



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

April 2023-March 2024



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO AND BOARD DIRECTOR

Last year we celebrated 50 years of conservation impact for cranes and other wildlife and people who all share the same lands. Starting as the college dream of two graduate students, we grew beyond our headquarters in Wisconsin to develop programs and offices across Africa, Asia, and North America in the places where crane conservation is needed most. One of the great joys of celebrating our 50th last year was the opportunity to reflect on our lessons learned from the first 50 years, and the ways forward for the next 50.

Over our first 50 years we learned that cultural reverence for cranes inspires people worldwide to safeguard these magnificent birds. Cranes are held sacred by Hindus and Buddhists and admired among people across five continents. But we find that communities revere cranes a lot less when the cranes threaten their crops or other livelihoods. In the coming years, we will work to solve crop damage with sustainable solutions that are affordable and convenient for farmers from Wisconsin to East Africa to Asia.

Likewise, we learned that cranes serve as powerful flagships for conserving wetlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands, helping us secure new protected areas and manage for healthier landscapes. There are literally tens of millions of hectares of land protected for cranes worldwide—China alone has created 46 protected areas for cranes at the national and provincial level, securing more than 70 million hectares of land. We learned as well that conservation of these protected and private lands is inseparable from the well-being of the communities who share these lands. In the coming years, we will make more deep commitments like our 20-year pledge to make the Kafue Flats in Zambia a “thriving floodplain for all.”

And we certainly learned over and over again how cranes are ambassadors for international

goodwill and conservation partnership, helping us bring people together in a very divided world to solve big conservation challenges. Our earliest efforts focused on bringing together China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, and other Central Asia countries to secure every link in the chain of migration to save and recover the Critically Endangered Siberian Crane. In this report you will read about what has been achieved by seeking partnerships with all who care about the fate of these birds and the lands they share with us.

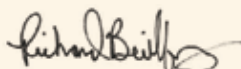
We could go on about our inspiring vision for the future:

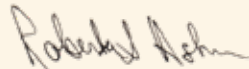
- Doing whatever it takes to fully recover Whooping Cranes from the brink of extinction.
- Helping farmers train each other on climate-smart agriculture that benefits their families and our biological heritage.
- Inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders in the places where cranes need them most.

But first, sit back and enjoy these stories of the impact YOU are making TODAY in the pages of this annual report. All of this work has been made possible—yesterday, today, and tomorrow—through the support of people like you who care about our natural world.

We hope you find this annual report as deeply inspiring as we do. And that you share the same pride in all that we have and will accomplish together.

With heartfelt gratitude for your support,


Richard Beilfuss
President & CEO


Roberta Asher
Board Chair

Who We Are

The International Crane Foundation works worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend. The nonprofit organization is headquartered in Baraboo, Wisconsin, with offices and staff in China, Vietnam, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, South Africa and Texas. The International Crane Foundation works through strong partnerships with local organizations, governments, universities, businesses and others in these regions. More than 135 staff and associates work with a network of hundreds of specialists in over 50 countries. The International Crane Foundation unites people behind the charisma of cranes to inspire international cooperation, help improve people’s livelihoods, and protect millions of acres of wetlands and grasslands on the five continents where cranes live.

Hannah Jones/International Crane Foundation



Junior birders on the Texas coast.

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS: SPANNING DECADES, CROSSING BORDERS

Some of the projects the International Crane Foundation is in the midst of today started 30, 40 or even 50 years ago, and involve partners from many nations. We are committed for as long as it takes.

Supporting a Trans-national Flyway: Decades of Siberian Crane Conservation

The Critically Endangered Siberian Crane disperses across vast, inaccessible wetlands and migrates across national boundaries. In our work to conserve the world's third rarest crane, we have risen to challenges related to the immense distances of their migration, the complexities of their biology, and the differing politics of the countries in their range.

This year marked both the 30-year anniversary of the global Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation of the Siberian Crane and the final year of a 10-year plan funded by the Disney Conservation Fund. Our work has achieved very positive high-level outcomes. As the program leader under the Disney grant, the International Crane Foundation works closely with partners from breeding, staging and wintering areas in China and Russia. We collaborate with governments, universities, nature reserves, research institutes, local non-government organizations, volunteers and communities along their flyway, from the Russian Arctic to southeast China. And we are proud to affirm that the eastern



Huang Wei

Monitoring for invasive crayfish that threaten natural food plants on wintering areas in Poyang Lake, China.



