



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

April 2017-March 2018



INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

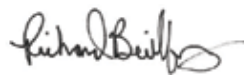
Did you know that wild Whooping Cranes – once reduced to just 21 birds – now number over 700? That China has designated 46 National Crane Nature Reserves, protecting five species and 71 million acres of land? Or, that 17 crane festivals, from Mongolia to New Mexico, bring together many thousands of people to celebrate and safeguard our endangered cranes?

On these pages, we share stories from our conservation efforts in Africa, Asia, and North America. By working strategically with partners around the world, we have achieved tremendous impact for cranes and their landscapes. We work in some of the most rapidly developing places, like northeast China and the coast of Texas. But we also work in some of the poorest places on earth, like the farmlands of East Africa and South Asia. Across all these lands, we have learned that genuine conservation solutions require idealism and pragmatism. In some places, our work leads to strictly protected areas, and in other places, we help communities sustainably harvest and market natural wetland products to improve each family's standard of living.

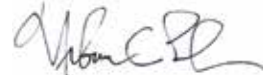
We hope you will enjoy this collection of highlights and numbers, but more importantly, we hope you are proud of the investment you've made in saving cranes. Your support makes possible our efforts to resolve threats to cranes, ensure healthy landscapes, bring people together, improve livelihoods, empower future leaders, take action based on science, and restore cranes to the wild.

Please continue to support the International Crane Foundation as your trusted partner in conservation. Together, we can save cranes and the places where cranes dance.

With gratitude,



Richard Beilfuss
President & CEO



Urban Lehner
Chairman of the Board of Directors



Cover photos of Demoiselle Crane with chicks in Mongolia by Ciming Mei

Our work is
focused on
7
key strategies

RESOLVING
THREATS TO
CRANES

ENSURING
HEALTHY
LANDSCAPES

BRINGING PEOPLE
TOGETHER

IMPROVING
LIVELIHOODS

EMPOWERING
FUTURE LEADERS

ACTION BASED ON
SCIENCE

RESTORING
CRANES TO THE
WILD

IMPACT by the NUMBERS!

By working strategically with partners around the world, we are able to have tremendous impact for cranes and their landscapes. Our seven key strategies keep us laser focused on our conservation mission.

Partnerships in **60** countries covering **5** continents

More than **90,000** Sandhill Cranes in the eastern population after near extirpation in the 19th century

More than **200** Grey Crowned Cranes rescued from illegal captivity

Over **1,500** miles of power lines marked or buried to prevent fatal collisions in South Africa, Bhutan, and the U.S.

Over **505** Whooping Cranes in the natural flock from a low of just **21**
232,000 acres of critical wetlands protected in Africa through Conservation Agreements

46 National Crane Nature Reserves protecting five crane species and **71** million acres in China

17 crane festivals around the world celebrating cranes and their landscapes

1,277 dedicated volunteers

23,448 visitors at HQ in 2017 engaged in crane conservation

8,817 members actively supporting conservation

400 households supported through sustainable handicraft production from Phu My wetland in Vietnam

8 conservation-friendly beekeeping coops protecting wetlands and sustaining **112** families in Rwanda

310 wetland scientists trained through our university network in the Mekong Delta

16,545 image, audio, video, and scientific document files in our digital asset management system

111 rare cranes in our species bank as a hedge against extinction

143 reintroduced Whooping Cranes in the wild

45,000 social media followers

25 years of aerial surveys of key wetlands in southern Africa

192,000 acres of cropland treated in 2017 with natural bird deterrent Avipel to reduce conflict with farmers

More than **960** interns trained in field ecology, captive management, educational outreach, and much more

WHY CRANES?

Good question – here's why

Cranes unite us.

The universal appeal of cranes as symbols for conservation brings people together and inspires enthusiastic action to resolve broader conservation challenges that matter deeply to everyone. Cranes are international ambassadors for peace and goodwill and serve as a flagship species for some of the most important places on Earth. Together, we can find new pathways to sustain our water, land, and livelihoods.

Help us save cranes and the amazing places where cranes dance!

Photo by Ted Thousand

OUR WORK IS ABOUT Life on Earth

With 11 of 15 species threatened with extinction, cranes are among the most endangered families of birds on Earth. From bringing back the Whooping Crane from the brink of extinction to reversing the decline of endangered cranes in Asia and Africa, our efforts ensure that cranes will always grace our planet.



But the work of the International Crane Foundation is about so much more than cranes. Our work is about life on Earth.

Healthy Indicators

Highly dependent on healthy wetlands and freshwater, cranes are excellent indicators for the state of our environment. To save the Wattled Crane, we are undertaking the largest wetland restoration project in Africa. We are removing thousands of hectares of invasive shrubs and improving water conditions in the Kafue Flats of Zambia to meet the ecological needs of cranes and many other rare and threatened species.



Goodwill Ambassadors

Traversing international boundaries and uniting people across countries, cranes are ambassadors for peace and cooperation. Sharing a passion for cranes, we bring together scientists and conservationists from North and South Korea, India and Pakistan, Russia and China – more than 60 countries on five continents.



