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**COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT
(August 1998-January 1999)**

(An edited version of the United States Department of the Interior report follows.)

Between 1977 and 1988, 132 juvenile whooping cranes were color-marked on the breeding grounds; of these 37 were accounted for during the winter of 1998-99. Five color-marked cranes were observed during the fall migration. All sightings of color-marked cranes during migration are maintained at the Grand Island office.

One hundred eighty-one cranes began the 1998 spring migration. Forty-nine nests were confirmed on the breeding grounds. Forty-seven chicks were located during June surveys, and the surveys during August determined that at least 24 chicks were surviving. Under optimum conditions about 2054 birds were expected to arrive at Aransas last fall. The first arrival at Aransas was confirmed on October 28. About 77% (140 birds) of the arrivals at Aransas occurred between November 13 and December 3. A record 182 cranes are believed to have arrived at Aransas, including 18 young birds. On January 4, 1999, an adult plumaged whooping crane was confirmed wintering with sandhill cranes near Sabinal, Uvalde County, Texas. Another crane, observed with sandhill cranes on January 24 near Brazos Bend State Park in Fort Bend County, Texas, could be the crane observed near Sabinal, an Aransas bird that moved north, or a new bird. A total of 182 (164 adult/subadult and 18 young) whooping cranes are wintering at Aransas, and at least one additional is wintering in south Texas. A 1986 color-marked female with a broken leg, first observed at Quivira NWR on November 12, apparently left Quivira NWR on December 29, and has not been reported since. As of February 4, sixteen adult/subadult cranes, of the number anticipated, had not arrived at Aransas.

The first dates recorded for confirmed observations of migrating whooping cranes were August 12 in Canada and October 2 in the United States. The last sighting date was January 24. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (62); North Dakota (9); South Dakota (4); Nebraska (7); Kansas (15); Oklahoma (1); Texas (5), and Illinois (1). The combined total of 104 confirmed sightings in Canada and the United States established a new fall migration record.

Weather during September and October was mild with above-normal temperatures. Based on the number of sightings reported in Saskatchewan and North Dakota during late October and early November, it appeared that the majority of migrant cranes were still north of Nebraska. The first confirmed arrival at Aransas (2 birds) was on October 28, further confirmation that the migration was about 2 weeks later than average. On November 9 and 10, an intense storm center moved northeast across the Dakotas, creating blizzard conditions. Northwest and west winds of 30-50 mph swept across the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas. A large migration of waterfowl and cranes occurred on November 11 and for several days following, during which large numbers of migrating sandhill cranes were reported in eastern Nebraska and Iowa, and was likely the result of the strong winds associated with the November 9-10 storm. Also, possibly as a result of the storm, a single whooping crane was confirmed (by photograph) at Illinois Beach State Park, about 5 miles north of Waukegon, Illinois, on November 11, and a highly probable sighting of an adult plumaged whooping crane was reported near Des Moines, Iowa, on November 12. On November 12, sightings of whooping crane family groups were confirmed in eastern Nebraska (the furthest east sighting ever confirmed in Nebraska) and eastern Kansas. One might speculate that the leg injury to the whooping crane, first observed at Quivira NWR on November 12, was the result of strong winds.

Please contact Mr. Wally Jobman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if observation details are desired (203 West Second Street, Federal Building, Second Floor, Grand Island, NE, 58801; commercial telephone: (308) 382-6468, ext. 16; FAX (308) 384-8835; or e-mail, wally_jobman@mail.fws.gov).