Sergei Steptsov

A Siberian Crane defends its breeding grounds in Yakutia, arctic Russia.

population of Siberian Cranes continues to thrive. In the 2000s, the Siberian Crane population stood at approximately 3,500. In 2022 we saw the highest numbers recorded to date: about 5,500 individuals.

More than 98 percent of Siberian Cranes spend their winter at China's Poyang Lake, one of the most important habitats along the entire East Asian-Australasian flyway. The area is a haven for White-naped Cranes, Hooded Cranes and Eurasian Cranes too, as well as many other waterbird species. ICF has worked with Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve since 1999 to build a robust long-term ecological monitoring program and to train local staff to conduct surveys and analyze data—work which continues today.

Our Siberian Crane conservation strategy also includes work at staging areas in China, primarily in nature reserves at Momoge, Xianghai, Tumuji, Wolong Lake, and Huanzidong. We are aiming to elevate these major Siberian Crane staging areas by working with the Chinese government to manage the wetland and water resources and establish a national park especially for cranes.

Because all of the world's Siberian Cranes breed in arctic Russia, this region is a critical part of our flyway-level conservation strategy. Over the last decade, we saw the official establishment of Kytalyk National Park in Russia. Upgraded protection provided by the park has meant ecological, institutional, and financial sustainability. Russia has also endorsed a national action plan for Siberian Cranes, and Kytalyk National Park is listed as a proposed World Heritage Site.

International cooperation along the Siberian Crane's eastern flyway is critical to the species' recovery. We're proud of the achievements of ICF and our many partners, benefiting Siberian Cranes as well as other threatened waterbirds. Our decades of work have also contributed to the integrity and resilience of wetland ecosystems along the flyway. Our global work in Siberian Crane conservation has inspired many people—from those sharing their lands with cranes to school children to nature reserve staff to government officials at all levels—to join this work and make it their own.



Zhou Haixiang

Siberian Cranes gathered for food and rest in Huanzidong National Wetland Park in northeast China.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS
(2015-2023)

Eastern population of Siberian Cranes increased from **3,500** to around **5,500** birds

9,565 sq. km of new habitat protected

3,211 sq. km of habitat received improved management

38,224 sq. km of habitat received upgraded protection

8,224 youth engaged in conservation programs

At least **60,000** people reached through community outreach efforts

85 million people reached through communications that champion the benefits of nature

A Lot of Hands Make It Possible: Reintroducing the Whooping Crane

The Whooping Crane is one of the rarest and most endangered bird species in North America. While there is only one natural, self-sustaining population of Whooping Cranes, the International Crane Foundation and our partners have implemented a series of reintroduction projects over the last 50 years, resulting in the establishment of two new wild Whooping Crane populations in North America. The first migrates through the eastern United States, while the second is a non-migratory population on the species' historic range in southern Louisiana. Captive breeding and reintroduction have been critical to helping these populations grow. This year the story of one young Whooping Crane who passed through many hands from north to south illustrated the bonds between partner organizations that led to our success. This individual bird's story also pointed out work that remains to be done.



Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and International Crane Foundation staff working together to band Whooping Cranes in Louisiana and share field techniques.

“

Reintroduction has been critical to helping restore Whooping Crane populations. But it's a team effort and there's a lot of hands that make what we're doing possible.

Anne Lacy

Director of Eastern Flyway Programs – North America



Tom Lynn

Whooping Crane chick.

The Whooping Crane chick known as L4-23 was the third of four eggs laid in 2023 by Whooping Crane pair Anzac and Slash at ICF headquarters in Baraboo. On day 26 of its incubation, the egg was transferred to the Dallas Zoo's Whooping Crane Center of Texas. There, the egg made news as the first-ever successful hatching of a Whooping Crane at the Dallas Zoo. Foster parents Huckleberry and Juniper raised the chick in Texas. In November 2023, the juvenile crane joined the wild Whooping Crane population in Louisiana.

Then, after less than two months in the wild, L4-23 was found near Mamou, Louisiana with a fatal gunshot wound. With such a small number of Whooping Cranes in the world, this one death, whether from negligence or malice, was a blow. Numerous people and organizations watched over, cared for and celebrated L4-23. The network of relationships that ICF has cultivated continues to support the reintroduced populations, and we will have happier endings to share. Notably, L4-23's demise eventually made the front page of the *Dallas Morning-News*, spreading awareness and concern for Whooping Cranes widely. Despite the sad fate of this particular bird, the population of Whooping Cranes is growing. ICF and our partners are committed to continuing this trajectory of success.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Organizational partners in L4-23's reintroduction: **5**—ICF, Dallas Zoo, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Whooping Crane breeding partners: **6**—ICF, Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo, Smithsonian National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute, White Oak Conservation, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Dallas Zoo

Wild Whooping Cranes in 1950: **34**

Reintroduced population of Whooping Cranes today: **162**

Aransas-Wood Buffalo wild population today: **536**



Liz Smith/International Crane Foundation

Whooping Cranes in flight.

