



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

April 2021-March 2022



INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION

As we reflect on our conservation impact this past year, we are especially grateful for our strong partnerships with organizations, governments, businesses, and supporters like you who made this work possible. The past two years have been profoundly challenging, with the ongoing pandemic, global conflict, and political divisiveness pulling us apart. But in these pages, we are struck by the diverse ways in which we joined together, at home and across the globe, to solve problems with innovative, collaborative solutions.

Our East Asia Flyway Program is a great example of how we bring people together through the charisma of cranes for international goodwill and cooperation. Four species of threatened cranes depend on close cooperation between Russia, China, North and South Korea, Mongolia, and Japan for their survival. Russia's Muraviovka Park, carpeted in a rainbow of irises, orchids, and lilies, is one of many places we are working to save cranes across this flyway. Muraviovka provides a safe breeding ground for highly threatened White-naped and Red-crowned Cranes, and an invaluable stopover for thousands of storks, geese, ducks, and other waterbirds on migration. Muraviovka hosts international summer camps that bring together thousands of students and educators across Russia (eleven time zones!) and their neighbors in East Asia to take pride in their cranes and wetlands. Through our long-term commitment to vital sites like Muraviovka, as well as Duolin and Poyang Lake in China, the Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve in Mongolia, and the Demilitarized Zone of Korea, we ensure that cranes have safe flyways to complete their long, transboundary migrations each year—and remind us that we are all interconnected on one planet.

Across Africa, rapidly growing human populations and poverty are placing tremendous pressure on natural resources shared by people and endangered

cranes. We join with these communities to build a foundation for conservation that they value, embrace, and lead—acknowledging that community health, wellbeing, and sustainable livelihoods are essential to the health of cranes and the wetlands they need. Our team in western Kenya is training local farmers to adopt climate-smart, biodiversity-friendly agricultural practices that improve their productivity and income while reducing pressure on wetland resources.

Around Rugezi Marsh in Rwanda, we provide farmers with seedlings to grow sustainable grass in upland plots for their cows. This reduces disturbance in the wetlands for nesting endangered Grey Crowned Cranes. Around Rukiga wetland of Uganda, we work in partnership with the Margaret Pyke Trust and others to provide better health services for the community, including family planning. These resources help empower women to engage in local livelihood activities that support their families and reduce pressure on local natural resources, benefiting both people and cranes.

Through our 20-year commitment with the government of Zambia to restore the Kafue Flats, we are bringing together communities with agencies and businesses to find lasting solutions for the sustainable use and management of two national parks and a vast floodplain ecosystem that support the world's biggest population of Wattled Cranes, more than 400 other bird species, and the endemic Kafue lechwe antelope.

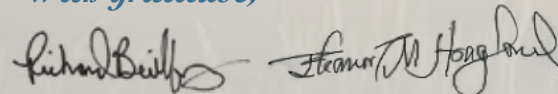
In Texas, private lands hold the future for Endangered Whooping Cranes as they expand out from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on their wintering grounds. We are building strong relationships with ranchers and other coastal landowners to help guide them through options to protect, maintain, and restore their lands for Whooping Cranes and other coastal wildlife in ways that mesh with their economic

needs and vision for land conservation. By supporting landowners with best management practices for water conservation, wetland restoration, and climate change adaptation, we can better ensure healthy habitat and healthy ranches, for today and tomorrow.

In December 2021, the largest disease outbreak ever observed in Israel killed more than 8,000 Eurasian Cranes in the Hula Valley. Eurasian Cranes are a highly successful species, increasing rapidly across Europe, but the outbreak was a stark reminder that large congregations of cranes are susceptible to bird flu and other diseases. We are grateful to our Israeli colleagues for their swift actions to limit the spread of the disease, while also using this incident to raise global concern about the vulnerability of cranes and other birds when they are concentrated at feeding stations.

Whether we are working to save endangered cranes across political boundaries or leveraging the charisma of cranes to help communities save wild places, we take comfort in the ways in which cranes help draw us together during times of division. We draw hope and inspiration from our great team at the International Crane Foundation and all we achieved this past year. We look forward to a productive year ahead. Our mission makes us guardians of special places around the world—the glorious, irreplaceable landscapes where cranes dance! We can't do it without you. Thank you.

*With gratitude,*



Richard Beilfuss  
President & CEO

Eleanor Hoagland  
Chairman of the  
Board of Directors



Grey Crowned Crane in flight. Daniel Dolpire

Cover photo of a Grey Crowned Crane flying through Masai Mara in Kenya. Daniel Dolpire



*Grey Crowned Cranes. Daniel Dolpire*

As a supporter of crane conservation, you know that cranes face numerous threats as they make their long journeys to and from nesting grounds, most notably in East Asia and North America, or seek to coexist year-round within impoverished communities in Africa and Southeast Asia. Their basic needs—fresh water, accessibility to food, good health, and secure places to sleep and raise their young—are the same basic needs that their human neighbors, and many other species of animals and plants, need to survive. We all seek to thrive together in a crowded world.

