

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two cranes in a wetland. One crane is white with a red face and long neck, standing in the water with its head tilted back and beak open. The other crane is a mix of white and brown feathers, also with its beak open. The background is a soft-focus view of tall, dry grasses under a clear sky.

# Continuing the Legacy: Our 10-Year Vision for Cranes & Communities

International Crane Foundation

**In a world that has lost more than three billion birds in the past 50 years, the cranes—one of the most threatened families of birds on earth—offer a powerful beacon of hope.**

**We are unwavering in our commitment to achieve our ambitious vision as OneICF—staff and Board, partners and supporters, today and tomorrow.**





# Our Vision

The International Crane Foundation's new 10-Year Vision (2025–2035) presents a bold, ambitious, global strategy to ensure that all 15 crane species survive and thrive, along with the people who live with them. We will focus our efforts on five key cross-cutting areas:

## Scale Up Globally

Drawing from five decades of science-based conservation success, our vision outlines a scaling-up of our long-term programs for highly threatened crane species in Asia-Pacific, Africa, and North America, while continuing to monitor and support species that are less at-risk. Together, we will reach more communities, restore more wetlands, and achieve greater impact.

## Conserve Cranes and Ecosystems

International flyway coordination, implementation of best management practices, and heightened regional conservation awareness will protect essential breeding, staging, and wintering grounds. We will improve our integrated conservation programs that blend biodiversity protection with community development, strengthen land management, and safeguard the genetic diversity and long-term viability of cranes in human care.

## Go Beyond Cranes

Our work advances nature-based solutions that link biodiversity conservation with poverty alleviation, food security, clean water access, regenerative agriculture, and climate mitigation. Through these integrated efforts, our work directly supports the commitments of governments to fulfill the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Global Biodiversity Framework, Paris Climate Accord, and other international conservation agreements.

## Uphold Organizational Excellence

The International Crane Foundation's 10-Year Vision seamlessly integrates world-class conservation science with strong institutional leadership, adaptive management, and global partnerships.

## Realize "OneICF"

At the heart of this vision is our unified OneICF culture, which brings together our diverse staff across continents through shared values of innovation, transparency, inclusivity, collaboration, trust, and optimism.



## What We Have Learned —and What Comes Next

**Our 50 years of conservation experience prove that crane conservation works.**

- Cranes are one of the most endangered families of birds on earth, but more than half of the world's cranes now have increasing population trends.
- The wild populations of most crane species across the Asia-Pacific region increased over the past decade.
- Many African crane populations are stabilizing on protected and communal areas after decades of decline.
- In North America, our rare and endangered Whooping Cranes and more abundant Sandhill Cranes have undergone remarkable population recoveries.

**... but we still have more to do!**

- Cranes face many serious challenges in the impoverished regions of Africa and Asia-Pacific, including habitat degradation, nest disturbance, and illegal trade.
- We are still struggling to successfully re-establish Whooping Cranes in their former range in eastern North America.
- Successful crane recoveries have created new conservation challenges, like crop damage for farmers.

We are pleased to have achieved significant progress towards our conservation goals for 10 of the world's 11 species of threatened cranes. We prioritized these species for bigger investments of time and resources over the past decade. We also learned valuable lessons for the next 10 years.



Photo by Ciming Mei



While we remain optimistic, cranes and the people who care for them will face many challenges over the coming decade.

## Scanning the Horizon

Many of the biggest crane conservation challenges of the decade ahead are longstanding—dams and water diversions, conversion of wetlands to agriculture and other land development, unsustainable use of wetlands and grasslands, human disturbance of nesting sites, illegal trade, invasive species, powerline collisions, and others.

We must also prepare for newly emerging challenges and opportunities in the next 10 years. No one has 20/20 vision of the future, and we know that the challenges, uncertainties, and vulnerabilities we will face tomorrow are bigger than we can imagine today. But our 50 years of conservation experience have taught us to be nimble in anticipating future changes in our politics, environment, technology, and much more.



To bring our vision to life, we are preparing to overcome hurdles and seize opportunities across the following critical areas.

# Emerging Issues

## Climate Change, Water, and Wetlands

From rising seas to prolonged droughts, climate change will impact every crane species worldwide—especially where wetland loss, water insecurity, and watershed degradation already impact biodiversity.