Flagships for Conservation

Culturally revered across much of the world, cranes are unique flagships for saving some of the most beautiful and diverse places on Earth. Our efforts to secure Poyang Lake in China benefit thousands of water birds, including most of the world's population of Swan Geese, Yangtze dolphins, and water deer, not to mention the livelihoods for thousands of people.



RESOLVING THREATS TO CRANES

This Tastes Yucky!

To keep our abundant Sandhill Cranes flourishing on farmlands, we must find new ways to counter their impact on the farmers' bottom line. We are working with state representatives across the political spectrum to help compensate farmers for their investment in Avipel, a non-toxic seed treatment we helped develop that prevents cranes and other wildlife from damaging new corn seedlings without harming wildlife.

Outreach to Safeguard Rare Whooping Cranes is Working

Illegal shootings are a threat to the fragile recovery of the Whooping Crane. We are working hard to mitigate the factors that contribute to these events through outreach and education in states with a high precedence of shootings and by strengthening punishments for convictions. We are creating communities that care about Whooping Cranes with our awareness campaigns in Alabama, Indiana, Texas, and Wisconsin. The winter of 2017-18 was the first in ten years without a shooting. In the next year, we will reach out to partners across the central flyway to continue to expand our outreach program to safeguard Whooping Cranes.



Crane Custodians in Uganda

In our quest to secure crane breeding sites on small, household-managed wetlands in Uganda, we initiated the crane custodianship program where volunteers take up the responsibility of caring for "their" cranes. The goal is to increase the breeding success of endangered Grey Crowned Cranes – the national symbol for Uganda. We provide training and equipment to the custodians for monitoring and recording information about nesting cranes. We also educate them on threats such as illegal domestication, egg removal, poisoning, and power line collisions. Our custodians have proven time and again to be powerful advocates for wild cranes living in close proximity to people who share their wetlands. We bring the custodians from different areas together so they can discuss their successes and challenges, and we are organizing celebratory events to raise awareness in the community.

Wildlife Crime Workshop

In early 2017, a workshop on wildlife crime took place in South Africa. The goal was to increase awareness about wildlife crimes such as poaching, trespassing, and related legislation. Wide-ranging attendance included members of the South African Police Service, Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, the Department of Environmental Affairs, Gert Sibande District municipality, Chrissiesmeer Protected Environment Land Owners Association, and community representatives. We collected information on the community's perceptions of wildlife crime to develop solutions to minimize conflicts between farmers and residents of Chrissiesmeer.





Did Hurricane Harvey Affect Whooping Cranes in Texas?

Our long-term monitoring of water and food availability for Whooping Cranes in coastal Texas became an important benchmark to evaluate the impact of Category 4 Hurricane Harvey that directly passed through the Whooping Cranes' wintering range. Working with partners, we employed a rapid assessment of freshwater quality in 33 ponds inundated with saltwater from the storm surge and provided a prioritized list of solar wells needing repair prior to the arrival of the cranes from their breeding grounds in Canada. Our efforts reduced the impact of the storm by providing sufficient fresh water for the cranes. Remarkably, coastal marsh conditions were exceptional with plenty of blue crabs and wolfberry fruits throughout most of the winter. Although impacts to the coastal communities of Fulton, Port Aransas, and our office in Rockport were devastating, the natural environment did not exhibit negative impacts. Increased storm flows from the coastal rivers carried freshwater loaded with nutrients, sediment, and small debris that increased productivity in the bays in the six months after the hurricane. We are grateful to Leiden Conservation Fund, USFWS, Mary Kohler, The Brown Foundation, Houston Zoo, Trull Foundation, Susan Vaughan Foundation, Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation, and Robert L. Patton for supporting these efforts.

ENSURING HEALTHY LANDSCAPES

Climate Change

Cranes are one of the most endangered families of birds in the world, and highly vulnerable to climate change – especially in the places where habitat loss, water resources development, and invasive species are already taking a toll on cranes. And cranes are important flagships for environmental changes. In the Zambezi River basin, we are challenging river developers to incorporate climate change into the design and operation of new dams, encouraging environmental flow releases from existing dams, and seeking energy alternatives more resilient to climate change and less harmful to river users and wildlife. In seeking to better manage water resources in the face of climate change, we draw from important lessons gained from two decades of engagement – that the needs of people, and the needs of cranes and many other species of plants and animals, are often surprisingly compatible and linked strongly to healthy wetlands and watersheds.



Walking Zhalong

Although people said the vast Zhalong Marsh in northeast China could never be crossed on foot, our crane biologist in China, Dr. Su Liying, devised a transect route across the widest and most crane-rich portion. Every year since 2007, Liying has led a scientific team for three arduous days of walking across Zhalong Marsh to collect information. Ten years of data trace the results of wetland restoration and recovery. Already it's clear that vegetation has responded to better water conditions. But the birds have lagged behind. Liying and her students are analyzing ten years of data to prepare recommendations on continuing marsh and crane recovery.