The International Crane Foundation's work is much more than just saving cranes. We identify and implement workable solutions that improve the lives of the people who live near cranes or support their safe migration. When we work to save vital habitats for cranes and people, countless other species of lesser-known wildlife benefit, too.

Your financial gifts allow us to implement results-focused projects that benefit cranes, people, and life on Earth. From managing the vital flyway in East Asia to restoring a once-thriving floodplain in Africa to enhancing the coexistence of cranes and humans here in North America, included are stories of how we've been putting your generous contributions to work this past year across the globe.

# AFRICA

Rapidly growing human populations and grinding poverty are placing tremendous pressure on natural resources shared by people and cranes. Across Africa, we join with communities to build a foundation for conservation that communities value, embrace, and lead—acknowledging that community health, well-being, and sustainable livelihoods are essential to the success of cranes and the wetlands they need. We are making long-term commitments to protect vital areas, supporting better long-term management of crane

habitats, and aiding communities in improving their livelihoods in a sustainable way.

## Environmental and economic evolution of the Rugezi Marsh

The Rugezi Marsh spans nearly 17,000 acres and is home to both a growing Grey Crowned Crane population and a growing human population of more than 200,000. Another piece of the landscape is Rwanda's "one cow per poor family" program, meaning nearly every household owns at least one cow. There is a zero-grazing policy near the Rugezi Marsh, but people enter the Rugezi Marsh illegally to harvest plant material for personal use and to feed their cows. In the process, people disturb cranes, which affects incubation and the rearing of chicks, and sometimes trample the eggs.

Through our long-term partnership with the Endangered Wildlife Trust and in collaboration with the Integrated Polytechnic Regional College-Kitabi and Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association, we have raised



*Nest monitoring in the wetlands of Rwanda. Olivier Ngabonziza/ International Crane Foundation*

awareness about the importance of the Rugezi Marsh including the detriments of illegal crane and egg removal and promoting the use of Napier grass production as a positive alternative to harvesting from the Rugezi Marsh. Prior to 2015 crane eggs were being taken for food, and adult cranes were taken for the illegal pet trade. The Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association worked hard to end these activities and rehabilitate cranes that were taken from the Rugezi Marsh. Since the start of this work, **our partner has removed 233 cranes from captivity and reintroduced 160 of these cranes to Akagera National Park.** While these practices were coming to an end we worked to promote Napier grass, a native, perennial grass, that can be used directly as cattle feed or made into hay, whilst also preventing erosion of the terraces along the steep hillslopes and the loss of nutrient-rich soil for farming practices. This has proven to be a sustainable alternative for families that previously relied on the Rugezi Marsh for their cattle and livelihood.



A Grey Crowned Crane in natural wetlands. Daniel Dolpire

**What initially started as 429 households growing grass is now more than 3,000.** Furthermore, the Rwandan government gave us additional land to expand our nurseries and has actively encouraged this practice across the landscape. In the past, Rugezi Marsh was a hive of activity on Saturday mornings as community members collected fodder for their cattle, and now, in the areas where Napier grass has been distributed not a single person is seen there. This reduction in human activity has played a significant role in the increase we have seen in Grey Crowned Cranes; we now have 23 breeding pairs, up from zero in 2012, and the population has grown from less than 200 ten years ago, to just over 1,000 now. The Rugezi Marsh itself has also benefitted as less soil reaches it from the surrounding hillslopes, which will allow for the vegetation and hydrology to recover.

Due to its success, this project has become a model for other key crane sites across East Africa. We now have an example of how we can secure habitat for cranes, and the many other species in a wetland, while also improving the status of the watershed and benefitting people who depend on it. Additionally, the Napier grass model is in the process of being replicated in southwestern Uganda, an area with a similar landscape of steep hillslopes and people dependent on the wetlands for cattle fodder. The Ugandan government has endorsed the concept and provided us with land for nurseries along with encouraging local farmers to become involved in the project. Across East Africa, we have many exciting agricultural projects that are in the pilot phase, focused specifically on reducing the encroachment of people and agriculture into wetlands, improving the habitat for cranes, and benefitting local communities.

Together, we are enacting a win-win conservation approach. Instead of chastising farmers and families for disturbing crane areas, we implemented solutions that work for everybody and have longevity for ongoing success.

We approached this in several steps:

- Presented the detriments of human activity within the Rugezi Marsh to neighboring communities.
- Educated residents on the benefits of growing Napier grass and producing hay on their farm plots.
- Provided Napier grass seedlings and tools, and trained residents on fodder production and management.
- Acquired three hectares of land from the Burera district local government to establish three more Napier grass nurseries.



