

# THE UNISON CALL

- Newsletter of the North American Crane Working Group -

Spring/Summer 2013

Vol. 24 No. 1

## President's Note — August 2013

**I**n just a few short months, craniacs will be gathering in Lafayette for our workshop. Co-chairs Sammy King and Barry Hartup are putting together a great event to celebrate crane research and conservation, and the culture and birds of southern Louisiana. Updates about the meeting will be posted on our website ([www.nacwg.org](http://www.nacwg.org)) and the Ornithology Exchange ([www.ornithologyexchange.org/](http://www.ornithologyexchange.org/)).

At the heart of our workshop is sharing knowledge about cranes and fellowship among people who share love and interest in Gruidae. Two other important events also occur at our workshop: a member's business meeting and elections to the board. The business meeting is for *all* members – to keep you informed about all of the working group's activities, our financial status, plans for editing and publishing proceedings from the workshop, looking ahead to the next workshop, and exploring new ideas. This is your opportunity to provide feedback and put forward new ideas.

Have some ideas that you want to see pursued by this working group? Something that could be improved? Be a candidate for the board! Our board has seven members who provide the guidance and planning for our main activities – workshop, proceedings, newsletter, and website. The board usually meets once or twice a year via conference call and more often in the year before the workshop as planning activity picks up. Board responsibilities are outlined in our bylaws (recently revised and included in this newsletter; pp. 15-19). **Interested in possibly joining the board? Contact me or one of the other board members.** This is a good opportunity to get a bit

more involved and develop organizational and leadership skills – and get a bit of the inside track on what's happening in the crane world. You never know where it may take you!

The current board is Jane Austin (president), Richard Urbanek (vice-president), Daryl Henderson (treasurer), and members-at-large Felipe Chavez-Ramirez, Barry Hartup, Sammy King, and David Aborn. Following our bylaws, this board serves until the next workshop (2014), when we will hold new elections for all seven board members.

Finally, a reminder that as a member of NACWG, you are also part of the Ornithological Council (OC), a coalition of ornithological organizations. The OC is a great resource for information on issues affecting ornithological research, including questions or problems about permits or import/export permits. And as an OC affiliate, you are part of the **Ornithological Exchange** – an online community of individuals interested in ornithology, or the scientific study of birds. If you haven't already, check it out – and sign up as a member – at [www.ornithologyexchange.org/](http://www.ornithologyexchange.org/). This is a great site for learning about upcoming meetings (including our own) and lots of news for anyone interested in birds.

I hope you all are able to join us in Lafayette for great presentations and discussions about cranes, good fellowship, good food, and great birding!

**Jane Austin**  
**President**

Contact: 701-253-5510 or [jaustin@usgs.gov](mailto:jaustin@usgs.gov)

## Lafayette Louisiana 2014 Workshop

We are excited to announce that the **13<sup>th</sup> North American Crane Workshop** will be held 14-18 April 2014 in Lafayette, Louisiana at the Hotel Acadiana (<http://www.thehotelacadiana.com/>). The Workshop will include 2 full days of presentations and one day of field trips to the spectacular Louisiana wetlands. The call for abstracts and registration are now open (go to <https://savingcranes.conference-services.net/>). Lunches for all three days, the banquet meal (Thursday night), and the field trip are all included in the registration fee (Students—\$175; All others—\$350), as is 3 years' NACWG membership (2014–2016). Room accommodations are not included in the registration fee, but we have reserved a block of rooms in the hotel at special rates. The special rates will also apply to the 3 days before and the 3 days after the Workshop, subject to availability at the time the room reservation is made. Please contact the hotel directly to arrange your room accommodations.

April in Louisiana offers spectacular birding with peak migration of Neotropical migrants and shorebirds and a plethora of native waterbirds (see <http://www.louisianatravel.com/louisiana-birding-trails> for a list of birding trails). Of course, crawfish will be in peak season and, as always, if you go home hungry and healthy it is not our fault! Please continue to monitor the NACWG website (<http://www.nacwg.org/>) for specific details and updates. See you in Lafayette!

### Student Travel Awards

NACWG is offering up to three (3) Student Travel Awards of \$500 each. To be eligible, the student must present a paper (oral or poster) at the Louisiana Workshop and be the lead author, although other authors may be listed on the paper.

Student Travel Awards are given on a competitive basis. Applications will be judged on the cover letter, statement of interest in crane research, and abstract of the paper to be presented.

Applications should be submitted to **Jane Austin** at [jaustin@usgs.gov](mailto:jaustin@usgs.gov)

### Silent Auction Contributions

We will be requesting goods (new or unwanted) for a silent auction to be held during the Workshop. Proceeds will go to help fund student travel & research. This was a fun event at the Nebraska Workshop. The sorts of items donated previously included bird-related books, framed pictures and other kinds of artwork, handicrafts, apparel, birding stuff...etc. More information to follow.

