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## Cooperative Whooping Crane Tracking Project March 1999-May 1999

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**COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT  
(March 1999 - May 1999)**

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

A peak population of 182 (164 adult/subadult and 18 juvenile) whooping cranes was reported at Aransas during the winter of 1998-99. An adult plumaged whooping crane, which wintered with sandhill cranes about 90 miles northeast of Aransas in Fort Bend County, was the record 183rd bird in the wintering flock. No birds are known to have been lost at Aransas during the winter. A 1986 color-marked female with a broken leg, last observed at Quivira NWR on December 29, 1998, was not reported during the spring migration, and is assumed to be dead. An estimated 183 whooping cranes migrated north in the spring of 1999, a net increase of 2 birds from the 181 present in spring, 1998. Departures from Aransas were about one week ahead of average. All cranes had migrated by April 21.

The first dates recorded for confirmed observations of migrating whooping cranes were March 4 in the United States and April 9 in Canada. The last sighting date was May 24. Sightings were reported from Oklahoma (2); Kansas (5); Nebraska (14); Iowa (2); North Dakota (6); Saskatchewan, Canada (13); and Manitoba, Canada (2). No confirmed sightings were reported in either Texas or South Dakota.

The peak of the migration in the United States appeared to be between April 2 and 15. An adult plumaged crane, probably the bird which wintered in Fort Bend County, Texas, was observed along the Platte River in central Nebraska from March 4 to March 23.

Major storms within the migratory corridor occurred on April 1 to 2, April 8, and April 14 to 15. Heavy snow fell across parts of North and South Dakota on April 1 to 2. On April 8, an intense low pressure area moved northeast across Nebraska, producing severe storms and strong west to northwest winds from Kansas northward. In all likelihood, the confirmation of nine whooping cranes in western Iowa on April 9, a sighting in Manitoba of two birds on April 14, and other sightings of birds east of the migration corridor were the result of the April 8 storm. Another storm on April 14 to 15 produced heavy rain and strong northwest winds. Persistent cloudy, cool weather with north winds from April 23 to 28 slowed the migration, and resulted in prolonged stopovers in Nebraska and Kansas.

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  
Spring 1999 Whooping Crane Sightings in the U.S.A.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
NE 99A-1	03/04-23/99	1	Buffalo, Hall, and Hamilton Cos., 3 miles south and 2 east of Gibbon, T9N, R13W, S32, E2; 6 miles west and 1 south of Doniphan, T9N, R10W, S18, NW4; Platte River, 0.75 miles upstream from Hwy 34 bridge southeast of Grand Island, T10N, R9W, S1, SW4, SW4.
NE 99A-2	03/21/99	1	Buffalo Co., 2 miles south and 2 west of Gibbon I-80 interchange, flying. T8N, R14W, S11.
NE 99A-3	03/21-23/99	1	Hall Co., Platte River, 2 miles south and 2 west of Wood River I-80 inter-change, T9N, R12W, S23, NW4, SE4.
NE 99A-4	03/29/99	1	Buffalo Co., 1 mile south, 2 west, and 0.75 south of Shelton I-80 interchange, T8N, R13W, S4, SE4.
ND 99A-5	04/01-02/99	2	Mountrail Co., 5 miles south of Ross. T155N, R92W, S18.
NE 99A-6	04/02-08/99	2+1	Rock Co., 3 miles east, 3 north and 0.5 east of Bassett. T31N, R18W, S30, SE4.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
NE 99A-7	04/03/99	2	Phelps Co., 2 miles south of Overton I-80 interchange, 1.5 miles east, and 0.5 south. T8N, R19W, S17, N1/2. W-nil; BwB-nil.
NE 99A-8	04/03/99	2	Phelps Co., Funk Lagoon WPA, 1.5 miles east and 2 north of Funk. T6N, R17W, S10, NW4, SE4; S15, NE4, SW4; S15, SE4.
NE 99A-9	04/06/99	2	Hall Co., flying 1 mile east of Grand Island. T114, R9W, S24.
NE 99A-10	04/02-08/99	2	Holt Co., 5 miles east, 6 north, and 0.25 east of Newport. T31N, R16W, S5, SW4.
NE 99A-11	04/06-08/99	2	Loup Co., 5 miles west, 1.5 north, and 0.5 east of Taylor. T21N, R19W, S13, NW4, SE4.
NE 99A-12	04/09-11/99	2+1	Antelope Co., 5 miles west and 1 north of Clearwater. T26N, R8W, S29, 32. G-GwG.
IA 99A-13	04/09-12/99	6	Harrison Co., 2 miles west of Hwy 30/I-29 interchange, 2.5 south, and 1 east. T72N, R45W, S36. HS-W.
IA 99A-14	04/09-12/99	2+1	Page Co., 2.4 miles north of Essex. T70N, R39W, S14, NW4.
KS 99A-15	04/11/99	2	Phillips Co., 2 miles east of Phillipsburg. T3S, R17W, S29.
ND 99A-16	04/11/99	2	Burke Co., 3 miles south and 7 west of Coteau. T160N, R91W, S8, SE4.
ND 99A-17	04/14-19/99	3	Burleigh Co., 2 miles north and 0.5 east of Moffit. T137N, R76W, S4; T138N, R76W, S33, 34. Nil-HS.
ND 99A-18	04/14/99	2	Burke Co., 6 miles north and 5 east of Bowbells. T162N, R88W, S5.
NE 99A-19	04/12/99	4	Buffalo Co., flying 8 miles west of Ravenna. T12N, R15W, S7.
OK 99A-20	04/07/99	6	Custer Co., flying over Washita NWR hqtrs., 6 miles west and 1 north of Butler. T14N, R20W, S26.
OK 99A-21	04/07-08/99	8	Custer Co., 5 miles south and 1 west of Thomas. T14N, R15W, S24.
ND 99A-22	04/15-17/99	5	Sargent Co., 4.5 miles west of and 0.5 north of Havana. T129N, R56W, S28, NW4.

State/Obs.	Date	No.	Location
ND 99A-23	04/14/99	2	Sheridan Co., 3 miles south of Martin. T150N, R74W, S26.
NE 99A-24	04/24-30/99	4+1	Phelps Co., 1 mile north and 1.5 east of Funk, Funk WPA. T6N, R17W, S15, NE4, SW4; S15, E2; S16, NE4, SW4.
KS 99A-25	04/19/99	3	Pratt Co., 1.25 miles east and 1 south of Pratt, flying. T28S, R13W, S1.
KS 99A-26	04/20/99	8	Rush Co., 6 miles north and 4 west of Pawnee Rock, flying. T19S, R16W, S36.
KS 99A-27	04/25-26/99	8	Norton Co., 6 miles west and 2.5 south of Norton. T3S, R24W, S14, NE4, SW4.
NE 99A-28	03/15/99	2	Buffalo Co., Platte River, 2.5 miles upstream (west) from the Gibbon Platte River bridge, Rowe Audubon Sanctuary. T8N, R14W, S10, SW4.
KS 99A-29	04/26-30/99	2	Reno Co., 5 miles south, 2 west, and 0.5 south of Hutchinson. T24S, R6W, S15, NW4.