Planting Napier grass on the hillslopes. Olivier Ngabonziza/International Crane Foundation



A community member feeding cattle using Napier grass. Olivier Ngabonziza/International Crane Foundation

### Communities Grow with Napier Grass

The benefits of the Napier are two-fold: Communities have seen an elimination of gullies in the crop fields on hillslopes that used to be caused by runoff, improving overall soil quality. On a more personal level, individual households are feeling meaningful benefits that matter to them. Uzakiriho Jeannette is thankful because the grass provides feed for her cows, which has more than doubled their milk production. And Uwiragiye Chantel can happily watch her children attend school every day, which wasn't possible before. (Instead of attending class, most days they had to look for animal feed in the marsh.) Conservation that benefits cranes and communities? That's the true marker of success.

### A thriving wetland for all: the Kafue Flats

The Kafue Flats is among Africa's premier wetlands and home to 30% of vulnerable Wattled Cranes that are dependent on the habitat for feeding, roosting, and breeding. Wattled Cranes are the most wetland-dependent of Africa's cranes, and they are important indicators of the health and ecological functioning of this enormous floodplain. This floodplain supports buffalo, zebra, hippo, and the world's only population of Kafue lechwe, which are all being decimated by the illegal bushmeat trade. **The Kafue Flats is a high-stakes resource that needs effective anti-poaching efforts and habitat restoration put in place to protect its 3,000 Wattled Cranes, 470 species of birds, and many other species of imperiled mammals.**



Wattled, Blue, and Grey Crowned Cranes gather in the Kafue Flats of Zambia. Daniel Dolpire

Historically, the ecological health of the Kafue Flats was maintained by communities that used the land for livestock, fisheries, and subsistence hunting. In recent decades, near



Wattled Crane and chick. Daniel Dolpire

collapse of the Kafue Flats has stemmed from the breakdown of traditional management authorities. There is considerable protection "on paper" for the Kafue Flats, but law enforcement is poorly financed, equipped, and trained, and they're physically unable to cover even a fraction of these lands. This has resulted in unsustainable levels of wildlife hunting, livestock grazing, fishing, hydrological degradation, and invasive species.

With the health of the Kafue Flats on the line, we are actively working toward signing a new 20-year agreement with the government of Zambia to co-manage and restore the Kafue Flats, a space that encompasses two national parks and a large game management area. **We are creating an innovative conservation approach to the protected area model which places community members at the core of every aspect of park management.** This approach enhances biodiversity protection and management while increasing employment and income for area residents.

Community members are employed to remove the invasive *mimosa pigra* shrub from the wetland habitats, while local men and women are being actively trained and deployed as scouts on law enforcement teams. Intensive community engagement from the four communities surrounding the Kafue Flats and more inclusive involvement for women and youth will further strengthen the entire community's ability to engage in natural resource management solutions. This is a win for cranes, people, and countless species in the Kafue Flats.



A scout patrol team that has been supplied with full personal kit including uniforms, tents, sleeping mats, sleeping bags and back packs. Department of National Parks and Wildlife (Zambia)

We focus on the right balance of government protection, private investment, and community empowerment. Working together, we believe that these entities can sustain rich biodiversity, enrich local livelihoods, facilitate economic growth, and improve the resiliency of the local population.



Her Royal Highness Chieftainess Muwezwa 1 of Muwezwa Ila Royal Establishment, Nyambo Palace in Itezhi-Tezhi District bordering Blue Lagoon National Park, Kafue Flats Zambia. David Banda/International Crane Foundation

“When the International Crane Foundation (ICF) came to our community wanting to work with us, I was concerned because many NGOs come with their big programs, but they do not involve or benefit the communities. So far, that concern has been allayed. ICF is working well with us, respectfully consulting with the communities to develop the program and not impose anything on them. We fully support ICF and encourage other organizations to emulate its approach, bringing programs that benefit both conservation and the community. We are succeeding because we are developing the program together.”

Her Royal Highness Chieftainess Muwezwa 1 of Muwezwa Ila Royal Establishment, Nyambo Palace in Itezhi-Tezhi District, bordering Blue Lagoon National Park

## ASIA

Cranes in East Asia are long-distance migrants, regularly crossing international boundaries. Their migrations are linked by a series of nesting, staging, and wintering sites. These sites are not just linked by cranes, but increasingly, by the communities living around the sites. Transboundary migrations are a reminder that we are all interconnected, and it takes a village, literally and figuratively, to develop effective strategies that contribute to achieving a balance between ecology and culture.

### Fostering international relations in the flyway

One thing that cranes continually teach us is that they transcend boundaries. Poyang Lake in China is where Siberian Cranes spend their winter, but Kytalyk National Park in Russia is where they breed. Both



Siberian Cranes sharing a landscape with their human neighbors. Zheng Zhongjie

areas are critical to the survival of this species, and they're separated not only geographically but politically. **A long-term goal was achieved when a memorandum of understanding was signed to establish an official sister site relationship between Kytalyk National Park and the Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve.** Both

parties recognized the need to jointly develop strategies that contribute to achieving balance between ecology and culture. The partnership will promote effective conservation at the flyway level, to enhance Siberian Crane monitoring and research, habitat conservation, and environmental

education. This partnership has already strengthened monitoring practices along the Siberian Crane's migration route and given us a more informed analysis of the population's status. This is critical as climate change continues to impact the arctic breeding grounds and the southern China wintering grounds.