Justice for Whooping Cranes

As the fate of L4-23 shows, we must engage with hunters as part of our work in crane conservation. In areas where Whooping Cranes live or pass through, we strive to educate people about their rarity and encourage them to see themselves as guardians of this iconic species. We also pursue consequences in the criminal justice system for people who injure cranes. This year, the United States Attorney's Office in Oklahoma sentenced four men for the killing of

four Whooping Cranes in November 2021. The four cranes the men shot were part of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo remnant wild population that winters in Texas and breeds in Canada. The men's sentencing included forfeiture of firearms, nationwide loss of hunting privileges for five years, and restitution totaling \$68,000 to the International Crane Foundation.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Partners: **4+** organizational partners, **7** traditional rulers

Land area: **650,000** hectares covering **2** national parks

Species impacted: **470+** bird species (including 23 of conservation concern), plus large mammal species including zebra, hippo, African buffalo, endangered Kafue Lechwe antelope

Human population impacted: **1 million+**

Coming Together to Manage a Critical African Wetland: Zambia's Kafue Flats

We see another momentous example of the impact of long-term partnerships in our signing this year of a 20-year collaborative agreement to help restore and manage Blue Lagoon and Lochinvar National Parks of the Kafue Flats in Zambia. This is one of the most important wetlands in Africa for wildlife and people. The International Crane Foundation has been working in this region for decades. The area is home to the largest population of threatened Wattled Cranes and to the endangered Kafue Lechwe antelope. By partnering with local leaders and empowering local communities to lead park management, we aim to create lasting conservation of the Kafue Flats. ICF came together with the Zambia Department of National Parks and Wildlife and the Worldwide Fund for Nature Zambia to form the Kafue Flats Restoration Partnership. The Endangered Wildlife Trust of South Africa and many other key partners are also collaborating in this effort, including local traditional rulers and their communities.

In addition to supporting a wealth of wildlife and natural resources, the Kafue Flats benefit more than one million people in Zambia through agriculture, livestock grazing, fishing, water supply, power generation and tourism. Under the agreement, local community members are involved in all aspects of park management, including invasive species control, research and monitoring, various livelihood initiatives and law enforcement.



Griffin Shanungu/International Crane Foundation

Kafue Lechwe, Wattled Cranes and Spur-Winged Geese at Blue Lagoon National Park.



Our motto is 'A Thriving Wetland for All.' A healthy wetland for cranes and other wildlife is also a healthy wetland for people. This commitment is more than just conservation. It is about people's livelihoods, cultural heritage, identity and pride.

Mwape Sichilongo

International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust Southern African Floodplains Regional Director

Global Connections – A Thriving Wetland for All in Mongolia's Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve

Our work in the Kafue Flats echoes our work in Mongolia, where we also co-manage a national park that contains a key wetland and crane habitat. A Memorandum of Understanding we signed in 2022 means that we help conserve Mongolia's Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve, the most important breeding haven for vulnerable

White-naped Cranes. And like our work in the Kafue Flats, our work in Khurkh-Khuiten encompasses a philosophy of supporting the communities that share the area with cranes. The wetlands provide an essential source of water for both herders and their animals. Yet livestock trampling the waterside vegetation and herders' dogs preying on birds pose significant threats to the breeding success of cranes nesting around the wetlands. One of the challenges for the nature reserve is to develop a

participatory management plan that collaborates with local herders to better manage these habitats and protect cranes and other wildlife.



Kari Stauffer/International Crane Foundation

Herders and their livestock share wetlands with cranes, here in Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve in Mongolia as well as in other places where we work.



Emile Nsengumuremyi

Experienced farmers share their knowledge with others to spread climate-smart agriculture methods.

MAKING CONSERVATION RELEVANT TO COMMUNITY NEEDS

Our community-centered approach to conservation draws on the knowledge of local people, who have much to teach us about the environment they share with cranes. We also provide solutions based on our knowledge, forming reciprocal respect.