Historic Survey of Sarus Cranes in Myanmar

In 2017, we collaborated with Yangon University to conduct Sarus Crane surveys at 76 villages in nine townships, covering 13,500 square miles of the Ayeyarwady Delta. It was the most comprehensive survey of Sarus Cranes ever done in Myanmar. We monitored 67 Sarus Crane breeding sites in the Ayeyarwady Delta. Over 80 percent of nests were successful with 102 chicks hatched. Our surveys showed that Sarus Cranes are using a traditional kind of rice paddy, one that is often low-lying, flooded longer, and planted with only one crop of rice per year. This type of rice field also supports a rich diversity of wetland plants and animals. Sarus Cranes serve as an indicator species for these healthy agro-ecosystems, but these wildlife-friendly rice fields may disappear in the near future as farmers switch to a more intensive rice farming system. An urgent need exists for preserving this type of rice farming system in the Delta. We are working with Myanmar and international partners to find solutions for protecting these ecosystems.



Pau Tang

Three-year Survey Completed in Cambodia and Vietnam

In 2017, we completed a three-year research project on wetlands of deciduous Dipterocarp forests in Northern Cambodia and the Central Highland of Vietnam. These wetlands provide breeding habitat for the Eastern Sarus Crane population in Cambodia and Vietnam. We collaborated with four universities to survey approximately 500,000 acres of Dipterocarp forests in both countries. In addition to locating and describing wetlands and crane breeding sites, we also documented the fish and bird diversity of the wetlands. These wetlands are important for cranes but also for many endangered species such as Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, Asian Elephant, and a species of wild cattle called Bangteng. We provided the Ministry of Environment Cambodia with our new research findings of wetland ecosystems in Northern Cambodia for the development of the wise use of wetland policy for Cambodia. We are grateful to the Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden for supporting this work.



Zhou Hai Yan

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Passport to Poyang

The Siberian Cranes at Poyang Lake in China are revered for their beauty and rarity and are a favorite subject of photographers. This brings economic benefit to the area, but currently there is very little management of visitors.

Bird watchers, tourists, and photographers often approach the cranes too closely and disturb their feeding. We want people to experience the cranes in a way that does not disrupt them. And, we want Siberian Cranes to be valued for bringing eco-tourism and boosting the local economy. We are developing a model visitor program that can be replicated at other sites within the watershed. We have two new environmental educators who are training local guides, and we established an environmental education center. We are

providing binoculars and spotting scopes so people enjoy the cranes from a distance. New educational signage at viewing hotspots instructs visitors how to reduce human disturbance in sensitive ecosystems.

Poetry in the Prairie

Poetry in the Prairie was a season-long celebration of cranes and the landscapes they need to survive. A poetry competition kicked off the event. We received entries from poets ages 9 to 90! A selection of 35 poems was printed on outdoor material and installed throughout the prairie habitat our headquarters. Visitors encountered the poems as they viewed cranes and toured the site. Wisconsin's Poet Laureate gave a public presentation about the project at our Cranes of the World Festival. Our poetry exhibit culminated with a poetry reading during our annual Membership Appreciation Day in September. This project was funded by a grant from the Sauk County UW-Extension, Arts & Culture Committee and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

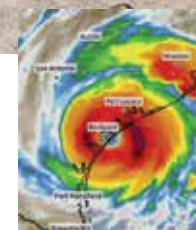


Site Renovation



Designing for Cranes and People

Our plans for a newly renovated visitor experience and crane exhibits took another step forward in 2017. Our Board of Directors approved the final layout for larger, more naturalistic enclosures for each species, complete with a water feature in each. Other design elements include murals that transport viewers to the natural landscapes where the species live in the wild. This helps our staff tell the compelling stories of the cranes and our work to ensure their survival in the wild. A new visitor center will provide the gateway as guests journey around the world, meeting our cranes, and becoming inspired to join the thousands of members and donors who make our work possible.



Destruction of Our Texas Office by Hurricane Harvey

In 2017, Category 4 Hurricane Harvey made landfall directly over Rockport, Texas, the home of our Texas Whooping Crane operations. The devastation was immense. It was days before we were allowed to return to the area to survey the damage. Everywhere, hundreds of volunteers cleared debris and delivered water and food to the cleanup workers. Our office complex in Rockport was completely destroyed. Luckily, the roof had fallen in such a way that it protected

some of the office contents. The exterior wall fell over our research boat, shielding it from flying debris. We salvaged as much as we could from the ruined building. We are thankful to the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program for offering us temporary office space in Corpus Christi. We quickly developed research plans to assess the response of the cranes to the hurricane, ordered replacement equipment and supplies, and made sure our team would be ready for the coming winter season. We are deeply grateful for the generous and rapid support of our members and the foundations that help us continue our important work.