The 2021 Migration with Siberian Crane Event gathered specialists, decision-makers, and the public to share results of Siberian Crane conservation in the East Asian Flyway. The event kicked off with a workshop at Momoge National Nature Reserve, an important stopover site in Northeast China. This was followed by environmental education activities in Xianghai and Longfeng Lake nature reserves.

In the flyway we also focus on the western population of the White-naped Crane, which migrates from breeding areas in Mongolia and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to winter at Poyang Lake, but has declined to less than one thousand birds. Through collaborative survey work between Chinese



White-naped and Demoiselle Cranes co-exist on the same landscape with grazing cattle in the flyway. Andrew Holman



White-naped Cranes are found throughout this important flyway. Terri Bleck

and Mongolian partners that involved tracking individual birds, the reasons for the decline of this population are now becoming clear. There is environmental degradation of key stopover sites along their migration route, especially around Bohai Bay in China where coastal wetlands have been heavily impacted by industrial development. It has been discovered that the Shandian River Basin located in Inner Mongolia and Hebei Province is now the most important stopover area for this population of White-naped Crane, with 85% of the birds stopping and spending more than 30 days each spring and fall. None of these areas are currently protected, so we are working with local communities, non-profit organizations, and the government to raise local awareness of their significance. We work towards community-based conservation while engaging with government authorities for longer-term protection of the ecosystem and the countless species that depend on it.

**Flyway education efforts play a big role in building a larger community for crane conservation across boundaries.** A series of educational activities have boosted local pride in participants' hometowns for their crane neighbors. Our Yakutian colleagues, in close collaboration with our China team, are developing an innovative comic book following a young Siberian Crane named Dyulus (meaning strong in spirit, generous, and able to adapt to difficult circumstances) from its hatching and early life in the tundra, through the challenges along its long migration, to its first winter at Poyang. Wide distribution of the comic is intended to capture the hearts of children and their families who share habitats with Siberian Cranes. It is beneficial to both people and cranes to foster international communication in youth through environmental education.

### A home to many: Poyang Lake

Poyang Lake is the largest freshwater lake in China and the most important wintering ground for Siberian Cranes and White-naped Cranes. This area is critical not only to cranes but to Oriental Storks, Tundra Swans, wild geese, and hundreds of thousands of waterbirds. The ecosystem also supports mammals such as the Water Deer which use marsh grasses for shelter and the wetland for water in the dry season. Poyang is known as



Siberian Cranes call Poyang Lake home. Ciming Mei

the "last fortress" for the lake's only cetacean, as half of the world's population of the endangered Yangtze finless porpoise calls this lake home.

For cranes, submerged aquatic plants such as *Vallisneria spiralis* provide a main source of nutrition, and water levels on Poyang Lake determine the availability of this food source. Record floods adversely affected much of this resource, forcing Siberian Cranes to leave the lake and forage in nearby agricultural areas, such as lotus ponds and rice fields. Their new use of agricultural lands has been most obvious during the winters of recent high-water years, though cranes still use natural wetlands for some feeding, and especially for safe roosting at night.

This recent shift in feeding behavior is a surprising change – while Eurasian and White-naped Cranes are well known to forage in farmlands, the Siberian Crane has always been regarded as completely dependent on its natural plant foods in wetlands. This specialized behavior was thought to place them at high risk as wetlands continue to be degraded and battle extreme flood and drought conditions. This recent behavioral shift suggests Siberian Cranes could adapt to these changing conditions, which may be a good sign for this Critically Endangered species.

This shift in behavior has also created new challenges, as the Siberian Cranes are at greater risk of human disturbance and exposure to disease and chemicals as they move to agricultural lands. Therefore, our conservation strategies are adapting to engage local governments and rural communities around the wetlands. We are increasing our emphasis on environmental education in local schools, working with local partners, conducting outreach events like birdwatching festivals, and monitoring the cranes in farmland areas with local government staff and volunteers. One example of local and government partnership protecting birds is at Chaqizhou and Wuxing Farms, where farmers have been hired as rangers to reduce the disturbance to cranes from local communities and visitors from cities.

Beyond this, we believe well-managed natural wetlands provide the most suitable and safest habitats for the Siberian Cranes, and our China team will continue to collaborate with the Jiangxi Provincial Forestry Bureau and the nature reserves to create and implement a comprehensive plan integrating monitoring, water management, *Vallisneria* restoration, community awareness, and alternative livelihoods. **Our ultimate purpose is to help restore the natural habitats for the cranes, which will also benefit the vast numbers of other waterbirds and aquatic life that Poyang is so famous for.**



Our China team does crane and wetland activities with local students. Chen Chaoxin



Environmental education bolsters community pride in wetlands. Guo Zhiwei/International Crane Foundation

To further our efforts of fostering crane ambassadorship, we have implemented education projects with local schools and schoolteachers to improve awareness of the importance of the wetlands and cranes. We work with a broad network of schools throughout the crane flyways to include cranes, wetlands, and local culture in students' lessons. These efforts resulted in the formal opening of the Poyang Siberian Crane School at Wucheng Primary School in December 2021. This school-based education model helps students understand their hometown's history and the way that natural ecology is woven in. It also cultivates the children's appreciation and value of the region.