Extending Farmer Knowledge with Climate-Smart Agriculture

One of the International Crane Foundation's key strategies wherever we work is to first ask what communities need, and then to craft responses that benefit local people while also maintaining healthy habitat for cranes and other wildlife. One of the major threats to the Grey Crowned Crane in East Africa is habitat loss because of the encroachment of agriculture into wetlands. Therefore, our approach has been to find solutions for small-scale farmers who may drain wetlands for cultivation or enter fragile marshes to collect water or food for themselves or their animals.

In East Africa, the needs of small farmers have been met with programs to train them in various climate-smart agriculture techniques. Using different plants and methods, farmers in East Africa have been able to increase their yields and also reduce their reliance on the wetlands where cranes live.

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Legislators met with to discuss farmer issues: **37**

Farmers met with individually: **100+**

Sandhill Crane population in 1930s (Wisconsin): estimated **25** breeding pairs

Sandhill Crane population today (Eastern Population): estimated **100,000+**

We have spread knowledge of climate-smart agriculture principally by training mentors, who then train others in turn. Expanding on this practice, two years ago we invited communities in Kenya to nominate students for higher education. Through a partnership with Manor House Agricultural Center, four students were nominated to earn a two-year diploma in Agro-Ecology on a fully paid scholarship. Two community groups in Nandi and two in Trans-Nzoia recommended students. After completing their diplomas this December, the four are all now working in the region. This circle of training and education means communities are strengthened, techniques that improve yield and income and also protect wetlands are spreading, and conservation of the environment is taken up as a benefit for all.

Finding Solutions for Farmers Worldwide

The recovery of the Sandhill Crane from near extinction to today's flourishing population is one of the great conservation success stories of the past 50 years. However, as these cranes settle in or near agricultural lands, crop depredation puts them in conflict with farmers. Our North America program makes outreach to farmers a vital part of our work.

One of the key tools farmers in the Midwest can use to prevent damage to sprouting corn is the seed treatment Avipel. Seed coated with Avipel tastes bad to birds, but the plant is not affected. This year we developed a program in coordination with Arkion Life Sciences to provide Avipel at no cost to farmers in a study area near Briggsville, Wisconsin to test its use on a large scale and study the impacts to crane behavior and regional movement. The International Crane Foundation also hired a Private Lands Biologist this year, a position specifically created to coordinate farmer relations in North America. This position has helped us make progress in meeting farmers where they are and to hold listening sessions to understand their needs. We can use these sessions to help farmers understand in turn the work ICF is doing to find effective solutions.



Sandhill Cranes in flight.

Ryan Michalesko/International Crane Foundation

We met with farmers one-on-one and in group meetings, and staffed a literature table at large agricultural gatherings, including Farm Technology Days, where more than 46,000 attendees had the opportunity to talk with us or learn more about our work. With the support of the new Private Lands Biologist, we can better understand the needs of farmers and continue to alleviate the pressure that a healthy Sandhill Crane population puts on farms.



Bur Minh Nguyen

Thousands of migratory birds use Tram Chim National Park and its buffer zone during the migration season.

Global Connections: Making Rice Fields Safer for Cranes in Vietnam

The outreach we do with farmers in the United States informs our work with crop damage issues in other parts of the world. One place we've made notable progress is in Vietnam's Tram Chim National Park, a nature reserve in the delta of the Mekong River. In order to protect Sarus Cranes (to be reintroduced within Tram Chim next year) and a host of other waterbirds, rice farmers have committed to organic rice cultivation in a buffer zone along the park. In only the second year of organic farming, the effects were already clear. During the bird migration season in December, thousands of birds used these fields for foraging.

Empowering Communities through Financial Literacy

Our community-centered approach to conservation draws on the knowledge of local people, who have deep understanding of the environment they share with cranes. Our team in East Africa found that community groups often encountered a barrier when doing conservation work: financial literacy. Without a basic understanding of financial management, such as how to keep financial records, often local organizations were unable to receive funding to support their work. If they did receive funding, they may not have had the chance to learn the skills to manage the money. Offering training in financial literacy to community groups may seem like a far step from crane conservation, however it is another way to meet the needs of local people and allows them to foster broader protection of the environment for all, birds included.

About 50 community members and Department of National Parks and Wildlife staff at Lochinvar National Park in Zambia took part in financial literacy training this

year during Global Financial Literacy Week. Our team also provided a course in financial literacy to people living in the foothills of the Drakensberg in South Africa. About 25 people from KwaMkhize Village took the two-day course to gain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to manage their money, both in their business and private lives.

Financial literacy is essential to the communities we work with as they take on greater responsibilities and build resilience. Our work to provide financial literacy training complements other work we have been doing, including group governance, leadership and management. To build on the success of the programs we offered this year, we have made plans for the rollout of a broader East Africa financial literacy program next year.

