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USE OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN TRAPPING METHODS TO CAPTURE SANDHILL CRANES

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Abstract: The Mississippi sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis pulla*) is an endangered, nonmigratory subspecies of sandhill crane located only in Jackson County, Mississippi, on and adjacent to the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge. Maintaining a marked population is essential to long-term monitoring efforts. Past trapping techniques such as walk-in traps and coffin traps were useful but not effective in capturing many cranes, wary of such obvious manmade devices. In 1998, refuge personnel recruited Master Bird Trapper, Ali Hussain from India, to demonstrate his low-tech, time-tested techniques. Hussain's traps such as the clap trap and nooses were highly portable, inexpensive, and frequently invisible to cranes and other birds. These ancient methods proved to be highly successful and safe. During a 1-week training visit, Ali Hussain caught 10% of the Mississippi sandhill crane population using the clap trap and noose trap. Since the initiation of their use, these techniques have supplemented the arsenal of capture techniques and account for 56% of cranes captured, being particularly effective for older, warier individuals.

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