As a natural next step, we want to extend this educational opportunity to other schools around important crane sites in the East Asian Flyway. The Office of the Foreign Affairs of the People's Government of Jiangxi has expressed interest in working with us to facilitate international crane conservation educational exchanges with Russia and Mongolia. We are also using this educational model in Korea's Demilitarized Zone and Civilian Controlled Zone, as we plan a public outreach program based out of Cheorwon. Such flyway-level education and engagement remain central to our mission of conserving cranes throughout their migration in East Asia and connecting all people that call these birds their neighbors.

## Blending Culture and Curriculum

"Cranes are special birds that are very rare and elegant. I'm proud to learn that four species of cranes spend the winter in my hometown." – Sun Hao, Wucheng Primary School student

Wucheng village sits at the heart of Poyang Lake, where a single road leads to the village and a single school sits ready for children eager to learn every day. This is where the International Crane Foundation has been working with the local teachers to create two Siberian Crane classrooms. The curriculum contains 16 topics including the history and culture of Wucheng, stories of the Poyang Lake wetland, cranes, and other topics related to nature. After completing the whole curriculum, students have a greater appreciation for their home and can identify common birds in the wetland. Zou Ailing, who teaches history and culture at the school, fondly notes that "the kids are learning a lot and feel sad knowing some endangered cranes are threatened by human disturbance. Many of the kids are deeply touched by these lovely creatures and magnificent landscapes."



Zou Ailing teaching the Poyang Lake curriculum to a group of students.

## Strength in partners in the Khurkh-Khuiten River Valley

The Khurkh-Khuiten River Valley of Mongolia is an extensive area of grassland with scattered wetlands that supports up to 80 pairs of nesting White-naped Cranes, making it the largest known breeding



In Mongolia cranes share the landscape with livestock herders. Andrew Holman

concentration of this species. **In total, six crane species reside in this area—one of the most diverse crane areas on Earth.** It is also home to other endangered wildlife including spectacular Great Bustards and Swan Geese. Unfortunately, overgrazing, livestock in the wetlands, and predation by dogs are constant threats to breeding cranes.

Our management efforts in this region include:

- Working with local herders to minimize disturbance to breeding cranes from livestock and dogs.
- Monitoring nesting cranes to understand factors affecting chick success.
- Tracking cranes along migration routes to identify and protect key stopover and wintering sites and to assess and respond to emerging threats.
- Coordinating research on wetland hydrology, climate change impacts, permafrost, and peatlands.
- Developing a management plan for the protection of the Khurkh-Khuiten River Valley.
- Empowering women from herding families by promoting their traditional skills, and providing training and marketing for their felt handicrafts.



Herding woman crafting felt slippers. Richard Beilfuss/International Crane Foundation

As we improve the management of this national reserve, one of the key indicators of success will be to maintain a stable number of breeding pairs of White-naped Cranes and increase their overall breeding success. Throughout this effort, we want to strengthen relationships with local herders to reduce impact within Khurkh-Khuiten River Valley and increase awareness and support of the reserve in surrounding communities.

# NORTH AMERICA

## Expanding their horizons: Whooping Cranes turn to private lands

The conservation of the last naturally occurring Whooping Crane population that migrates between Canada and the gulf coast of Texas is a key priority. With approximately 690 remaining Whooping Cranes in the wild, the stakes remain high to ensure these birds have the proper habitats, food sources, and safety measures in place to thrive.



Coming together with landowners to find solutions that are beneficial for them and wildlife. International Crane Foundation

These cranes migrate 2,400 miles annually from breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada to wintering grounds in and around Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas. They require vast expanses of wetlands to thrive, and a major threat to their continued recovery is wetland loss and degradation on their coastal wintering grounds. To find ample habitat, Whooping Cranes increasingly seek refuge on private lands.

Because of Whooping Cranes shifting to private lands, we are focused on building

support for cranes with local landowners and ranchers. Landowners are constantly faced with decisions about land use, with lobbying efforts from energy companies and commercial and residential developers. Heritage ranching families comprise a large proportion of the 95% privately owned lands around Aransas, and they are striving to continue their land legacy while providing wildlife habitat. To help offset the cost of maintaining these working landscapes, we are working with partners to promote conservation easement purchases, wetland and grassland restoration cost-shares, and exploring long-term innovative financial support through carbon credits.

Because of local collaborations with landowners and the San Antonio Bay Partnership, a new freshwater wetland is on the landscape! A local heritage ranch has a new solar powered well that feeds water into a created shallow wetland. This pond was utilized by Whooping Cranes the first winter and has already attracted other wildlife. The wetland has been visited by spoonbills, egrets, turkey vultures, yellow-legs, herons, avocets, and many other shorebirds. Wells on other properties have been used by livestock, also helping the ranchers.