Our vision for securing cranes incorporates diverse strategies for climate change mitigation and adaptation in all our programs and model projects. We will draw insights from our decades of conservation experience—knowing that the needs of cranes, many other species, and people are linked strongly to healthy wetlands and watersheds.

## Bird Flu and One Health

The bird flu (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza)

pandemic in North America has spread to Sandhill Cranes for the first time, with outbreaks reported from their wintering grounds in Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Across Europe and Asia-Pacific, bird flu is hitting hard on wintering populations of White-naped, Hooded, Demoiselle, and Eurasian Cranes.

Our vision for combatting bird flu and other emerging diseases includes strategies to secure healthy wintering grounds and establish alternative wintering sites (or diversified feeding stations) that reduce these big concentrations, while also increasing local capacity to safely manage disease outbreaks. Our One Health approach recognizes the risks to people and wildlife are deeply interwoven.





Photo by Pan Shengyu

### Cranes, Agriculture, and Resiliency

Crane resiliency emboldens our vision for crane recovery, but the increasing dependence of cranes on agricultural lands poses many new challenges. As human populations and agricultural demands expand and intensify, conflict between cranes and farmers is becoming more severe.

Our vision commits us to lasting solutions for crop depredation that help farmers in rural Wisconsin and rural Kenya. We will build deeper partnership with farmers, ranchers, communities, governments, and everyone who seeks a healthier, more profitable, wildlife-friendly “agriculture 2.0” within our lifetimes.

### Mining, Energy, and Nature-Based Solutions

Human population growth and the global quest for a better standard of living will require exponential increases in energy development and resource mining for decades to come.

Our vision focuses on nature-based solutions that provide viable alternatives to land conversion, ensuring community and government gain from increased employment, improved livelihoods, and natural resources directly associated with conservation landscapes. Our vision also seeks to raise awareness and affect change in the industry, finding common ground for positive change with companies and agencies responsible for power generation and sighting, mining, prospecting, and others.

### Global Geopolitics and Partnership

Ever since the International Crane Foundation was founded, we have championed cranes as global ambassadors, bringing people together across political and cultural divides through our shared passion and reverence for these birds. That commitment will be put to the test over the decade ahead in our increasingly fractured world.

Our vision across all these regions is one of genuine collaboration with all who care about cranes and the land—communities, governments, NGOs, universities, and others—with a commitment to the values we share rather than those that divide us. We will emphasize how our projects align with government imperatives everywhere we work, through the Sustainable Development Goals, Biodiversity Targets, Paris Accords, and other mandates. We will also nurture local partners who will carry forward our mission whether (or not) we are able to operate in-country.



Photo by Hillary Thompson / International Crane Foundation



Photo by Ciming Mei





Human Wellbeing and Biodiversity

Many of the crane landscapes of Africa and Asia-Pacific are rich in biodiversity but under relentless pressure from rapidly growing human populations with high levels of poverty, food insecurity, and poor access to clean water, sanitation, health services, family planning, and educational opportunities. Regardless of whether communities are struggling on their own lands or around protected areas, socio-economic development places enormous pressure on the wetlands, grasslands, and other natural areas that sustain cranes and other wildlife.

Our vision for conservation on public and private lands helps communities become more resilient to a changing world and benefit directly from their conservation commitment. We will integrate land and water conservation with basic human needs and promote sustainable livelihood strategies on working lands and employment in protected areas. We need climate-friendly and regenerative agriculture practices that better support cranes, other wildlife, and people. Through genuine caring for the communities who share their lands with cranes, we can best advance our global goals for sustainable development and biodiversity preservation.

Conservation Finance and Sustainable Long-Term Investment

One of the most exciting prospects in the decade ahead is the growth of conservation finance strategies and mechanisms that offer long-term, sustainable financing opportunities for land and water conservation worldwide. Conservation financing opens the door for private sector investment in measurable conservation outcomes, a funding stream that will likely grow in the future as wealthier countries focus their aid internally to improve their own economies and the security and welfare of their citizens.

Our vision conveys a clear commitment to increasing our expertise and experience in conservation finance, and global engagement with the community of conservation finance practitioners.



Photo by Erica Cochrane / International Crane Foundation

Handing Over Lasting Conservation Impact

We embrace a future where all our programs are self-sustained in the regions and countries where we work. Communities, government agencies, and local non-profits see the work as genuinely theirs. Local knowledge and priorities are fully integrated into project planning and decision-making.

