “last-mile” communities in Uganda, resources are scarce, and people who live here are often the last to get the services they need. In the larger cities, government schools are well funded, but children in remote communities don’t have the transportation to get to them. Instead, they rely on poorly funded government schools or private ones for primary education. These schools raise money from community members and outside organizations, but most of the funds go to paying the teachers. Resources like water, food, and books are often paid for by the parents, who have little money to spare. A private latrine, especially one that includes separate areas for boys and girls, is considered a luxury.

Why would ICF build a latrine?

Before ICF built the latrine at the Kabirizi Annex Primary School, most of the girls dropped out by age 12—they were too

embarrassed to continue sharing a bathroom with the boys once they began having their periods. The girls often married young and started having children soon after—sometimes 10 or 12 kids during their lifetime. All these children meant lots of mouths to feed, and Rukiga was running out of agricultural land to grow enough food to support the population. The wetlands became the only space available to grow crops. This led to significant habitat loss for the Endangered Grey Crowned Crane.



Peer farmers. Courtesy of Margaret Pyke Trust.

“The International Crane Foundation knew we needed to reduce human actions in the wetlands, especially agricultural activities that caused erosion and wetland sedimentation,” said ICF’s East Africa Regional Manager Dr. Adalbert Aine-omucunguzi. “These activities were destroying the habitat for cranes, but also damaging the wetlands for people.”

The Rushebeya-Kanyabaha wetland in southwest Uganda reduced in size by 33% between 1986 and 2020, which significantly decreased the habitat for Grey Crowned Cranes. Since the ICF team had already

formed a partnership to improve human and environmental health in 2021, the idea to build a latrine to help the girls stay in school was a logical next step. The partnership was already providing healthcare services, including family planning, to the Rukiga District.

“The idea of building a restroom came from the community,” said ICF’s Vice President of Africa Programs Kerryn Morrison.



Grey Crowned Cranes. Courtesy of Margaret Pyke Trust.

“With a \$10,000 investment, we determined this could have a real impact in the community and would lead to a reduced burden on the wetlands.”

An integrated partnership for conservation, communities, and cranes

The integrated population, health, and environment partnership formed in early 2021 among ICF, EWT, the Margaret Pyke Trust, Rugarama Hospital, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It was designed to serve communities throughout the Rukiga District, while also supporting conservation initiatives. ICF and EWT would work directly with communities to provide climate-smart agriculture training, and Margaret Pyke Trust, Rugarama Hospital and the London School would provide health and family planning services. With early reports already showing better health outcomes and higher growth in crane numbers in this project area compared to other sites in Uganda, the project, funded by the UK Government through Darwin Initiative, has been extended through 2026 to include additional communities.

Initially the partnership focused on barriers to family planning services as well as the many requests to help community members find sustainable incomes. When conducting the initial research, staff found the Grey Crowned Crane is very important to the community. It is also the National Bird of Uganda and is featured on the country’s flag. “We realized quickly the communities wanted to help us save the cranes,” said Uganda Country Manager Patrick Engoru. “However, if they had to choose between feeding their families and saving a species, their families would obviously come first. We had to work collectively to address their needs before we could also save cranes together.”

While ICF addressed the need for sustainable incomes and smarter agricultural practices, the health care team took on basic health care and the quality of family planning. Many women had no access to information or services, which led to larger families than desired. ICF’s Uganda project team had already developed strong relationships with the communities where the Grey Crowned Crane was most at risk, so local farmers welcomed the climate-smart agricultural training—including planting Napier Grass to feed the cattle and protect the wetlands and digging trenches to protect crops from erosion caused by heavy rains happening because of climate change. “This integrated project is complex, but these issues are overlapping,” said Margaret Pyke Trust’s Uganda Manager Uwimbabazi Sarah. “The health care partners are supporting the community members’ ability to choose the size of their families and provide better health care overall, while ICF is teaching better ways to farm and manage wetlands. We know this project will lead to improved wetlands, crane habitats, and human health.”

As the ribbon-cutting ceremony began on that hot July day at Kabirizi Annex Primary School, the girls sang words of thanks, of inspiration, and of hope—not just for the new latrine, but for the chance at a better life, a healthier wetland, and lots and lots of cranes.

“We realized quickly the communities wanted to help us save the cranes. However, if they had to choose between feeding their families and saving a species, their families would obviously come first. We had to work collectively to address their needs before we could also save cranes together.”

–Uganda Country Manager Patrick Engoru



Climate-smart agriculture programs protect wetlands and reap better harvests. Photos left and right by Jodi Legge/ICF. Center photo courtesy of Margaret Pyke Trust.