Ted Thousand

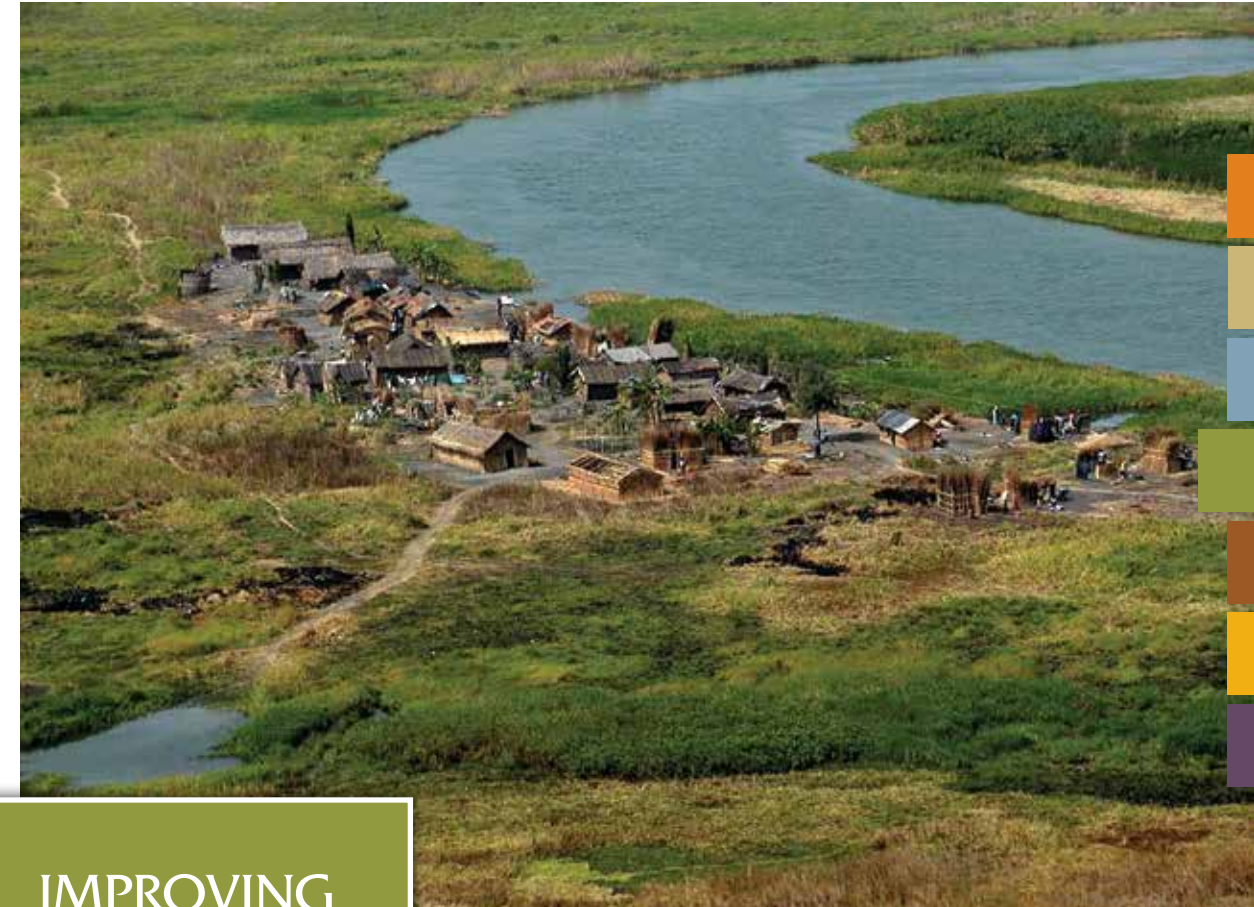
Captive Management of Cranes Through Breeding

Managing the only captive flock of all the rare crane species in the world is not a simple task, and we can't do it alone. We work with the Association of Zoo and Aquariums Species Survival Plans for sustainable genetic and demographic breeding recommendations of the captive collections. In 2017, we produced a rare fertile White-naped Crane egg that was sent to the Bronx Zoo to be placed with a pair of surrogate cranes. We also produced five fertile Hooded Crane eggs and successfully hatched and reared two chicks from one of the most genetically valuable pairs in the North American captive population.



Highveld Crane Project

The sixth annual Chrissiesmeer Crane Festival was held in June 2017. We worked together with local partners in planning the event. Preparations included ensuring local community participation, monitoring the Grey Crowned Crane movements, and working on the logistics of the festival. Over 150 people attended the festival. The activities took place at Lake Chrissie Primary School and participation in activities was beyond expectations. Crane mask coloring and the pin-the-crown-to-the-crane game were particularly popular. The crane viewing trips were again well received and raised awareness about the status of cranes, habitats, and biodiversity. We are grateful to HCI Foundation and South32 for funding this work.



IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS

Managing Waters for Biodiversity and Rural Livelihoods

In Namibia, we joined with water authorities, hydropower managers, and water user groups from across southern Africa for a special workshop on environmental flows (sustainable water management for rivers and their floodplains). We teamed up with our colleagues at WWF-Zambia to discuss lessons learned from two decades of advancing environmental flows in the Zambezi River Basin for rural livelihoods and biodiversity conservation.

