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WINTER DISTRIBUTION OF GREATER SANDHILL CRANES MARKED AT BREEDING AREAS IN CALIFORNIA, OREGON, AND WASHINGTON

GARY L. IVEY
International Crane Foundation

JOSEPH D. ENGLER
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

MARTIN J. ST. LOUIS
Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc.

MARK A. STERN
The Nature Conservancy

SEAN CROSS
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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GARY L. IVEY, International Crane Foundation, E-11376 Shady Lane Road, Baraboo, Wisconsin 53913, USA; and Oregon State University, 2600 NW College Way, Bend, OR 97701, USA
JOSEPH D. ENGLER, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Summer Lake, OR 97640, USA
MARTIN J. ST. LOUIS, Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc., 2003 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, WY 82001, USA
MARK A. STERN, The Nature Conservancy, 821 SE 14th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214, USA
SEAN CROSS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Modoc National Wildlife Refuge, Alturas, CA 96101, USA

Abstract: Large numbers of greater sandhill cranes (Grus canadensis tabida) have been banded and color-marked at several important breeding sites in the western U.S. since the late 1960s. Crane color-marking began in the late 1960s at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in eastern Oregon. Crane marking programs were initiated at Sycan Marsh, Summer Lake Wildlife Area (both in south-central Oregon), as well as at Modoc NWR in the mid-1980s. In the mid-1990s, a marking program was initiated at Conboy Lake NWR in south-central Washington. This paper reviews winter records and distribution of marked birds from these sites within the Central Valley of California, reviews their movements between wintering areas, assesses their fidelity to wintering sites and discusses conservation implications of this information.

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