### Walkinshaw Award Nominations

We are seeking nominations for the L. H. Walkinshaw Award to be presented at the 13th Workshop. The purpose of this award is to recognize individuals whose efforts have advanced our ability to conserve a species, subspecies or population of cranes in North America. Criteria for consideration for this award are long-term involvement with conservation of cranes through research, management, education, or application of

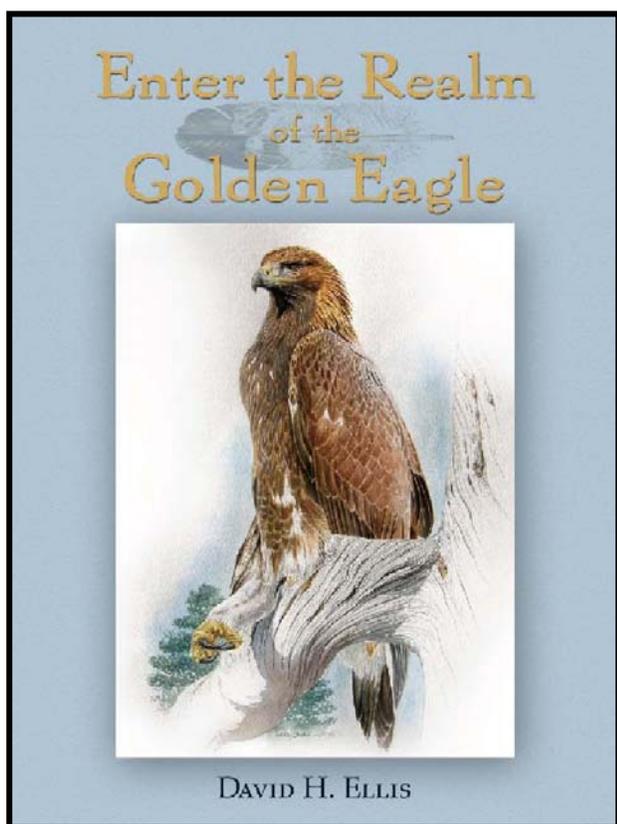


biological principles to the preservation of cranes in North America. Past recipients are: Jacob Valentine, James Lewis, George Gee, Stephen Nesbitt, Ernie Kuyt and Brian Johns. For more details on the award and recipients, visit the NACWG website (<http://www.nacwg.org/awards.html>). Nominations (1-2 pages) highlighting the nominee's contribution to crane conservation may be sent to **Jane Austin** at [jaustin@usgs.gov](mailto:jaustin@usgs.gov)

# *Enter the Realm of the Golden Eagle*

a new book by David H. Ellis

**F**riends: I am writing to invite you to learn about my 17-year labor of love, the book, *Enter the Realm of the Golden Eagle*. Although it is a collection of eagle adventures by nearly 50 authors around the world, it has lots about wild cranes in Siberia, Mongolia, and elsewhere, and lots more about crane reintroduction experiments in America, and no, the eagles don't always win. This book has great power to excite young and old to lay down their electronic devices and get outdoors for their own eagle (and crane) adventures. You can read Chapter 1 and see the Table of Contents at <http://www.hancockhouse.com/products/entrea.htm>. Write to me at [dcellis@theriver.com](mailto:dcellis@theriver.com) if you would like a signed, inscribed copy at a cheaper rate. I also have signed copies available of *Wings Across the Desert* (the adventure story of our crane trucking experiments in the 1990's) and *Cranes: Their Biology, Husbandry, and Conservation*. **David H. Ellis**



ISBN 978-0-88839-704-1

8½" x 11", hardcover, 496 pages

Over 400 images: photos, drawings, paintings

Color throughout

Including 100 accounts from 48 authors and the images from 21 photographers and 15 artists, this book provides both education and contemplation. \$60.00

**From the Publisher:** Seventeen years in the making, this anthology offers a treasure trove of literary quotes and compelling stories by dozens of scientists, falconers, and adventurers. With over 400 illustrations by 21 photographers and 15 artists, and more than 100 accounts by 48 authors representing 20 nations, this book will appeal to both the generalist and the academic. Focusing on teaching everyone to value the eagle and the vast open habitats it needs to survive, and the creatures that share its world, this unique work both celebrates the eagle and attunes readers to the challenges facing this species in the modern world.

Along with legendary stories from antiquity are chapters on trained eagles hunting large quarry such as gazelle, deer, foxes, wolves, and even man; eagle research and intelligence; and the eagle in the legend and lore of native peoples worldwide, including the acts by North American First Nations people to obtain coup feathers. An additional chapter outlines ways and means of capturing eagles, including the use of helicopters. The book concludes with chapters on three special trained eagles.

## *Enter the Realm of the Golden Eagle*

**David H. Ellis** grew up in eagle country in the Rocky Mountain West and was fascinated by golden eagles from early childhood. His PhD dissertation is *the* monograph on golden eagle behavior. He has lived in 16 US states and has visited all of them, as well as more than 50 nations, generally in pursuit of bird (mostly raptor) research. These travels involved work with harpy eagles in Central and South America, bald and golden eagles in Alaska and Canada, and golden eagles in the US, Japan, Siberia, and most of all, Mongolia. His falcon research focused on pallid falcons in Patagonia, saker falcons in Mongolia, and peregrine populations in Arizona. His publications exceed 200 articles, chapters, or books, and include three volumes on crane research.