Wattled Cranes, with their highly specialized diets and nesting requirements linked to the natural ebb and flow of floodplains, are an important flagship for sustainable water management. One of the most powerful arguments for environmental flows is that economic value of water for fisheries, agriculture, livestock grazing, natural resources, and wildlife is higher than the value of that same water held back for hydropower generation. On the Kafue Flats in Zambia, the massive Zambia Sugar Industry supports our environmental flows efforts. When the floodplain is naturally flooded, most of the predatory insects that feed on sugar stay in the floodplain wetlands, but when floods are withheld or diverted, the insects abandon the floodplain and attack the sugar plants, in turn requiring the intensive use of pesticides. It's all connected!



Empowering Local Communities at Poyang Lake, China

Changhu Chi is one of nine sub-lakes located within the vast Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve. The local communities own this sub-lake. We have been working with Wucheng Town to modify the next lake lease for Changhu Chi to include measures that benefit fish and waterbirds. They will limit the harvest of the smallest fish, ban electroshocking of fish, and minimize disturbance to birds. The lease pledges to consider the needs of birds in their water management. Because of these changes, Wucheng will receive less revenue for the lease, but because they are a birding hotspot, they know they will benefit more from eco-tourism. We worked with Ocean Outcomes, an enterprise fishery consulting organization to conduct a fishery improvement project at Poyang Lake where Changhu Chi is a pilot project. We expect to see tangible benefits to fishermen and improvements to fishery practices that benefit the birds. Effective fishery management in the sub-lakes needs participation by local communities. By improving fishery sustainability and increasing fish prices, the community, cranes, and conservation triumph. We are grateful to Disney Conservation Fund, Erica P. John Fund, and Stiftung Feuchtgebiete for funding this work.



Farmer Homestead Restaurants Feed Birdwatchers and Increase Household Incomes

The critically endangered Siberian Crane is a beloved denizen of Poyang Lake, China. An increasing number of tourists travel to this impoverished area to view and photograph the stunning white birds. We have been working at Poyang for decades to protect the cranes from disturbance, but a more recent goal of our program is to create new sources of income for the communities that share their landscapes with the rare birds. A popular new initiative is the farmer homestead restaurants that help feed the growing numbers of tourists. Local people value the Siberian Cranes for bringing economic benefit to the area, and their families benefit from conservation-friendly income. We are also hiring local people as guides and guards to reduce disturbance.

Our Conservation Agreements Are Working in Rwanda!

Rugezi Marsh is a protected high altitude peat bog located in the Northern Province of Rwanda. It is a source of water for thousands of people who reside in its catchment. Rugezi Marsh also provides critical habitat for Rwanda's largest population of endangered Grey Crowned Cranes. Unfortunately, intensive subsistence farming, grazing, and the illegal taking of cranes to sell on the black market threatened the health of this extraordinary marsh. We knew that the key to protecting the marsh and its cranes meant addressing the needs of the people who call Rugezi home.

We have used the Conservation Agreements model successfully where people and endangered cranes depend on the same wetlands. Conservation Agreements are negotiated incentive packages that communities receive in return for becoming stewards of their own ecosystems. Beekeeping emerged as a priority livelihood because it creates incentives for protecting the marsh, and honey is a reliable source of income for rural households in Rwanda. By signing the agreement in 2016, the cooperatives made a commitment to stop agricultural encroachment such as grass harvesting and livestock grazing in the marsh. They agreed to participate in monitoring activities and to report illegal activities including hunting and removal of crane eggs. They also pledged to play a leading role in raising awareness for the need to conserve Rugezi Marsh.

Each cooperative received beehives, honey processing equipment, training and technical support. Since the signing of the agreement, members of the cooperatives have led coordinated efforts to patrol the wetland, identify and report threats, and document sites where cranes breed and forage. They have mobilized community members to extinguish fires, replant trees in the wetland's buffer zone, and spread the word about the benefits of wetland conservation. Monitoring of the Beehive Project is ongoing and honey yields are increasing, a result that is transforming local residents into wetland stewards. We are grateful to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for supporting this work.





EMPOWERING FUTURE LEADERS

Improving our Effectiveness in Africa

Our work in East Africa focuses on helping communities work together to sustainably manage their wetlands in the face of increasing human pressure and climate change. In early 2018, members of the African Crane Conservation Program (ACCP) and our Conservation Measures Manager met in Uganda and Rwanda for a team building retreat focused on improving the effectiveness of our work there. ACCP is a partnership between the Endangered Wildlife Trust, based in South Africa, and the International Crane Foundation. The group focused on the concepts of *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*, a set of best practices for evidence-based conservation and adaptive management. We also learned about new crane and ecosystem monitoring techniques to better assess our impact for cranes and wetland health over time. This retreat was supported by a generous donation from the Dohmen Family Foundation.

