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## Review of *Sandhill and Whooping Cranes: Ancient Voices over America's Wetlands*. By Paul A. Johnsgard.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Sandhill and Whooping Cranes: Ancient Voices over America's Wetlands.** By Paul A. Johnsgard. Lincoln: University of Nebraska press, 2011. xx + 155 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, bibliography, suggested reading list, online resource list. \$12.95 paper.

This charming, informative book has clearly been written by someone who truly understands and appreciates the magnificence of cranes. Indeed, *Sandhill and Whooping Cranes: Ancient Voices over America's Wetlands* is Paul Johnsgard's fourth book on the subject. The knowledge he imparts, presented from the heart, culminates almost five decades of personal observations and research on cranes. Moreover, the book features many attractive illustrations and detailed maps sketched by the author himself.

Two of four chapters offer overviews of life history, habitat preferences, behavior, phenology, and demographics of all six sandhill crane subspecies. Johnsgard emphasizes seasonal movements and distinguishing features, with great care explaining the taxonomy and distribution of these often difficult to distinguish birds. Many readers will find this extremely useful, particularly when observing cranes during migration.

Chapter three offers a brief history of endangered whooping cranes with concise summaries of past and current conservation programs established to preserve the species. Johnsgard highlights the astounding efforts and success of Operation Migration and the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership in reintroducing an eastern migratory flock. In addition, he provides demographic and distributional information for all wild and introduced whooping crane populations.

The final chapter looks to the future of North American cranes. Johnsgard discusses current and potential threats to populations and provides baseline numbers and cautionary predictions regarding recovery plans and policies. He ends with a compelling appeal to readers to safeguard these marvelous birds.

The book contains an outstanding appendix of crane-viewing locations in which Johnsgard provides an alphabetical annotated list by state and province of refuges and wildlife areas where cranes are regularly observed, including site details, approximate dates of occurrence, and contact information. One featured location is Nebraska's Platte River, a historical focus for cranes that still boasts the largest spring assemblage of these birds globally.

*Sandhill and Whooping Cranes* is a scholarly work with a much-welcomed personal touch. Whether its reader is contemplating a pilgrimage to observe these wonderful birds in the wild, or merely catching up on

the state of cranes, this book will be a worthwhile acquisition. **Janice M. Hughes**, *Department of Biology, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.*