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In the trainings, groups were encouraged and guided on how to start savings as a group as one way of strengthening group financial capacity, resilience and continuity. To date, most of our groups now have a saving and credit scheme. This is one of the most significant changes we have so far had.

Zeneb Musimire

International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust East Africa Community Engagement Specialist



Financial literacy training in Zambia.

David Banda/International Crane Foundation

PLANNING FOR A CHANGING PLANET

The International Crane Foundation is committed to helping cranes and the communities sharing their lands with them cope with our changing climate. To manage and secure wetlands facing climate change, we draw lessons from decades of crane conservation—that the needs of cranes, many other species, and people depend on healthy landscapes and watersheds. Some of our key work this year involved exploration of solutions for fresh water and for managing fire. We also continue to educate the next generation of conservationists to cope with the changing world they inherit.

Managing Water and Fire on the Texas Coast

One of the more noticeable effects of climate change is increasing drought in some areas. Drought is creating pressure within and around the Guadalupe-San Antonio Estuary in coastal Texas, where the remnant wild population of Whooping Cranes winter. A growing human population and competition for water from industry and municipalities means water is increasingly scarce for Whooping Cranes and the many other species of waterbirds and other animals that depend on these wetlands. Grasslands are a secondary habitat for wintering Whooping Cranes. Due to various causes, many of our grasslands globally are seeing increased encroachment of woody plants. Unless woody plants are controlled, grasslands may convert to shrublands or woodlands. One tool to manage and even reclaim grasslands is the use of prescribed fires. Given the importance of both fresh water and healthy grasslands for Whooping Cranes and other waterbirds on the Gulf Coast of Texas, the International Crane Foundation committed to a Water & Fire Initiative this year.

Carter Crouchy/International Crane Foundation



Top: A prescribed burn on the Texas coast.
Bottom: Waterbirds in a flooded unit in Colorado County, Texas.

This program will take on the challenges to Whooping Cranes on two fronts. We are working to see more freshwater on the landscape to benefit Whooping Cranes and other

birds. This year was our second year of a three-year agreement with the Texas Water Trade, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Guadalupe Blanco River Authority to release 200 acres/feet of freshwater a year in the Guadalupe Delta Wildlife Management Area. Through monthly avian surveys, ICF staff documented more than 80 bird species using this water over the fall, winter, and spring. In addition, Texas Parks and Wildlife Staff documented four Whooping Cranes on the units in November.

Another way we are working to see more freshwater on the landscape is through wetland enhancements on private and public land. Since 2012, the San Antonio Bay Partnership, ICF, and various other organizations have worked to ensure that freshwater is available to Whooping Cranes and other wildlife through Water for Wildlife projects. This year, ICF initiated the Wells and Water for Whoopers cost share program. This lets us build upon the many years of successful collaboration on Water for Wildlife projects, to formalize the agreements with landowners, and to work in Whooping Crane expansion areas. We completed our first cost share project in January 2024 and expect to complete many additional projects next year.

On the fire side, Texas staff worked on acquiring their National Wildfire Coordinating Group certifications. We pursued this because lack of trained personnel is often a barrier to implementing prescribed burns. Once complete, all staff will be Wildland Fire Fighter Type 2 certified. This will allow us to become more involved in prescribed fire on the grasslands where it will benefit Whooping Cranes.



Tom Lynn

Managing Our Site in Baraboo with Fire

At ICF headquarters in Wisconsin, ICF staff, fellows and volunteers manage 175 acres of our 260-acre site with prescribed fire. This includes our prairie, oak savanna, wetland, and a portion of our woodland communities. The first prescribed burn at ICF took place in 1985, and we've been burning annually since 1988.



Tom Lynn

Wildflowers in bloom at our site in Baraboo.



A Wattle Crane nest with two eggs in the Umgeni Vlei Nature Reserve with a prescribed fire in the background.

Drakensberg Coordinator Lara Jordan and farm manager Joe Gates take a kick boat out to access a nest and its valuable eggs.



Lara Jordan, International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust

Jacquie van der Westhuizen

Cranes in the Path of Wildfires: Wood Buffalo and the Drakensberg

While fire is vital to maintaining the healthy grasslands cranes depend on, fire can be a threat in itself. The summer of 2023 saw unprecedented wildfires in Canada, including in the Northwest Territories, where an estimated nearly three million hectares were impacted—an area more than three times the size of Yellowstone National Park in the U.S. Many of these fires were in and around Wood Buffalo National Park, where the last remnant wild Whooping Crane population breeds. The fires prompted the evacuation of Fort Smith, where the park headquarters is located. The Wood Buffalo Complex fire covered more than 453,000 hectares and was at one point classified as “out of control” and expanding.