A Shared Vision

A shared vision brought ornithologists George Archibald and Ron Sauvey together in 1973 to establish the International Crane Foundation. They quickly enlisted others around the globe who were captivated by the idea of a world where all 15 crane species thrive. Over the next 50 years, through collaboration and cooperation, the International Crane Foundation made remarkable discoveries, created new protected areas, empowered local conservation champions, and restored some of the most beautiful places on earth.

Because of you and your investment in this vision, the International Crane Foundation will continue to act boldly and globally to protect cranes, their habitats, and the people cranes live among. Let's celebrate our first 50 years, as we shape the next 50 together!

Photo by Ciming Mei



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Karen and Martin Voss

Eau Claire, WI
Members for 50 years

On a summer night in 1973, we were on the edge of a marsh on a mission to photograph a Sandhill Crane family. My husband Marty and I sweltered in down sleeping bags—our only refuge from clouds of mosquitoes. I peeked out to see George Archibald sleeping soundly, his bare midriff black with mosquitoes. “How does he do this?” I asked myself, then and many times since, as George described his vision of this repurposed horse farm becoming a world-renowned center for research and protection of rare cranes and their wetland habitats. Fifty years later, the International Crane Foundation continues to be one of our most beloved organizations. We are committed to supporting their work far into the future.



Karen Voss, third from left, and Martin Voss, second from right in an ICF photo from 1974

Some Historical Highlights

1970s

1973—Co-Founders George Archibald and Ron Sauvey establish ICF on former Sauvey horse farm in Baraboo, WI.



1974—George Archibald gets permission to study cranes in Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea, while Ron Sauvey focuses on the last remaining Siberian Cranes that winter in India.

1979—Archibald secures invitation to visit China's foremost ornithologist Prof. Cheng Tso-hsin in Beijing, leading to more than four decades of ICF conservation partnership in China.

All photos: International Crane Foundation except Whooping Cranes (2000s) and Blue Cranes (2010s) by Ciming Mei, Mongolian landscape (2020s) by Spike Millington

1980s

1982—Tex, a rare Whooping Crane imprinted on humans, bonds with Archibald and hatches her chick Gee Whiz. Tex is killed by a raccoon on the same night George appears on Johnny Carson's “Tonight Show” to tell America this remarkable story, but Gee Whiz lives on to contribute 178 chicks/grand-chicks for Whooping Crane reintroduction over the next four decades.

1983—ICF moves to current quarters on Shady Lane in Baraboo. Two years later, ICF became the only place in the world to house all 15 crane species.



1987—ICF Co-Founder Ron Sauvey passes away unexpectedly at age 38.

1989—ICF focuses on community livelihoods to support Black-necked Cranes at Cao Hai, one of China's first community-based conservation projects.

1990s

1993—ICF organizes the first African Crane and Wetland Workshop in Botswana, bringing together 100 people from all over Africa for the first time in the post-Apartheid era. Partnerships forged at that time continue into the present day.



1994—ICF signs a 50-year lease to create the Lumbini Crane Sanctuary at the Birthplace of Buddha in Nepal. Sarus Cranes are sacred in the Buddhist and Hindu cultures of this region.

1995—ICF launches long-term efforts to improve Zambezi River water management for cranes, wildlife and communities across Mozambique, Zambia, and southern Africa.

1997—Vietnam establishes first wetland national park, Tram Chim, culminating from long-term collaboration with ICF to protect Eastern Sarus Cranes and many other bird species in the Mekong River Delta.

2000s



2001—Whooping Cranes led from Wisconsin to Florida by ultralight aircraft to reestablish the eastern migratory flyway for Whooping Cranes that had been lost a century earlier.

2006—ICF field tests lead to the eventual marketing of a nontoxic seed coating called Avipel that farmers use to deter cranes from damaging crops.

2006—ICF's Phu My project in Vietnam wins the Equator Prize from the United Nations Development Programme. The project integrates wetland conservation with improved income for local people, who successfully market handbags made from renewable wetland sedge *Lepironia*.

2009—ICF begins partnership with multi-agency team that is the first to safely capture wild Whooping Cranes at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, leading to groundbreaking spatial and health research along the population's North American central flyway.

2010s

2012—ICF starts work in Rugezi Marsh in Rwanda, focusing on improving the livelihoods of people who share the marsh with Endangered Grey Crowned Cranes.

2014—ICF completes an award-winning, 10-year Global Environmental Facility project that brings together China, Russia, Iran, and Kazakhstan to secure the migratory flyway for Siberian Cranes.

2014—Approx. 150,000 acres proclaimed a Protected Environment in South Africa's Lake District, Chrissiesmeer, protecting key habitat for Blue, Grey Crowned and Wattled Cranes.

2017—ICF Beijing office opens-- China is home to half of the world's crane species.