Fiona to the Rescue!

Over the years, we have developed a network of crane custodians in Western Kenya, a stronghold for Grey Crowned Cranes. A member of the Sio Siteko Wetland Conservation Team reported an incident of children harassing a family of cranes with chicks. Fortunately, a young girl named Fiona was able to save one of the chicks by hiding it in the wetland. She took the chick home and fed it grasshoppers and other insects. Our project leader in Kenya worked with Fiona to rehabilitate the chick so it could return to the wild. They invited teachers and students from the local schools to witness the chick's release. Members of the community, including a village elder, were also present when the chick was reunited with its parents. The happy occasion provided the opportunity to talk about crane and wetland conservation with the students. They promised to spread our conservation message in the Sio Siteko area.



Crane Connections

More than 500,000 Sandhill Cranes converge on Nebraska's Platte River every spring – the world's largest gathering of cranes in one place. This great crane migration is truly one of the most breathtaking wildlife spectacles in North America. We sent twelve team members, including staff and volunteer tour interpreters and outreach interns, to participate in the Nebraska Crane Festival, experience the migration, and enhance their ability to interpret the ecology of Sandhill Cranes for our visitors. This experiential learning opportunity deepened their connection to Sandhill Cranes as educators and scientists. The heightened awareness and passion engage visitors in resolving threats to cranes and their diverse landscapes around the world. We are grateful to Kathryn Scheer for supporting this trip.



Second Printing for *Saving Imisambi!*

After distributing all 3,000 copies of the first printing of the comic book *Saving Imisambi | Saving Grey Crowned Cranes* near Rugezi Marsh and Akagera National Park, we printed another 10,000 books for distribution in and around Rwanda's capital, Kigali City. This urban center created much of the demand for the country's illegally held Grey Crowned Cranes. *Saving Imisambi* addresses the challenges faced by the cranes and inspires action. Children receiving comic books at school participate in outreach activities with the Rwandan Wildlife Conservation Association. Survey evaluations reveal that critical messages are indeed helping to change attitudes. In pre-outreach surveys, 44% of students believed everyone had a responsibility to protect wildlife. The number rose to 71% in post-outreach surveys. Helping children appreciate cranes in the wild as part of their natural heritage is a first step in reversing the rapidly declining numbers of Grey Crowned Cranes.



Environmental Education Workshop in China

A successful Environmental Education Workshop for Black-necked Crane Protection was held in Kunming, China, in 2017. Many teachers, reserve educators, and representatives of governmental education bureaus from Black-necked Crane areas participated in the weeklong training course. The workshop included lectures, field trips, and seminar discussions. Professors and experts from Yunnan Normal University and other institutions gave lectures on relevant topics. Field trips went to

Dianchi Lake, Yunnan Zaidi Nature School, and Stone Forest National Park. During the indoor training sessions, the participants enjoyed dancing, singing, and craft making activities. We formed a Teacher Network for Black-necked Crane Education and established a social media WeChat site for the network to strengthen exchange and cooperation along flyways in western China. We discussed the next steps for environmental education work for the next three to five years. Major support for this workshop was provided by Ms. Heather Henson, U.S. Forest Service, and Stiftung Feuchtgebiete.



ACTION BASED ON SCIENCE

Aerial Surveys: A Bird's Eye View

Over the past 40 years, South Africa's cranes (Blue, Grey Crowned, and Wattled) have declined drastically due to agricultural expansion and human development. Over the last 24 years, we have been collaborating with KZN Wildlife to fly annual aerial surveys in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, to monitor and record crane populations and distribution. Early on, the aerial surveys showed a steady decline, but understanding the situation helped us identify the main causes and also how to tackle them. One threat demonstrated by the surveys was death from power line collision. This led to the formation of a partnership with the power utility, Eskom, to attach bird diverters on power lines in sensitive areas. Identifying problems and formulating solutions has led to a steady increase in population sizes of all three crane species over the last ten years. We are grateful to Eskom and WWF Nedbank Green Trust for funding this important work.

Studying Sarus Cranes and Climate Change

We collaborated with Vietnam National University to conduct a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for three protected areas in the Mekong Delta, important sites for the Sarus Crane. The main objectives were to assess the vulnerability of ecosystems and people's livelihoods to the impacts of climate change and to identify options to increase the resilience of the wetlands and communities. We assessed eight main wetland habitat types and 20 wetland species. Sarus Cranes stand out as the species most vulnerable to climate change of all the species assessed. Drought and saline water intrusion into freshwater wetlands due to sea level rise are the most significant climate impacts to cranes and other wetland species. We are now developing a climate change adaptation plan for these protected areas and training staff in climate change adaptation and mitigation.



K. S. Gopi Sundar



Biomonitoring of Whooping Cranes

Global increases in oil and gas exploration and mining in North America have resulted in rapid and dramatic landscape changes and ecological impacts. These changes ultimately lead to habitat loss, water diversion, and pollution threats. The Central Flyway population of endangered Whooping Cranes migrates through Alberta's oil sands region twice a year, and its entire wintering range near the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas is bisected by the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway near numerous oil and gas installations.