Fortunately, core Whooping Crane breeding areas were largely spared. Whooping Cranes breed in the wettest and least fire-prone areas of the park. Their breeding sites tend to be concentrated along drainages that hold water for a longer period of the year. Even though the cranes were in a good place, this year’s fires threatened the homes and well-being of the staff of our partner organizations, Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

In eastern South Africa, ICF staff worked diligently to protect Wattle Cranes and their eggs from prescribed fires this winter. The wetlands of the Drakensberg region of South Africa are rich in biodiversity, supporting critical populations of Wattle Cranes as well as Grey Crowned Cranes, Blue Cranes and many other rare and threatened species. As in Texas, where water is an issue, we’re also concerned with fire.

The Wattle Crane breeding season in Drakensberg overlaps with prescribed burns during the winter fire season, and one of the most significant historical threats to the species has been the loss of eggs and chicks at nest sites to fire. The International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust Partnership worked with farmers, landowners and nature reserves to secure the safety of Wattle Crane eggs and chicks by

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Number of schools: **3**

Number of teachers: **12**

Number of children who have used the curriculum this year: **133**

Number of children who have used the curriculum since 2019: **369**

temporarily removing them during scheduled burns. The ICF/ EWT team returned the eggs or chicks to the parents once the fire danger had passed.

This kind of project, though small and labor-intensive, speaks to our deep engagement with local landowners who trust our expertise—and who respect the needs of cranes. Such projects are part of our broad global strategy. Across the diverse wetlands that support cranes in Asia, Africa, and North America, ICF strengthens wetland protections from drainage and development, improves livestock management, and manages fires as interconnected methods to combat climate change and protect cranes, landscapes and communities.

Crane Schools: Education Brings Solutions for Cranes into the Next Generation

This report begins with the decades of work the International Crane Foundation and its partners have done to conserve the Siberian Crane, much of it centered around Poyang Lake in China. As we close our circle around the globe, we come back to the communities around Poyang, where an expanding program encourages schoolchildren to understand and value the



Students study an innovative curriculum in a newly remodeled crane-themed classroom.

Yu Qian/International Crane Foundation



Ryan Michalesko/International Crane Foundation

Sandhill Crane.

environment they share with cranes. More than 600,000 waterbirds spend the winter at Poyang Lake every year, including almost all the Siberian Cranes in the world, more than 90 percent of Oriental Storks, more than 50 percent of Tundra Swans, and more than 95 percent of the Western Population of White-naped Cranes. Yet, like other unique and precious ecosystems we work in around the world, Poyang Lake is subject to pressure from human population growth and development. One problem we face is how to encourage local communities to take pride in their cranes so they take steps to protect them. A successful approach ICF has taken in this region is to educate local

schoolchildren on the importance of cranes and a healthy ecosystem. Our flagship program is our Crane Schools.

In cooperation with local partners, we contacted schools located in or near crane habitats. If the school was interested, we helped establish a team of four to eight teachers in each school, who then received special training from ICF in basic knowledge of wetlands and waterbirds. We also took teachers on field observations of cranes and other waterbirds. In each Crane School, ICF renovated and decorated a crane-themed classroom to provide a learning environment focused on cranes. We coupled the new classroom with an innovative one-year curriculum designed for students in Grades 4 or 5.

To date we have set up three crane schools in the Poyang Lake area. Plans are underway to develop and replicate the Crane School model in other communities along the flyway. Our goal is to grow to at least 12 Crane Schools in China over the next few years. The species of concern can be expanded from the Siberian Crane to other crane species, for example the Black-necked Crane. With more Crane Schools, we hope to be able to organize collective training events, bringing established schools and new schools together as a team.



Lin Ling

A student explains wetland metaphors to the rest of the class.

Global Connections: Getting Kids Hooked on Cranes by Visiting Our Cranes of the World Site in Wisconsin

The International Crane Foundation reaches the next generation of conservationists in many ways, including visits to our site in Baraboo. Out of more than 21,000 daily visits last year, we served more than 3,600 participants in group tours, including school and youth groups. We received a grant to fund an introductory video for our visitor center aimed specifically at kids in grades Kindergarten through 6. We also received funding for the development of six Cranes of the World education trunks. Teachers can use these in their classrooms to prepare their students for a trip to our site.