2020s



2021—ICF reopens to visitors after a \$10 million expansion and renovation at our Baraboo headquarters, including the new George Archibald Welcome Center.

2021—ICF signs 20-year agreement with the government of Zambia to help restore and manage Lochinvar and Blue Lagoon National Parks and surrounding floodplains of the Kafue Flats.

2022— In partnership with the Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia, ICF supports a 20-year agreement to manage one of the most diverse crane areas on earth, Mongolia's Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve.



Celebrating 50 Years of Flying Together



Stephanie Shanks/International Crane Foundation

On Sept. 16, about 400 of the International Crane Foundation family gathered for a gala dinner at the Kalahari Resorts and Convention Centers near our headquarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin to celebrate 50 years of saving cranes. We welcomed supporters, volunteers, board directors and former directors, current and former staff, interns, partners, and old friends—including some who have been with us since our founding in 1973. Co-Founder George Archibald and President & CEO Rich Beilfuss walked the crowd through our history, from our beginnings on a humble horse farm to the present day with our vital conservation programs in collaboration with a global network of partners in more than 50 countries worldwide. We are so grateful to all of you who were able to join us in Baraboo, and to those of you who have wished us well from wherever you are. We're proud of what we've been able to do because of your steadfast support. Keep flying with us!



A Moment of Kinship

In a small white tent in a remote valley in Mongolia, 15 people quietly conversed. Amid the human voices, I could pick out Eurasian skylarks chattering, and the calls of the nearly 50 White-naped Cranes roosting in the wetland half a kilometer away. This peaceful scene threaded with birdsong gave no hint of the power of this moment.

This group of people had come together from China, Mongolia, the United States, Canada, and Germany to discuss the newly designated Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve, its vulnerable and endangered crane species, and ideas about how we can partner across boundaries to save them. The group included researchers, educators, diplomats, business people and philanthropists. Despite the different languages, ages, nationalities and backgrounds, a spirit of harmony pervaded the tent.

As I sat in that tent just before sunset listening to the collaborative discussion, I realized that conversations

like this, just as special and momentous, had taken place time and again over the last 50 years. Moments precisely like this one helped spread the work of saving cranes across more than 50 countries and brought kinship among those involved in that work.

None of this amazing cooperation and problem-solving is possible without your support. Cranes unite us. We come together through them and for them, and together we tackle the biggest conservation issues the world faces. I am so grateful. Thank you.



Kari Stauffer

Kari Stauffer
Vice President of Development



WAYS TO GIVE

Please send your donation in the enclosed envelope today or visit savingcranes.org/donate to make your year-end contribution.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



Becky Von Haden
Wind Lake, WI
Member for eight years

Since I got involved in the International Crane Foundation, I've followed cranes throughout the country. In 2012 I went to Nebraska for my first Sandhill Crane spring migration, and I've gone ever since. Inspired by George Archibald and other ICF staff, in 2017 I went to Texas to see Whooping Cranes. I went again in 2023. Alongside ICF staff, I was lucky to track Whooping Cranes at Horicon Marsh and Jasper-Pulaski Wildlife area in Indiana. Because of my love of cranes, and the knowledge and experience I've gained through ICF, I do all I can to spread the message of habitat restoration and wetland protection. I am proud to be called a "craniac" and ICF member!



Skyler and Leslie Bellwood
Minneapolis, MN
Members for two years

Cranes were our spark birds for birding. Ever since we saw a Sandhill Crane pass over the Mississippi River from our apartment in Minneapolis, we've been following cranes—taking us to the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo and the Platte, while looking at every field in between. This Sandhill Crane brought us into a community of people who care for the future of cranes and the humans who love them. Without this community, cranes would no longer be here to inspire us with their steadfast bonds and gregarious displays. Cranes were here long before us and *Grus willing*, they will be here long after.



Forrest Hartmann
Baraboo, WI
ICF co-founder, member from the beginning

Why are cranes important to me?
Why should saving cranes be important to everyone?

Because in resolving to save the existing species of these beautiful birds in the next 50 years, we are unconditionally committing ourselves to preserving the habitat that they need to survive. And in protecting crane habitat, we mortals, perhaps accidentally, just happen to wind up saving habitat required by thousands of other living organisms in the process. What a deal that is!



Nancy Merrill (left) and Claire Mirande (right). Photo by Kate Fitzwilliams/International Crane Foundation

Two Win Good Egg Awards

By Jennifer Fiene, Membership Manager

During our annual Member Appreciation Day on Saturday, Sept. 16, we presented two winners—Nancy Merrill and Claire Mirande—with Good Egg Awards. These “Good Eggs” have gone above and beyond for cranes and conservation, and we thank them for their dedication.