Our vision involves successful handoffs, from Vietnam to Zambia, built on years of collaboration, not short-term engagements.



Photo by Liu Tao



# Our High-Flying Future

Our program vision looks in depth at our expected impact across five continents. A great 10-year vision starts with the future — transporting ourselves forward to the year 2035 to describe our achievements for cranes and much more than cranes—and works back to the present to put the right people, projects, and support systems in place today for the greater impact we seek tomorrow.

## Crane Conservation

In 2035, all crane species are stable or increasing across their major flyways. Worldwide, we advance coordinated action for crane conservation at every level. From the well-being of individual cranes in managed care to viable crane populations in the wild. From the healthy wetlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands that cranes need, to the surrounding watersheds that sustain these vital ecosystems. From the long flyways that cranes must safely traverse, to the global threats they face like climate change and illegal trade.



## Broader Biodiversity and Sustainable Development Impact Through Cranes

In 2035, cranes will serve as flagship species for vital landscapes across Asia-Pacific, Africa, and North America, driving conservation efforts that enhance biodiversity, ecosystem services, and the well-being of communities that share their lands with cranes.

We are creating and managing protected areas that thrive for all in Zambia and Mongolia, while ensuring a home for wildlife on the working lands of East Africa and Southeast Asia. Our impact is aligned with the priorities of governments and societies worldwide. We've found lasting solutions for crop damage by cranes and other wildlife on agricultural lands worldwide. We find lasting solutions for human-wildlife conflict on agricultural lands worldwide.

## Reputational Advancement

By 2035, the International Crane Foundation will be recognized as a leading conservation organization in Asia-Pacific, Africa, and North America. As a global conservation leader headquartered in a rural, agricultural setting, we bring a fresh and important perspective to the conservation movement. We are respected as an authentic, mid-sized "boots-on-the-ground" organization that engages directly with international and local NGOs, national and local governments, community leaders and members, large corporations and small businesses, and university faculty and students in ways that provide global models for combining biodiversity conservation with sustainable development.

## Model Project Innovation

In 2035, our most important conservation impacts worldwide will be achieved through our model projects. These projects serve as models for taking our impact to scale through different pathways to success—innovative conservation solutions that we expand in scope or replicate in other areas, for example, disseminate to encourage widespread adoption among peers or affect pro-conservation behavior change by industries, or leverage to enact new policies. Our model projects are supported through transformational levels of multi-year funding, tied to long-term commitments to people, places, and partners. They are the platform through which we take-action, learn, adapt, and grow stronger.