Hannah Jones/International Crane Foundation

When ICF's China team visited our Baraboo headquarters this year, our Interpretative Programs Coordinator Quinn Brownell (right) explored a Crane Trunk with them.

TURNING TO ONE ANOTHER

I was gratified earlier this year to read an essay in the *New York Times* by nature writer Margaret Renkl on the gathering of Sandhill Cranes at wintering grounds near her home in Nashville. Renkl describes the exuberant mass of birds, some 15,000 Sandhills at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Many other waterbirds, mammals, amphibians and plants flourish in this protected area—but the human visitors are all there to see the cranes. While others focus their cameras and binoculars for close-ups, Renkl watches the flock and sees cooperation. “Birds don’t exist to teach us anything,” she writes. “They have their own purposes and their own complicated lives—but we are fools if we can’t learn something important for our purposes, too, for our own complicated lives, in their dazzling, life-sustaining cooperation. How sensible it is for a fragile species, having no fangs and no claws, to share resources. How wise to turn to one another for help.”

Renkl’s words illuminate our mission at ICF: everything we’ve accomplished and hope to accomplish comes because we turn to one another. It’s through the support of our donors, our partners, the communities across the globe who share lands and livelihoods with cranes, the aviculturists, bird enthusiasts, policymakers, farmers, school children, lovers of the outdoors and nature, who come together with us, that we save cranes. Examples you’ve read about in this report are testament to how much we can do: we can help farmers in Africa teach each other techniques that increase their incomes and keep them from disturbing cranes in wetlands. We can work with very different and sometimes conflicted national governments over the course of decades, to save the Siberian Crane. We can share water and manage fire with ranchers in Texas, while evaluating similar solutions for wetlands and grasslands in Mongolia, South Africa, and elsewhere. We are connected, and together, we can accomplish more than we ever dreamed. Thank you for supporting the International Crane Foundation. Stay with us to achieve our mission to secure all 15 species of cranes and the ecosystems, waterways and flyways on which they depend.



Everything we do is because you make it possible.

Kari Stauffer

Kari Stauffer
Vice President – Development

Crane migration at the Platte River.

DONOR LIST

\$1,000,000

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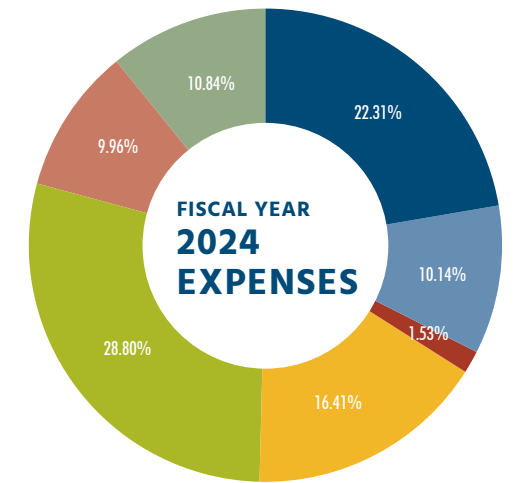
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INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

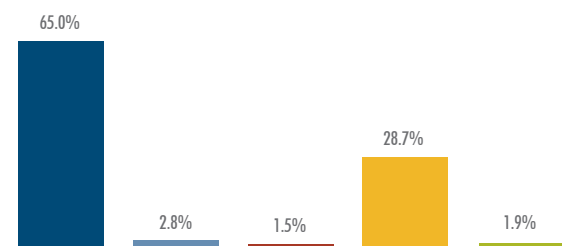
Years ended March 31, 2023 and 2022

ASSETS	2024	2023
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$6,493,364	\$5,653,557
Accounts receivable	\$92,240	\$36,987
Unconditional promises to give, current portion	\$1,826,533	\$1,123,362
Inventories	\$96,131	\$88,355
Prepaid expenses	\$181,375	\$124,081
Total Current Assets	\$8,689,643	\$7,026,342
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT, NET	\$11,521,312	\$12,440,280
OTHER ASSETS		
Unconditional promises to give, long-term portion	\$3,847,513	\$288,005
Right-of-use Assets - Leases	\$140,871	
Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trusts and community foundation	\$1,207,455	\$1,033,487
Investments, restricted to endowments	\$4,257,319	\$4,111,819
Investments, other	\$35,709,132	\$31,938,168
Cash and Investments restricted for capital improvements	\$984,077	\$875,466
Construction in Progress	\$518,675	\$61,133
Other receivables	\$54,252	-
Total Other Assets	\$46,719,294	\$38,308,078
Total Assets	\$66,930,249	\$57,774,700
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Loan Payable to related party	-	-
Notes Payable	-	-
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$176,880	\$107,043
Accrued payroll and related liabilities	\$365,692	\$382,529
Deferred revenues and refundable advances	\$118,522	\$81,987
Lease Liabilities	\$34,122	
Total Current Liabilities	\$695,216	\$571,559
NONCURRENT LIABILITIES		
Lease Liabilities	\$91,301	-
Total Liabilities	\$695,216	\$571,559
NET ASSETS		
Without Donor Restrictions	\$43,613,564	\$42,025,316
With Donor Restrictions	\$22,530,168	\$15,177,825
Total Net Assets	\$66,143,732	\$57,203,141
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$66,930,249	\$57,774,700



