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RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKING GROUP SIXTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP, REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

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**RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE
NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKING GROUP**

**SIXTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP,
REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN,
CANADA**

3 – 5 OCTOBER 1991

ACCELERATED RESEARCH PROGRAM FOR MIGRATORY SHORE AND UPLAND GAME BIRDS

Whereas, the Accelerated Research Program for Migratory Shore and Upland Game Birds supported substantial research on cranes in North America prior to the early 1980's, and
Whereas, population and habitat management techniques require additional research, and
Whereas, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service retains a mandate to properly manage migratory shore and upland game birds,
Therefore, be it resolved that the North American Crane Working Group supports the reinstatement of the Accelerated Research Program for Migratory Shore and Upland Game Birds by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with annual funds of at least \$1,000,000.

**PROTECTION OF LANDS USED BY SANDHILL CRANES AND OTHER AVIAN SPECIES
FOR WINTERING AND MIGRATION IN NORTH AMERICA**

Whereas, continued existence of the sandhill crane requires a specific grouping of habitats that includes a moderate amount of unique wetlands in Mexico, and southern U.S. (Texas and New Mexico) for wintering, and
Whereas, the sandhill cranes concentrate in highly visible flocks at staging areas in Texas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska during northern migration, and
Whereas, these staging areas have specific requirements that involve wetland as well as native grass prairie and cultivated fields where waste grain is available, and
Whereas, the sandhill cranes have inhabited the North American continent for millions of years and share their wintering and migratory habitats with many other species of wetland related birds, mammals, and plants, and
Whereas, biodiversity is provided by the concentration of obligate wetland avian and plant species in sandhill crane wintering and staging locations, and
Whereas, loss of habitats used by sandhill cranes and associated migratory bird species would severely reduce avian biodiversity in grassland areas,
Therefore, it is hereby resolved, by the North American Crane Working Group meeting at the Sixth North American Crane Workshop held 3–5 October 1991, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, that the assembled international group petitions the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and his counterpart in Mexico to cause to be documented and placed under public ownership or public easement those specific land and water areas essential to support the wintering and migrating sandhill cranes and associated species, including the endangered whooping crane, during the annual migration and wintering periods.
Be it further resolved, that the highly visible sandhill cranes and associated wintering and migrating avian species be recognized as a national treasure to be observed and enjoyed by millions of citizens of both the United States and Mexico through an educational program designed to create an attachment between humans and the limited wetland habitats so essential to the survival of sandhill cranes and their associated avifaunal groups.

CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS

Recognizing that wetlands conservation is crucial to the future existence of cranes and other water birds, and that current proposals by the Executive Branch of the United States Government redefine wetlands in a way that will remove a larger percentage of U.S. wetlands from the protection of the Clean Water Act, Section 404, and believing that the *1989 Federal Manual for Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands* defined wetlands in a biologically meaningful and accurate way, we, the North American Crane Working Group, call on the U.S. Government to return to using the **1989 Manual** to define and identify wetlands, and to give special protection to prairie potholes in the drought-susceptible Great Plains, instead of adopting the stock definition of wetlands proposed by the Government in August 1991.

PRESERVATION OF LAGUNA DE BABICORA IN CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

Participants at the Sixth North American Crane Workshop in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, support preservation of Laguna de Babicora in Chihuahua. Laguna de Babicora is the most important wintering area for sandhill cranes in Mexico with up to 30,000 cranes wintering in the area. A proposal exists to modify Laguna de Babicora by drainage to improve conditions for agriculture and flood control.

If enacted, this would be severely detrimental to large numbers of cranes and many species of waterfowl. All 3 subspecies of migratory sandhill cranes originating from breeding grounds throughout western North America and possibly the Soviet Union depend on Laguna de Babicora as a winter area, as do many thousands of snow, Ross', and white-fronted geese. Long-billed curlew, American avocet, American white pelican, as well as the endangered bald eagle and peregrine falcon winter there. Additionally, there are several records of endangered whooping cranes from the Rocky Mountain flock at Laguna de Babicora during the 1980's. An unconfirmed sighting of 2 endangered Eskimo curlews was reported in December 1989.

Adverse alteration of this natural wetland ecosystem would be an irreplaceable loss to many migratory aquatic birds, including 3–4 endangered species. Participants at the Sixth North American Crane Workshop request that the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Secretaria de Desarrollo Urbano y Ecologia in Mexico support efforts to preserve Laguna de Babicora in Chihuahua.

RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF ERNIE KUYT TO CONSERVATION OF THE WHOOPING CRANE

Participants of the Sixth North American Crane Workshop wish to recognize Ernie Kuyt, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) Biologist, for his outstanding dedication and contribution to research, management, and conservation of whooping cranes. Ernie joined CWS in 1960, and began work on whooping cranes in 1966. He is now retired from field work to concentrate on writing his research findings. His long and dedicated work with whooping cranes on their breeding grounds has immeasurably increased our knowledge of the species and has facilitated other major conservation efforts for whooping cranes, including monitoring and management at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, the Grays Lake cross-fostering experiment, and the captive propagation program at Patuxent. Workshop participants look forward to seeing more of Ernie's written efforts in the future.

HOST RESOLUTION

Participants of the Sixth North American Crane Workshop wish to express their thanks to the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and the Canadian Council of the Whooping Crane Conservation Association for hosting the Sixth North American Crane Workshop, and to the various sponsors, committees, and individuals who made it such a success. We thoroughly enjoyed the papers, the camaraderie, and the banquet. The field trip to Last Mountain Lake was a real highlight. Special thanks to CWS Biologist Brian Johns for his fine efforts in planning the conference, to Gary Lingle for his contributions as President, treasurer, and newsletter editor of the North American Crane Working Group 1988–91, and to Dale Stahlecker and Richard Urbanek for the enormous task of editing the proceedings.