

2010

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

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IVEY, GARY L.; ENGLER, JOSEPH D.; ST. LOUIS, MARTIN J.; STERN, MARK A.; and CROSS, SEAN, "WINTER DISTRIBUTION OF GREATER SANDHILL CRANES MARKED AT BREEDING AREAS IN CALIFORNIA, OREGON, AND WASHINGTON" (2010). *North American Crane Workshop Proceedings*. 136.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nacwgproc/136>

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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.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP 11:206

Key words: banding, California, Central Valley population, *Grus canadensis*, sandhill crane, winter distribution.