● Africa	\$2,840,720	22.31%
● East Asia	\$1,291,713	10.14%
● South and Southeast Asia	\$195,464	1.53%
● North America	\$2,090,126	16.41%
● ICF Center for Conservation Leadership	\$3,667,420	28.80%
● General & Administrative	\$1,268,281	9.96%
● Fundraising	\$1,380,246	10.84%

Total Program Services	\$10,085,443	79.20%
Total Supporting Activities	\$2,648,527	20.80%
Total Expenses	\$12,733,970	100.00%



FISCAL YEAR 2024 REVENUE		
● Contributions and Grants	\$14,094,286	65.0%
● Memberships	\$616,745	2.8%
● Sales and Tour Income	\$324,402	1.5%
● Investment Income (Loss)	\$6,228,147	28.7%
● Other	\$410,981	1.9%
Total Revenue	\$21,674,561	100.0%

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The International Crane Foundation collaborates with a global network of partners in more than 50 countries on five continents. We are grateful for investments of time, equipment, local knowledge and connections, grant funding, joint fundraising efforts and much more, from the organizations listed here.

Advancing Conservation Through Empathy For Wildlife, African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, African Parks, Afriwet and ANAK (Senegal), Aldo Leopold Foundation, American Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Australian Crane Network, Beijing Forestry University, BirdWatch Zambia, Calgary Zoo, Canadian Wildlife Service, Center for East Asian-Australasian Flyway Studies, China Wildlife Conservation Association, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program (Texas), Colorado Crane Conservation Coalition, Community Action for Nature Conservation-CANCO (Kenya), Crane Park Izumi (Japan), Crane Trust (Nebraska), Crane Working Group of Eurasia, Dallas Zoo, Dong Thap Province (Vietnam), Ducks Unlimited, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center (Louisiana), French Biodiversity Office (Office Francais de la Biodiversite), Global Educational, Economic and Social Empowerment-GEESE (Pakistan), Gulf Coast Joint Venture (Texas), Indiana Department of Natural Resources, International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission (IUCN), IPRC – Kitabi College (Rwanda) Kafue Flats Traditional Leaders and Communities, Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group (Kenya), Kranichschutz Deutschland, Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences; Kytalyk National Park (Russia), Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana State University, Lumbini Crane Foundation (Nepal), Manor House and Thrive (Kenya), Margaret Pyke Trust and Rugarama Hospital (Uganda), Mekong Wetland University Network, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia; Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda; Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Muraviovka Park (Russia), NABU, Nakhon Ratchasima (Korat) Zoo (Thailand), National Bird Banding Center (China), National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China; The Nature Conservancy, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Parks Canada, Population & Sustainability Network, Poyang Lake National Nature Reserve (China), Ramsar: the Convention on Wetlands (Switzerland), Red Crowned Crane Conservancy, Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (Bhutan), Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association, San Antonio Bay Partnership, Self Help Africa, Smithsonian Institution, Solidaridad, Southeast Zoo Alliance for Reproduction & Conservation, Texas Mid-Coast Master Naturalists, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Texas Water Trade, Tour du Valet (France), Uganda Meteorological Authority, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre, United States Department of Agriculture, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Geological Survey, Vietnam National University at Ho Chi Minh City, University of Wisconsin, Waterbird Network Korea, White Oak Conservation (Florida), Wildlife Science and Conservation Center (Mongolia), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory, World Wide Fund for Nature Zambia, Zambia Department of National Parks and Wildlife, Zoological Park Organization Thailand.

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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 Conservation Standards adaptive management framework to achieve and demonstrate greater and longer lasting global impacts.



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.



International Crane Foundation

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www.savingcranes.org

*Front cover: Crane monitoring in Mongolia. Nyambar Batyabar
Back cover: Sandhill Cranes. Ciming Mei*

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