**Enhanced collaboration with landowners in the Aransas area is critical for the success of Whooping Cranes and countless other species that seek refuge on private lands.**

## Giving a Whoop for communities in the Eastern Migratory Flyway

The Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes spans from their breeding grounds in central Wisconsin to their wintering grounds in Indiana, Alabama, and Florida. These birds face many threats such as illegal shootings and powerline collisions, and because this population is still small, every loss matters. As we work to reduce threats we continue to grow our public outreach, captive-rearing methods, specialized veterinary care, and research and monitoring. To sustainably secure this population, it is



Boosting crane pride in local communities to partner with them in the protection of Whooping Cranes. Lizzie Condon

imperative that we involve the local communities to help reduce threats to Whooping Cranes.

We involve communities by boosting pride for their neighboring Whooping Cranes. Many people aren't aware of the cranes' critical status, so we are inspiring local communities to actively engage in Whooping Crane conservation efforts. For example, we work with communities throughout the flyway by asking them to sign a Whooping Crane Pledge. This pledge educates people about the status of Whooping Cranes and teaches them

how they can help cranes and other wetland species. They learn how to protect wetlands by limiting the use of pesticides and fertilizers near water bodies, participating in wetland clean-up projects, and contacting elected officials to advocate for wetland protection. This year our public programs in the flyway spanned four states and reached 5,938 community members, hunters, naturalists, and students.



Whooping Cranes on the Gulf Coast of Texas. Ciming Mei



The Whooping Crane Pledge not only supports Whooping Cranes and other species that call the wetlands home, but it supports clean water sources for neighboring communities, streams, and wetlands. Wetlands support one-third of threatened and endangered species in the United States, including Whooping Cranes, and are the source of drinking water for one in three Americans. Educating the public about the importance of conserving wetlands is an essential investment for wildlife, the ecosystem, and human welfare.

Throughout the flyway, we work to keep a symbiotic relationship between the landowners and the ecotourists that come to view the cranes and waterfowl. Indiana Department of Natural Resources Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area is home to Whooping Cranes and supports many recreational activities like birdwatching and hunting on its 9,000 acres of prairie and marsh. The International Crane Foundation provides educational interpretation about cranes that is accessible to their 12,000 annual visitors. As we encourage participation in these important federal lands, we also work with the landowners nearby. We create and provide signage that identifies private lands and deters trespassers from unlawfully accessing those lands. This helps Whooping Cranes encounter fewer human disturbances, and it helps landowners by deterring unlawful activities, like poaching, that could take place on their land.

**Community pride and involvement is an effective and critical way to protect Whooping Cranes throughout the Eastern flyway.**

**LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT WHOOPING CRANES IN INDIANA**  
[savingcranes.org/indiana](http://savingcranes.org/indiana)

**WHOOPING CRANE FACTS**

- Indiana is the home for the United States' only endangered species of crane, the Whooping Crane!
- They get their name from the loud "whooping" call used to attract a mate.
- Whooping Cranes mate for life.
- Two species of cranes exist in the United States, the endangered Whooping Crane and the abundant Sandhill Crane.
- Standing at 5 feet tall, Whooping Cranes are the tallest birds in North America.
- Whooping Crane populations have been slow to recover from fewer than 30 birds in the 1960s to over 300 today.
- Due to low numbers, Whooping Cranes lack genetic diversity which makes it hard to fight disease and adapt to a changing world. Each bird is genetically unique and crucial to the survival of the species.
- Whooping Cranes are important to maintain a balanced ecosystem. They eat a variety of plants and animals, and they provide food for predators such as foxes, wolves and bobcats.
- Wetlands provide critical habitat to Whooping Cranes and over 200 other bird species, and they provide water for 70% of the Indiana residents who rely on groundwater to drink.

**PLEDGE TO BE A CRANE HERO!**

Take the pledge at [savingcranes.org/indiana/pledge](http://savingcranes.org/indiana/pledge) to protect Whooping Cranes in Indiana.

- ✓ During my time in Indiana, I pledge to protect Whooping Cranes by:
- ✓ Reporting all Whooping Crane sightings to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at 1-800-455-6868.
- ✓ Keeping a distance of 200 yards from Whooping Cranes in the wild.
- ✓ Observing Whooping Crane behavior and respecting their need to forage and rest.
- ✓ Reporting animal enclosures and parking in designated areas to local landowners.
- ✓ Supporting legislation to add more Whooping Crane habitat and restoration of wetlands.

