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RECORD COUNT FOR WHOOPING CRANES ON THE PLATTE RIVER

Since 1942, there have been eight confirmed Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) sightings on the Platte River (Whooping Crane Recovery Team. 1983. List of confirmed whooping crane migration sightings of the Wood Buffalo — Arkansas population. U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv., Washington, D.C. 18 pp.). The largest number of birds on the Platte was five although seven were seen flying along the Platte near Kearney in April 1980. On 27 October 1983, five adult Whooping Cranes were reported feeding in an idle cornfield 3.5 mi. NE of Denman in Hall County and later, these 5 individuals were observed landing in the Platte to roost for the night. Personnel from the Platte River Whooping Crane Trust and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service arranged to confirm this report the following morning.

At 0720 CDT on 28 October 1983 the presence of five Whooping Cranes roosting on the Platte River was confirmed. They departed from the roost at 0754 and eventually landed in a grazed corn stubble field 1.5 mi SE of the roost at 0804 where they were observed probing the soil. At 0903 these five individuals were joined by a family group of three, making a total of eight Whooping Cranes. The group remained in the field until 0959, then they departed SE and were last seen flying south at 1010. They presumably continued their southeast migration.

I observed another adult Whooping Crane migrating with about 150 Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) at 1109 about 8 mi SE of Norman. The group of eight Whooping Cranes represents the largest group confirmed in the Platte Valley at least since 1942. The roost site was located in an area that was mechanically cleared of woody vegetation over the past 20 years, leaving no doubt that Whooping Crane roost sites can be restored and maintained as long as adequate water remains flowing in the Platte. For a detailed description of the roost site see Lingle, G.R., P.J. Currier, and K.L. Lingle. in press. Physical characteristics of a whooping crane roost site on the Platte River, Nebraska. Submitted to The Prairie Naturalist.

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In addition to the above three incidents involving nine Cranes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pierre, S.D., reported the following confirmed sightings: 7-11 October, 2 in Custer Co., 7 mi. south and 8 mi. west of Callaway; 27 October to 8 November, 3 in Nuckolls Co., 6.5 mi. west and 1.5 mi. north of Superior; 27 October, 1 in Howard Co., 2 mi. east of St. Paul, on the South Loup; 2 in Harlan Co., 2.5 mi. south and 1.25 mi. east of Stamford; and 21-22 November, 3 in Harlan Co. 4 mi. south and 1.5 mi. east of Alma, on the Harlan Co. Reservoir. There was also a probable sighting 6 November in Blaine Co., .75 east of Brewster. Other birds, either singly or with others, could be traced over Nebraska by radio tagging or color marking: 11-12 October in Corson Co., S.D. and 12-13 October on Wilson Reservoir, Russell Co., Kansas; 8-9 November Stanley Co., S.D. and 9-10 November west of Enid, Oklahoma 50 to 75 miles (exact site unknown); 26-27 October, Stanley Co., S.D. and 28-29 October, Ford Co., Kansas (location 27-28 October not reported).