Confirmed

Fall 1998 Whooping Crane Sightings in the U.S.A.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
ND 98B-1	10/02-04/98	2	Mountrail Co., 3 mi. northwest of Palermo. T157N, R90W, S36.
ND 98B-2	10/16-17/98	1	Emmons Co, 5 mi. west of Braddock. T136N, R76W, S20, S1/2
ND 98B-3	10/19/98	9	Williams Co, 6 mi. south of Appam. T158N, R100W, S36. Flying.
SD 98B-4	10/09/98	7	Walworth Co., 11 mi. east of Hwy 83 on Hwy 12, near Spring Lake. T123N, R74W, S30. Flying
NE 98B-5	10/20/98	2+1	Rock/Keya Paha Co. line, Niobrara River, 0.5 mi. east of Carns bridge. T32N, R18W, S19.
KS 98B-6	10/21-11/08/98	1	Stafford Co., Quivira NWR. T22S, R11W, S5.
KS 98B-7	10/20-28/98	2	Stafford Co., Quivira NWR. T21S, R11W, S32.
NE 98B-8	10/22-11/09/98	3	Buffalo Co., Platte River, Rowe Audubon Sanctuary, 1.25 mi. east of Hwy 10 bridge. T8N, R14W, S10, NE4; S10, NE4, SW4.
OK 98B-9	10/22/98	2	Alfalfa Co., Salt Plains NWR.
KS 98B-10	10/20/98	5	Barton Co., Cheyenne Bottoms SWA. T18S, R12W, S28.
SD 98B-11	10/19/98	6	Haakon Co., flying near Ottumwa. T3N, R23E, S10.
ND 98B-12	11/01/98	2	Divide Co., 12 mi. south and 6 east of Colgan. T161N, R99W, S24.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
ND 98B-13	11/01-02/98	2	Divide Co., 2 mi. west and 5 north of Noonan. T163N, R95W, S7, NE4.
NE 98B-14	10/23/98	3	Cherry Co., flying over northeast corner of Valentine NWR. T30N, R27W.
ND 98B-15	11/03-04/98	11+2	Divide Co., 12 mi. south and 4 west of Crosby. T161N, R98W, S28, 33. G-R.
ND 98B-16	10/17/98	4	Kidder Co., 4 mi. south and 4 west of Robinson. T142N, R72W, S30.
SD 98B-17	10/21/98	2	Bennett Co., LaCreek NWR, pool #10, flying about 5 mi. north of headquarters. T37N, R36W, S26.
SD 98B-18	11/01/98	2	Sully Co., Cottonwood Lake, about 8 mi. east of Agar. T116N, R75W, S30.
NE 98B-19	11/03-08/98	2	Phelps Co., Linder WPA, 5 mi. east and 1 north of Bertrand. T7N, R20W, S25, SE4.
KS 98B-20	11/05-08/98	3	Stafford Co., Quivira NWR. T21S, R11W, S22.
KS 98B-21	11/06/98	1	Barton Co., 6 mi. south and 2 west of Ellinwood. T20S, R12W, S35, SW4
ND 98B-22	11/07/98	2	McKenzie Co, 1 mi. southwest of Buford. T152N, R104W, S20.
ND 98B-23	11/10/98	5	Williams Co., 3 mi. north of Williston. T154N, R101W, S3, SW4.
KS 98B-24	11/11/98	2+1	Saline Co., 4 mi. west of Solomon. T13S, R1W, S20, S1/2.
NE 98B-25	11/11/98	1	Hall Co., flying west along Platte River south of Wood River I-80 exit. T11N, R9W.
NE 98B-26	11/11-18/98	2+1	York Co., 2 mi. south and 3 east of McCool Junction. T9N, R2W, S27, SW4, NE4.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
KS 98B-27	11/12-15/98	8+2	Stafford Co., Quivira NWR, T21S, R11W, S28, 29. BWB-nil; o/w-Bwsp (injured leg, remained until 12/29).
KS 98B-28	11/13/98	2	Kingman Co., 3 mi. east, 1/2 north, and 1/4 east of kingman. T27S, R7W, S36.
KS 98B-29	11/13/98	1	Russell Co., flying 2 mi. east of Bunker Hill. T13S, R12W, S32.
NE 98B-30	11/16-28/98	2+1	Garfield Co., 16 1/4 mi. east and 1 north of Burwell. T21N, R13W, S10.
KS 98B-31	11/12/98	2+1	Riley Co., 3 mi. north of Manhattan. T9S, R8E. Flying.
KS 98B-32	11/14-24/98	6	Pratt Co., 5 mi. south and 4 east of Pratt. T28S, R12W, S32.
TX 98B-33	11/24-29/98	2+1	Fayette Co., 6 mi. West of La Grange.
TX 98B-34	11/24/98	2	Wheeler Co., 15 mi. northwest of Shamrock.
KS 98B-35	12/02-03/98	2+1	Barton Co., Cheyenne Bottoms SWA. T18S, R12W, S10, NE4.
IL 98B-36	11/11/98	1	Lake Co., 5 mi. north of Waukegon, Illinois Beach State Park. Flying
KS 98B-37	12/03-06/98	2+1	Stafford Co., Quivira NWR. T21S, R11W, S28, SE4.
TX 98B-73	12/23-26/98	1	Jackson Co., 4 mi. south of Edna along Hwy 111.
TX 98B-74	01/02-21/99	1	Uvalde Co., 1 mi. east of Sabinal.
KS 98B-76	11/11-12/98	1	Stafford Co., Quivira NWR. T21S, R11W, S29.
KS 98B-81	11/14/98	3	Pratt Co., 1 mi. east and 4 north of Sawyer. T29S, R12W, S5.
TX 98B-82	01/24/99	1	Fort Bend Co., near Brazos Bend State Park.