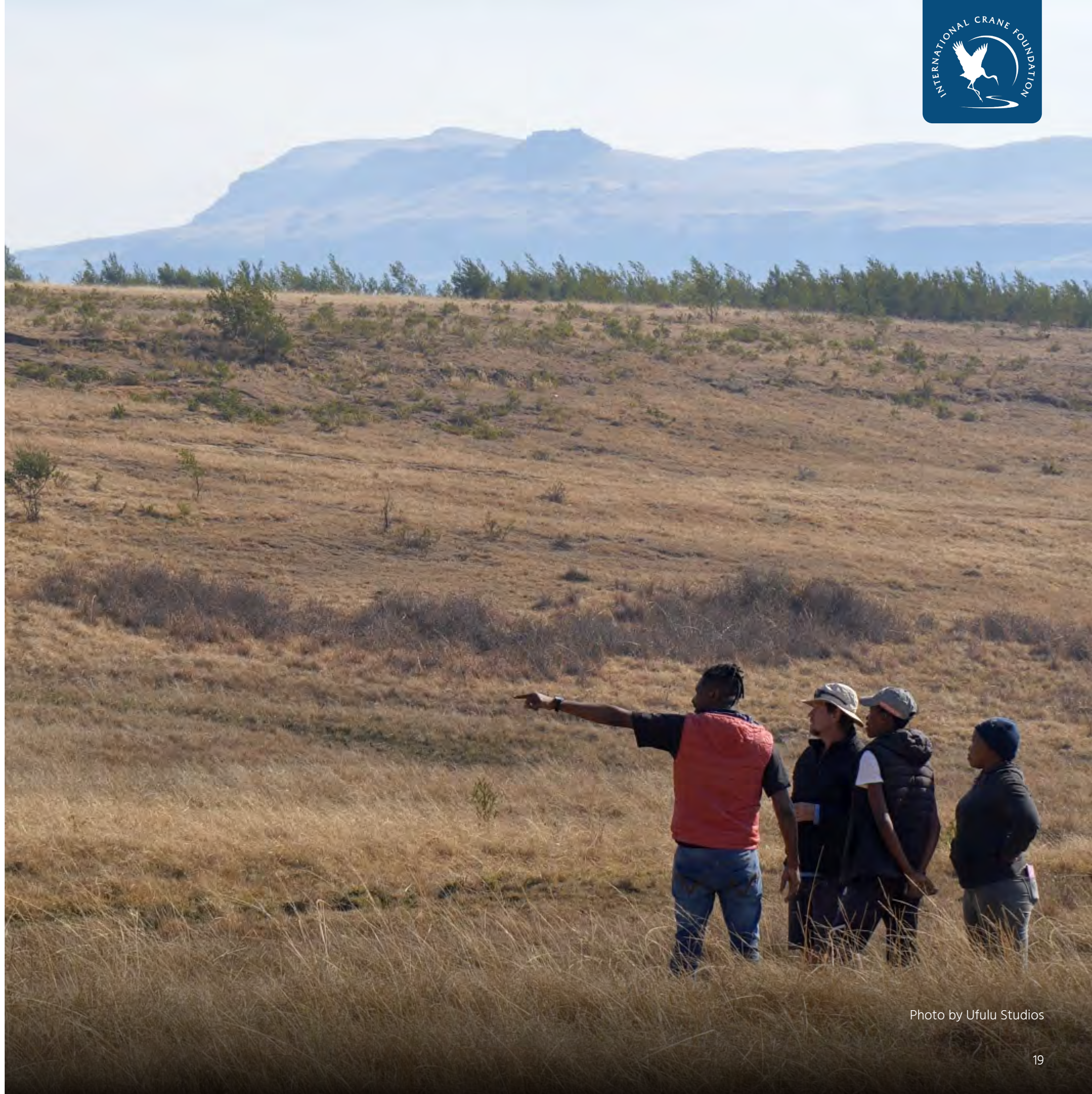






Photo by Kahangye Kagwa

## Strong Partners and Collaboration

In 2035, cranes act as global ambassadors, bringing people together with different backgrounds and experiences. We commit to long-term investments of time and resources in Asia-Pacific, Africa, and North America through strategic regional programs and partnerships. We champion the exchange of ideas, concerns, and lessons-learned between and among all regions and programs, leveraging local strengths to solve global problems.

## Risk Management

In 2035, we anticipate and address a wide array of ecological, political, socio-economic, demographic, technological, and operational risks. We manage challenges such as cyberattacks, economic recession, political instability, diplomatic breakdowns, global pandemics, corruption, or catastrophic events, with a nimble Board-staff Enterprise Risk Management team. Our senior leadership team monitors our response to high likelihood, severe impact environmental risks to our mission, such as avian influenza, climate change, and large-scale land and water development, and emergent risks to our programs, finances, fundraising, reputation, operations, and human resources. At the regional and country level, we address the many risks associated with engaging our staff, communities, governments, and other partners in field conservation programs, with emphasis on strategic planning and adaptive management systems.

## Essential Support Services

In 2035, our Essential Support Services provide the core support needed for our programs and operations worldwide—financial, operational, legal, technological, strategic, resourceful, external, and much more. From our headquarters in Wisconsin, USA to our regional offices and teams in China, South Korea, Vietnam, Chad, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa, Texas, USA, and elsewhere, we ensure our programs and project are well-managed, implemented, sustainably funded, equitable, and transparent.



## Sustainable Financial Growth

By 2035, our financial growth will have kept pace with the expanding conservation impact we desired. We increased our annual funding investment by more than \$10 million, from \$14.0 to \$24.6 million.

Direct investments from committed partners who work closely with us doubled the financial support to our project activities and the communities we serve and raised the total annual investment in our mission to nearly \$38 million per annum.

## Sustainable Funding

In 2035, we engage individual donors, family foundations, and private foundations, mainly in the USA but increasingly overseas, in providing multi-year support for our major programs and core operations.

These dependable funding streams collectively provide the foundation for attracting competitive staff and committed partners and making the long-term investments needed to achieve our impact.

