

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Nebraska Bird Review

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union

---

6-1994

## Whooping Crane Sightings during Spring Migration, 1994

Steven Anschutz

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, [Steve\\_Anschutz@fws.gov](mailto:Steve_Anschutz@fws.gov)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev>



Part of the [Poultry or Avian Science Commons](#), and the [Zoology Commons](#)

---

Anschutz, Steven, "Whooping Crane Sightings during Spring Migration, 1994" (1994). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 491.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev/491>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Nebraska Bird Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

WHOOPING CRANE SIGHTINGS DURING SPRING MIGRATION, 1994  
Compiled from information sent by Steven Anschutz  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 203 West Second St.  
Grand Island, NE 68801

Between 1977 and 1988, 132 juvenile whooping cranes were color-marked on the breeding grounds; of these, 51 were accounted for during the winter of 1993-94. The 1994 spring population at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge was estimated to be between 135 and 138 birds depending on the fate of three banded birds last seen in December and January. By March 31, an estimated 23 cranes had begun to migrate, and a major crane departure took place on April 1-2. On May 3 and 9, a minimum of 15 and 9 cranes, respectively, remained at Aransas, the most ever observed that late in the season. By May 16, all but three cranes had migrated.

Early sightings of family groups were reported in Texas on March 14 and in Alberta, Canada on April 9. Most of the migration sightings occurred in Nebraska, where the number of confirmed sightings (19, including about 38 different cranes) was the most ever recorded in this state, and nearly twice that in all other states combined.

The weather during April was mild and dry except for a snowstorm in central Nebraska on April 11-12, and a snowstorm in western South Dakota on April 26. The first dates for confirmed observations of migrating whooping cranes were March 14 in the United States (Texas) and April 9 in Canada (Saskatchewan). The last sighting date was June 6 in Saskatchewan. Sightings were reported from Texas (2); Oklahoma (2); Kansas (2); Nebraska (19); South Dakota (3); North Dakota (2); and Saskatchewan (17).

Dates and locations of confirmed and probable Nebraska sightings are presented in the following table. The legal descriptions of locations by township and range have been omitted, but may be obtained from the editor or from Wally Jobman at the above address. There were 12 unconfirmed sightings, ranging from 1 to 14 birds, and including the counties of Antelope, Brown, Hall, Howard, Knox, Merrick, Platte/Saunders, and Rock.

s = south, n = north, e = east, w = west. Underlined numbers include color-banded birds.

<u>Spring '94</u>	<u>No. of Cranes</u>	<u>Location</u>
<u>Confirmed Sightings</u>		
4/4	<u>6</u> adults	Hall Co., 1 mi. s of Hwy 34/South Locust jct. and 2 mi. e (3.5 mi. s of Grand Island).
4/4	4 adults	Buffalo Co., 3 mi. e and 1 mi. n of Lowell.
4/4	2 adults	Buffalo Co., 1 mi. downstream from Gibbon Bridge, Platte River.

<u>Spring '94</u>	<u>No. of Cranes</u>	<u>Location</u>
<u>Confirmed Sightings (cont'd)</u>		
4/4-6	2 adults	Buffalo Co., 2.5 mi. e and 1.25 mi. e of Minden bridge, Platte River.
4/4	2 adults	Buffalo Co., 5.5 mi. n and 1 mi. w of Riverdale.
4/4-5	2 adults	Buffalo Co., 3.5 mi. n and 0.5 mi. w of Amherst.
4/4-6	2 adults 1 young	Kearney Co., 5 mi. s of Axtell; Prairie Dog WPA.
4/5	2 adults	Buffalo Co., 1 mi. n of Hwy 10/I-80 interchange, 1 mi. w, and 0.5 mi. s.
4/5-12	6 adults	Howard Co., 2 mi. n of Cotesfield on Hwy 11: North Loup River.
4/6	2 adults 1 young	Phelps Co., 7 mi. n and 2 mi. e of Holdrege; Johnson WPA.
4/7-15	2 adults 1 young	Kearney Co., 2 mi. n and 1.25 mi. west of Axtell.
4/7-15	2 adults 1 young	Custer Co., 2 mi. e and 1.25 mi. n of Merna, and 2.5 mi. n and 1.5 mi. w of Merna.
4/12-14	7 adults 1 young	Adams Co., 1 mi. s and 1 mi. e of Kenesaw.
4/14	1 adult	Hall Co., 1 mi. downstream from the I-80 bridge over the south channel, Platte River, s of Grand Island.
4/14	1 adult	Buffalo Co., 1.5 mi. upstream from Gibbon bridge, Platte River (0.5 mi. downstream from Rowe Sanctuary).
4/15	2 adults	Phelps Co., 4 mi. n and 2 e of Funk; Funk WPA.
4/15	2 adults 1 young	Sherman Co., 4 mi. n of Loup City.
4/26-5/1	2 adults 1 young	Custer Co., 5 mi. w and 1 mi. s of Broken Bow.
4/29-5/1	2 adults 1 young	Thayer Co., 4 mi. w of Chester on Hwy 8, 2.5 mi. n and 0.25 mi. e.
<u>Probable Sightings</u>		
4/3	6 adults	Hamilton Co., 5.5 mi. w of Giltner.
4/5	2 adults	Webster Co., 0.5 mi. e of Cowles.

<u>Spring '94</u>	<u>No. of Cranes</u>	<u>Location</u>
<u>Probable Sightings (cont'd)</u>		
4/7	2 adults	Custer Co., 3.5 mi. w and 1 mi. n of Comstock.
4/8	2 adults	Cherry Co., 4 mi. n and 5 mi. e of Crookston.
4/13	6 adults	Holt Co., 2 mi. w, 6 mi. s, 1 mi. west and 0.5 mi. s of Stuart.
4/16	10 adults	York Co., flying near Bradshaw I-80 exit.
4/18	2 adults 1 young	Custer Co., 0.25 mi. n and 0.75 mi. w of Milburn.