**IDENTIFICATION TIPS**

- Black necktie
- Red patch on forehead
- 7-foot wingspan (adult)
- 5-foot tall bird
- White bird with black wingtips (adult)
- Juveniles are a mottled white and cinnamon brown

**WHAT CAN YOU DO? HERE ARE FIVE BEST PRACTICES THAT WILL HELP PROTECT WHOOPING CRANES:**

- 1. LEAVE THEM ALONE!** If you see someone harassing, disturbing, or poaching Whooping Cranes, call the Indiana DNR at 1-800-455-6868.
- 2. KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!** Stay 200 yards (2 football fields) away from Whooping Cranes in the wild.
- 3. READ UP, WING UP, BACK UP!** Observe Whooping Crane behavior. If they are not used to having a person or their wing and leg, they are startled. They are shy birds. Keep your distance.
- 4. RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY!** If on the property, please keep driving & the property intact. Park in designated parking areas and keep your distance.
- 5. SAVE THE CRANES AND THE PLACES THEY DANCE!** Contact your local and state legislators asking them to support protection and conservation of wetlands. Then vote to support those who do.

Outreach materials are designed to fit the needs of different regions, like this one created with partners to support outreach efforts in Indiana.

### Bird's-eye view: Releasing a Whooper into the Wild

As we continue to be a lead partner for releases from our carefully managed captive flock, we rely on a team of well-trained volunteers to help us keep track of the population. One of our cherished volunteers, Doug Pellerin, has been working with Whooping Cranes for 12 years, including eight years with the International Crane Foundation. In the Fall of 2021, Pellerin helped release and monitor a male bird named Yoeme near a pair of adult Whooping Cranes near the White River Marsh in Wisconsin. The hope was that the pair would integrate him into their flock and show him the way south.

“From the beginning, the target pair and the other two adult pairs in the area showed interest in Yoeme, taking him under their wings,” said Pellerin. “Additionally, a few other male Whooping Cranes around the area were trying to befriend him. It was quite interesting to watch it all unfold.”

The birds began to migrate in late November. After brief stops in southern Illinois and Tennessee, the family made it to their wintering grounds in Morgan County, Alabama.

Happily, Yoeme made his way back to Wisconsin with his foster family in the spring. Once they arrived back at the marsh, Yoeme ventured out on his own. He has since been associating with a wild-hatched chick and other single Whooping Cranes in the area.

“It’s been a passion of mine to help them survive for future generations,” added Pellerin. “Whenever I see a Whooping Crane in the wild, it gives me hope.”

Doug Pellerin is the recipient of the 2021 International Crane Foundation Good Egg Award.



Doug Pellerin is using the Whooping Crane tracking antennae. Doug Pellerin



Whooping Crane Yoeme with adult birds. Doug Pellerin



*Sandhill Cranes on the Wisconsin River. Ted Thousand*

Your gifts make an immediate impact, triggering action and deeper commitment for cranes, wetlands, and communities of the Kafue Flats, Poyang Lake, coastal Texas, and everywhere we work. And we have much more to do! New and emerging threats to cranes, like the recent bird flu epidemic and the growing impacts of climate change, will keep us busy for decades to come.

Your generosity has allowed the International Crane Foundation to protect and restore wetlands, grasslands, and other critical habitats for nearly 50 years. We hope you will continue to invest as our partner in conservation for the next 50 years. Looking forward, we are making new commitments today that will resonate far into the future, none of which will be possible without you.

Thank you for supporting this important work—yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

## *Cranes of the World*



*Visitors enjoy the newly renovated Red Crowned Crane exhibit. Middle: Ribbon cutting at the George Archibald Welcome Center. Bottom: Freshly planted prairie leading up to the new welcome center. International Crane Foundation*

### **Grand reopening of HQ in Baraboo**

After being closed for two long years, we reopened our gates in May 2021 to eager visitors and proudly showcased the newly renovated Cranes of the World exhibits and the George Archibald Welcome Center. Our extensive remodel includes 10 new ponds, seven murals, three prayer wheels, and a new fountain at the center of the Cranes and Culture Plaza.

In each crane habitat, visitors can observe the natural behaviors of cranes, such as foraging for food, conducting unison calls and dances, and protecting their territory.

Inside the welcome center, the Sandhill Crane exhibit details the extraordinary comeback of the species and offers interactive touchscreens and videos from our staff in the field. Shining a spotlight on the accomplishments to save this species shows our critical work and that we are just getting started.

From all of us at the International Crane Foundation—including the cranes—thank you for your generous donation to make this possible. We hope to see you soon.

## OUR FOCUS

Our work is focused on seven key strategies. When you invest in saving cranes, you invest in sustainable water management, land protection and stewardship, biodiversity conservation, empowering the leaders of tomorrow, and conservation-friendly livelihoods.

“Elegant and endangered, cranes bring us together and inspire us to find lasting conservation solutions. We will carry many of the lessons of the past year 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.”