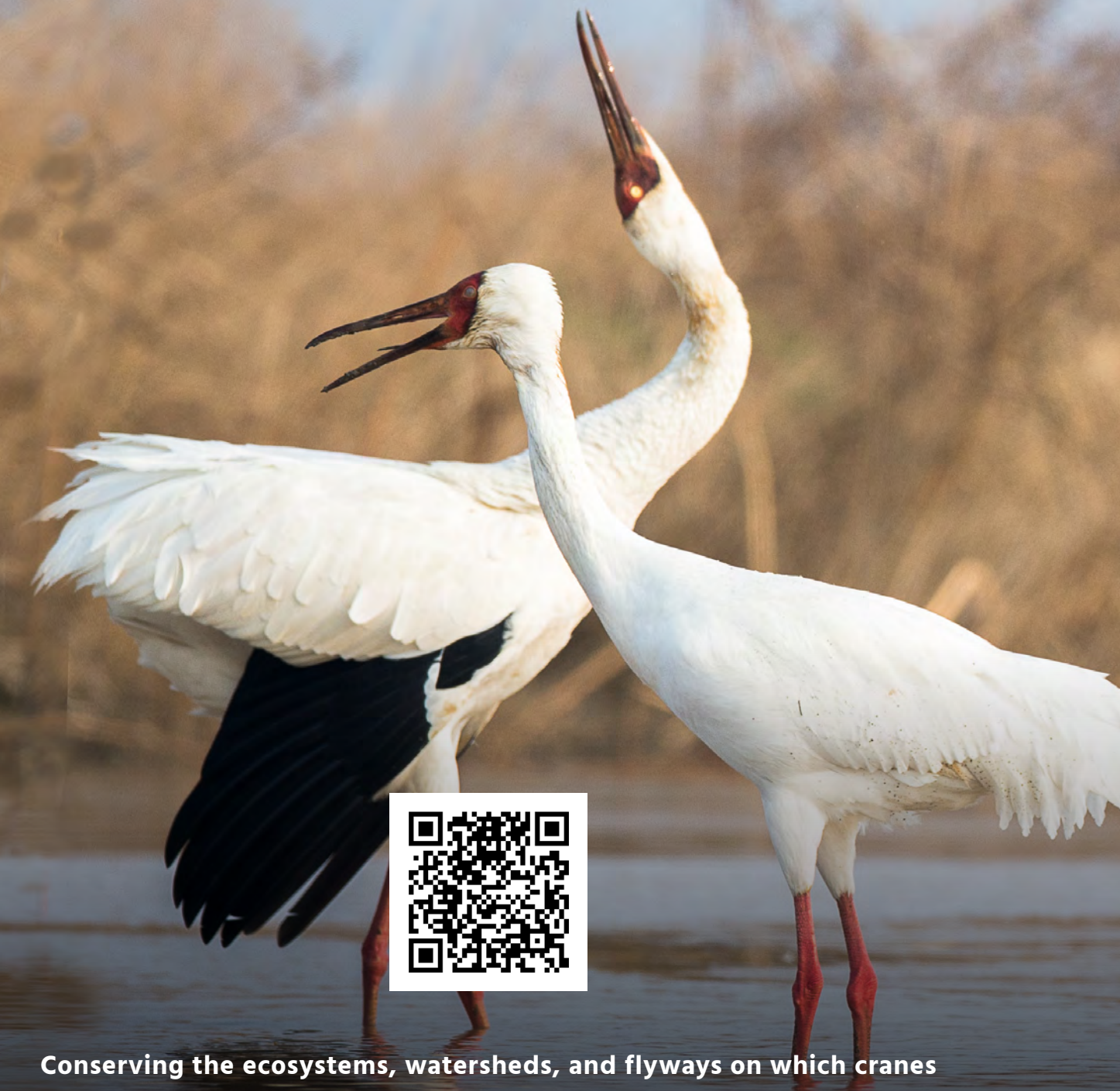
## An Organizational Culture and Vision We Can All Be Proud Of

In 2035, we continue to be a science-based, global organization situated on the rural-urban divide of America. In 2025, we accepted the challenge to advance a vision that can be embraced by all, near and far, despite the personal, political, and cultural differences that make us who we are.

In 2035, we have achieved our ambitious vision and have grown together as OneICF. We are unwavering in our commitment to do so, as staff and Board, today and tomorrow.







**Conserving the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which cranes depend while meeting community health, economic, and livelihood needs.**

Photo by Ciming Mei

[savingcranes.org](https://savingcranes.org)