Nancy established the Yampa Valley Crane Festival near her home in Colorado in response to a Sandhill Crane hunting proposal. And she recently completed her service on our Board of Directors. Claire is retiring after more than 30 years as a staff member in varying roles, including as Curator of Birds and most recently as Grants Officer-Asia.

Growing Africa Team Takes Time to Connect

By Kerryn Morrison, ICF VP International: Director of Africa / EWT Head of Africa Conservation

The number of people working for the International Crane Foundation (ICF)/Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) Partnership in Africa almost doubled over the past four years. With ICF’s registration in Uganda and Zambia as an NGO (non-governmental organization) during the COVID-19 pandemic and a scale-up of our strategies for impact, staff in each of our key countries in Africa has grown. It was time for us all to get to know each other.



The Africa team came together this summer for a five-day workshop in Eldoret in Western Kenya. The team of 51, from 10 countries, included all our Africa staff and key partners from Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda. We also celebrated the 50th anniversaries of ICF and EWT, and our 30 years of coordinated crane conservation across Africa. We looked critically at our status and explored the future as a foundation for developing our strategy for the next 10 years. We also got some training on administrative aspects of our work and spent a day in the field at Kipsaina learning more about the Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group, wetlands, research and monitoring, and community work.

It was amazing to have everyone together and to forge relationships that will support our team going forward. The meeting paved the way for a stronger sense of collaboration and deepening of our strategic focus. Together we are working towards achieving our shared vision of securing cranes and the places where cranes dance, all in partnership with local communities.



Top photo: Piet Botha/International Crane Foundation. Bottom photo: Christie Craig/International Crane Foundation

A Fond Farewell to Claire Mirande

By Dr. George Archibald, Co-Founder & Senior Conservationist



For the past 39 years, the cranes of the world have benefited from Claire Mirande’s work at the International Crane Foundation. Armed with degrees from Cornell and Rutgers and experience with birds at the Bronx Zoo, Claire began her career at ICF as Curator of Birds in 1984. Within a few years, Claire had co-authored a handbook on the management of cranes in captivity with colleagues from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). In part through her skills in breeding cranes, and to alleviate the dangers of the majority of captive Whooping Cranes at a single center, in 1989, 22 Whooping Cranes at the USGS’s Patuxent Wildlife Research Center immigrated to ICF’s Crane City.

Claire worked in raising captive Siberian Cranes as well, and in 1987 traveled to the remote Oka Nature Reserve in what was then the Soviet Union to partner with scientists there. In 1992, Claire received a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. At that point she realized she would no longer be able to manage the physical activities associated with the care of captive cranes. Claire teamed up with Jim Harris, then ICF president, in helping cranes in Asia. In company with Crawford Prentice, now our VP of Asia Programs, in 2000 they landed a \$10 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) for the conservation of Siberian Cranes as a flagship species for wetland biodiversity in China, Iran, Kazakhstan and Russia. This was the first flyway-level conservation project supported by UNEP and GEF. Following seven years of productive work that helped to safeguard sixteen wetland sites across two flyways, their program received the highest recommendation from both the U.N. and the associated nations.



Since the end of the UNEP grant in 2010, Claire has continued to help colleagues working in Asia achieve important conservation outcomes for cranes by providing sound guidance, securing financial support and managing grants, most recently as Asia Program Manager and Grant Officer for Asia. In 2016, Claire and Jim co-authored a comprehensive revision of the Crane Conservation Strategy for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature that provided the centerpiece for ICF’s conservation planning efforts. Then in 2015, the Disney Conservation Fund allocated a \$2.5 million grant to conserve Siberian Cranes in China and eastern Russia over a 10-year period. Now entering its final year, this program has helped secure the adaptive management of its key breeding, staging and wintering sites and strengthened cooperation along its flyway. Claire has had a hand in guiding all the diverse aspects of ICF’s Asia program, from community engagement with herding families in Mongolia to research on tracking migration routes, from environmental education across flyways to crafting international action plans. She is never happier than when in the field working directly with our partners, communities and the birds that continue to inspire her. Claire’s exuberance, optimism and concern for the welfare of others—and for cranes—endears her in the hearts of friends around the world. She is the best of us, and we wish her well in her retirement.

Top photo: Claire at Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve in Mongolia, 2023. Nyambayar Batbayar. Bottom photo: George Archibald, Claire Mirande and Crawford Prentice at ICF headquarters in Wisconsin, 2000. International Crane Foundation.

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

Editor: Angela Woodward

Bugle comments or questions? Please email Bugle@savingcranes.org or send mail to P.O. Box 447, Baraboo, WI 53913. To become a sponsor of this publication, please contact the editor.

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