Together with science partners from Environment and Climate Change Canada, we began a three-year research effort to increase our knowledge of the contaminants present in this population of Whooping Cranes. We safely extract blood and feather samples from juvenile and adult Whooping Cranes to delineate hydrocarbon and heavy metal residues. We also watch to see if cranes are exhibiting undue stress responses related to these threats. If high residues are discovered, we identify actions to prevent future exposures by working with industry to reduce risk in areas overlapping with cranes.



Understanding Blue Cranes in the Western Cape, South Africa

South Africa's national bird, the Blue Crane, adapted to the agricultural landscape of the Western Cape less than a century ago. Today, more than half the world's Blue Cranes are found in the regions known as the Overberg and Swartland of the Western Cape. The landscape there has been completely transformed by human development and is vulnerable to climate change. This fabricated landscape comes with many other threats, such as collisions with power lines and wind turbines, poisoning, and fence entanglements. We want to understand how Blue Cranes move and use the landscape of the Western Cape. We embarked on a research project with the University of Cape Town where we fitted satellite trackers to 15 Blue Cranes over two years. We are now getting a clear picture of the daily movements of these cranes. We have identified roost and breeding sites and discovered the crops they prefer. We now know how the seasons influence their movements. This information is critical for implementing our conservation strategies to reduce threats and to keep South Africa's national bird dancing for future generations. We are grateful to the Leiden Conservation Foundation for supporting this work.



K. S. Gopi Sundar

How Many Sarus?

Vast spaces with intensive agriculture are the home for Sarus Cranes in South Asia. Not millions, but nearly a billion people live there. Our extensive monitoring efforts aim to determine the total number of Sarus Cranes and to understand how people, agriculture, and waterbirds exist harmoniously together in this area. In other parts of the world, this combination of agriculture and birds causes conflict. Our incredible field associates covered over 55,000 miles during three seasons of surveys. We now have information for 800 breeding Sarus pairs and nearly 3,000 Sarus in flocks. We discovered that crane areas are also very important for other waterbird species. We found thousands of heronries and new significant populations for two globally threatened stork species. We are updating the status assessments for these species. We are grateful to Eppley Foundation for Research and National Geographic Foundation for supporting this work.

Smart Phones, Smart Data

Our team of researchers includes geospatial professionals who use technology tools like GIS and satellite images to understand the distribution of cranes in the wild. Whether it's tracking reintroduced Whooping Cranes, using satellite imagery in India to classify wetlands, or modelling the effects of climate change on critical habitats, these tools and expertise make it possible for us to ensure a future for cranes. Sharing data and techniques across programs makes the entire team stronger. Our team meets regularly using remote technology to learn from each other and make our projects stronger. We are now using data collection applications on smart phones to collect information from experts and citizen scientists. The efficient gathering of information augments the impact we have for cranes and conservation.

Wattled Cranes Are Increasing in Zambia

We conducted nearly 13 hours of intensive aerial surveys over Liuwa Plains National Park, Zambia. We flew 47 transects across the park covering a distance of 625 miles and an area of nearly 300 sq. miles (21% of the park's total surface area) and recorded and mapped all conspicuous Wattled and Grey Crowned Cranes and other species. We finished with a total of 730 Wattled Cranes (9% of the global population). Of these, 90 breeding pairs and 52 families were seen. A total of 503



Adrian Kaluka

Wattled Cranes were counted the previous year. Our survey shows the population in Liuwa and its surrounds appear to be healthy, stable, and increasing – confirming that the park has a high global significance for these vulnerable birds. Our research is now playing a role in the park's conservation management decisions. The geospatial database of crane sightings, nest sites, and seasonal movements are incorporated into management and land use planning, and the recommendations from these plans will provide key conservation support to the two crane species and their habitats. We are grateful to Stiftung Feuchtgebiete/Frankfurt Zoological Society for funding this survey and to Foundation Segre and Nimick Forbesway Foundation for funding conservation action in the region.



Where Are the Cranes?

We've consulted with the experts, analyzed the satellite tracking data, talked to local people, scrutinized banding studies, and finally created a new set of crane range maps! The last comprehensive set of crane range maps was completed in 1994. That was a long time ago, and crane populations, distribution, and technology have changed since then. Building on decades of research, we have new range maps for the 15 crane species created on behalf of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Crane Specialist Group. The maps represent the combined knowledge of experts throughout each species' range.



RESTORING CRANES TO THE WILD

What Are They Doing?

In 2001, a reintroduced population of Whooping Cranes, known as the Eastern Migratory Population, was established east of the Mississippi River. The population originally migrated from Wisconsin to the Florida Gulf Coast, but over time their winter distribution has expanded north. To better understand how the cranes use the landscape, we studied their daily home range sizes, habitat use, and behavior. We used radio telemetry to track groups of cranes and focused on three regions: North (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky), Central (Tennessee, Alabama), and South (Georgia, Florida, Louisiana).