— Richard Beilfuss, President & CEO



Whooping Crane chick. Tom Lynn

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

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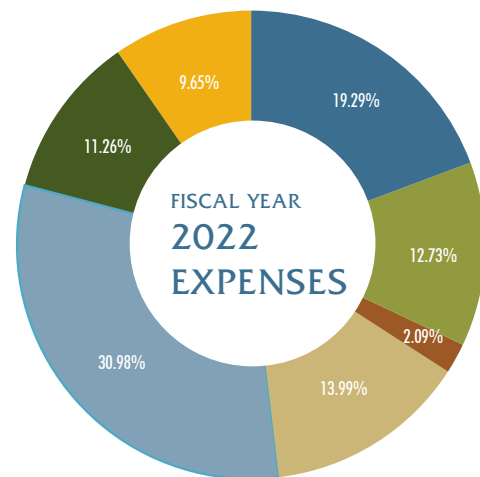
## INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Years ended March 31, 2022 and 2021

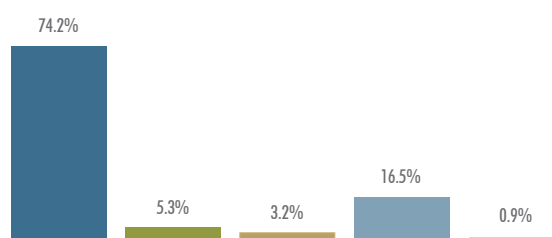
ASSETS	2022	2021
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$5,780,211	\$5,583,119
Accounts receivable	\$92,833	\$36,373
Unconditional promises to give, current portion	\$466,900	\$519,000
Inventories	\$80,654	\$85,555
Prepaid expenses	\$101,769	\$139,170
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$6,522,367</b>	<b>\$6,363,217</b>
<b>PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET</b>		
	\$13,397,374	\$14,011,439
<b>OTHER ASSETS</b>		
Unconditional promises to give, long-term portion	\$567,807	\$436,597
Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trusts and community foundation	\$1,225,343	\$1,033,849
Investments, restricted to endowments	\$4,015,511	\$3,929,386
Investments, other	\$36,139,771	\$34,489,556
Cash and Investments restricted for capital improvements	\$396,738	\$315,723
Construction in Progress	\$31,317	-
Other receivables	-	-
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	<b>\$42,376,487</b>	<b>\$40,205,111</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$62,296,228</b>	<b>\$60,579,767</b>

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Loan Payable to related party	-	-
Notes Payable	-	\$37,097
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$108,379	\$44,719
Accrued payroll and related liabilities	\$370,849	\$371,100
Deferred revenues and refundable advances	\$56,449	\$116,663
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$535,677</b>	<b>\$569,579</b>
<b>NONCURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Notes Payable, long term portion	-	\$581,183
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$535,677</b>	<b>\$1,150,762</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$46,498,736	\$45,451,591
With Donor Restrictions	\$15,261,815	\$13,977,414
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$61,760,551</b>	<b>\$59,429,005</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$62,296,228</b>	<b>\$60,579,767</b>



● Africa	\$1,905,321	19.29%
● East Asia	\$1,257,784	12.73%
● South and Southeast Asia	\$206,482	2.09%
● North America	\$1,381,722	13.99%
● ICF Center for Conservation Leadership	\$3,060,275	30.98%
● General & Administrative	\$1,112,437	11.26%
● Fundraising	\$952,621	9.65%
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$7,811,584</b>	<b>79.09%</b>
<b>Total Supporting Activities</b>	<b>\$2,065,058</b>	<b>20.91%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$9,876,642</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



<b>FISCAL YEAR 2022 REVENUE</b>		
● Contributions and Grants	\$9,055,739	74.2%
● Memberships	\$642,211	5.3%
● Sales and Tour Income	\$391,266	3.2%
● Investment Income (Loss)	\$2,010,469	16.5%
● Other	\$108,503	0.9%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$12,208,188</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



The International Crane Foundation works worldwide in partnership with governments, communities, landowners, universities, businesses, and organizations large and small to advance our mission. Each of our partners brings expertise and experience to help us achieve much more than we could ever do alone. We support many of our local partners through our Conservation Impact Fund and joint fundraising efforts. Other partners make significant financial contributions through their direct investments in the crane conservation strategies we undertake together. During the past fiscal year, our partners investments amount to millions of dollars in impact for our mission.

Our most important global partnership is the **Crane Specialist Group** under the Species Survival Commission of the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The Crane Specialist Group, through our leadership, engages more than 300 colleagues from more than 60 countries on all five crane continents, working collaboratively under a global Crane Conservation Strategy. Collectively, we monitor the status and distribution of all fifteen species of cranes, share results, assess threats, and act as needed. This partnership is particularly useful for monitoring wide-ranging species that cross our priority program boundaries (such as Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes) and other species of Least Concern (Brolgas), such that we may concentrate our resources on species of highest conservation concern.

The International Crane Foundation is actively involved in many other global partnerships, including the World Commission on Protected Areas, the International Conservation Caucus, the Ramsar Convention for Wetlands of International Importance, the World Commission on Ecosystem Management, the Conservation Measures Partnership, the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the World Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy to scale-up our impact for the places and species that matter most.

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Whooping Crane eggs in Wisconsin. Hillary Thompson/International Crane Foundation



*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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*Eurasian Crane and chick sitting on their nest.  
Brut Ginter Nowald*