We discovered that home ranges decrease in size from north to south. Home ranges in the south were comprised of the greatest proportion of wetlands, and the cranes primarily used wetlands or grasslands. In the north and central regions, cranes used agricultural areas. In the north, they foraged more often in agricultural lands than in grasslands or wetlands. In the central region, cranes foraged equally in all three habitats. Resting behavior was associated with wetlands in all three regions. Now that we have a good understanding of the habitat preferred by these cranes, we can prioritize our future efforts and land management planning.



Patuxent Pairs Arrive

The U.S. Geological Survey announced the closure of the Whooping Crane program at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland creating the need to relocate their cranes. Three breeding pairs of Whooping Cranes were transferred to the International Crane Foundation and joined 38 Whooping Cranes in Crane City. The birds are acclimating well, although it could be a while before they are comfortable enough to produce chicks in their new surroundings.

International Crane Foundation Annual Report Donor List

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INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Years ended March 31, 2018 and 2017

ASSETS

	2018	2017
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$4,243,784	\$3,022,043
Certificates of deposit	\$-	\$250,770
Accounts receivable	\$61,000	\$95,967
Unconditional promises to give, current portion	\$1,833,205	\$1,693,556
Inventories	\$42,641	\$40,549
Prepaid expenses	\$93,585	\$76,461
Total Current Assets	\$6,274,215	\$5,179,346
Property And Equipment, Net	\$4,479,954	\$4,472,272

Other Assets

Unconditional promises to give, long-term portion	\$2,980,968	\$3,630,205
Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trusts	\$807,711	\$830,878
Assets restricted to endowments	\$3,805,156	\$3,778,811
Long-term investments	\$17,088,187	\$16,257,181
Cash restricted for capital improvements	\$3,846,912	\$3,452,155
Construction in progress	\$731,451	\$126,676
Other receivables	\$46,435	\$42,987
Total Other Assets	\$29,306,820	\$28,118,893

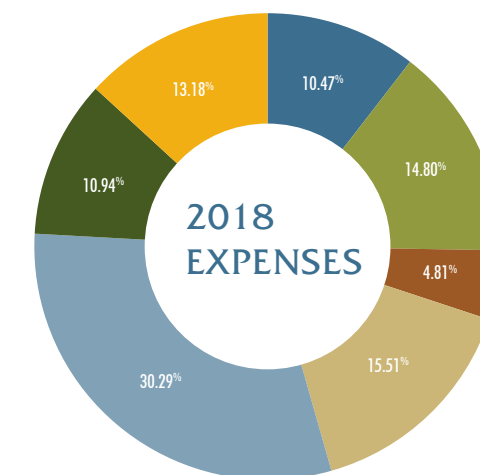
Total Assets \$40,060,989 \$37,770,511

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$193,960	\$199,939
Accrued payroll and related liabilities	\$265,982	\$248,704
Deferred revenue	\$118,454	\$40,675
Total Current Liabilities	\$578,396	\$489,318

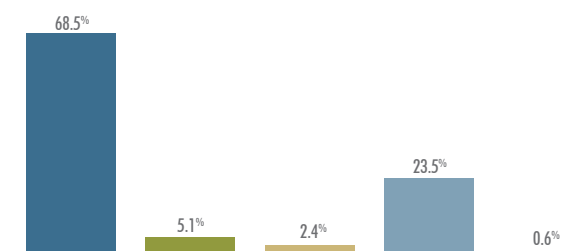
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	\$19,904,027	\$19,606,294
Temporarily restricted	\$15,759,586	\$13,873,797
Permanently restricted	\$3,818,980	\$3,801,102
Total Net Assets	\$39,482,593	\$37,281,193

Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$40,060,989 \$37,770,511



Africa	\$720,073	10.47%
East Asia	\$1,018,068	14.80%
South and Southeast Asia	\$331,004	4.81%
North America	\$1,067,213	15.51%
ICF Center for Conservation Leadership	\$2,084,232	30.29%
General & Administrative	\$752,990	10.94%
Fundraising	\$907,057	13.18%

Total Program Services	\$5,220,590	75.87%
Total Supporting Activities	\$1,660,047	24.13%
Total Expenses	\$6,880,637	100.00%



Contributions and Grants	\$6,217,971	68.5%
Memberships	\$460,007	5.1%
Sales and Tour Income	\$217,193	2.4%
Investment Income (Loss)	\$2,135,805	23.5%
Other	\$51,061	0.6%
Total Revenue	\$9,082,037	100.0%

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



Charity Navigator, the leading independent charity watchdog, has consistently awarded the International Crane Foundation with a **Four-star Rating**, recognizing us for exceeding industry standards in the areas of nonprofit financial health, accountability, and transparency.



The International Crane Foundation achieved **GuideStar's Platinum Seal of Transparency**. GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations.

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Photo of Grey Crowned Cranes by Chantelle Melzer.



The International Crane Foundation works worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend.

International Crane Foundation

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