**From the book:** Lothvar with a Sandhill Crane chick. This captive eagle cared for several eaglets, not her own, and hatched and cared for two Sandhill Crane chicks. Because the eagle is ill-equipped to feed the tiny crane, a human caretaker uses a stuffed adult crane head to assist.

# Alaska Crane Chronicles

NACWG members **Nina Faust** and **Ed Bailey** of Homer, AK invite you to check out the **Kachemak Crane Watch's** playlist of Sandhill Crane videos on YouTube:

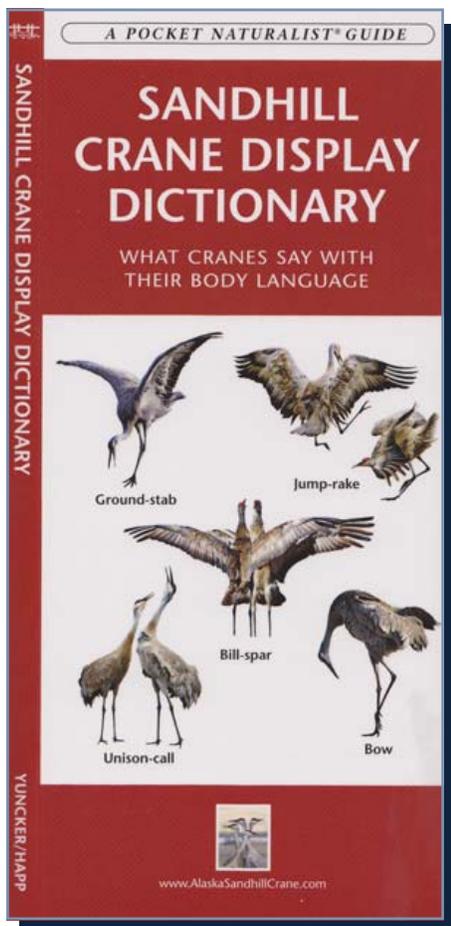
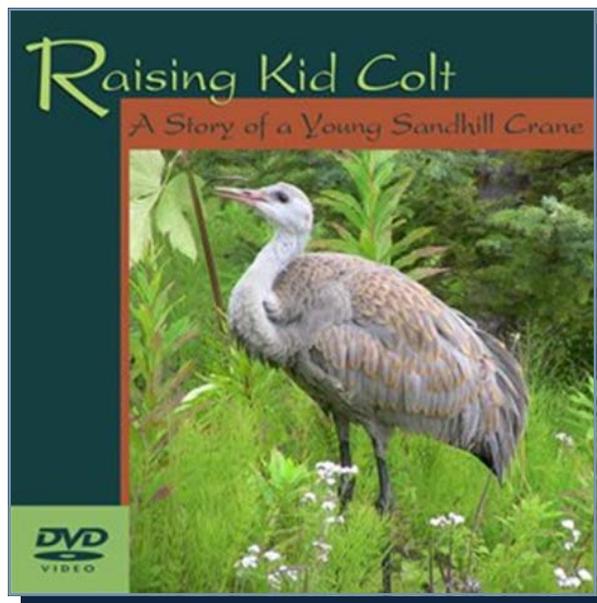
<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLE5DF4095CA03BCCC>

Also, available for purchase, from the International Crane Foundation, is a DVD of their video, *Raising Kid Colt: A Story of a Young Sandhill Crane*.

Proceeds from the sale of the video go to the ICF's West Coast Sandhill Crane Project, headed by **Gary Ivey**.

*From feather painting to nest building to becoming a family of three, this incredible footage reveals an intimate look at the daily lives of Sandhill Cranes teaching their chick to survive in Homer, Alaska.*

<https://www.savingcranes.org/cart/gifts/raising-kid-colt-dvd.html>



NACWG members **Christy & George Happ** of Fairbanks, AK, authors of the *Sandhill Crane Display Dictionary*, invite you to view their website for a running chronicle of the growth and education of a colt in the wild:

<http://www.alaskasandhillcrane.com/>

George writes: *Christy's photography and her journals are the basis for the website and the Guide and the talks that I give. Our aim is to encourage some respect for the birds and deeper interest in their biology, that goes beyond either "big jumpy things" or "merely another resource to be managed."*

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## Regional Reports

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### Two Records of Leucistic Sandhill Cranes in Michigan

**L**eucism is a rare genetic mutation that is caused by reduced deposition of melanin in feathers resulting in pale white plumage or patches of white feathers. Numerous pictures have been posted on the Internet of mostly white Sandhill Cranes. Sandhill Cranes with abnormal plumage have been reported in several areas of North America, but there are no published accounts of leucistic Sandhill Cranes in Michigan.

Leucistic Sandhill Crane found 26 November 2012 in Jackson County, Michigan. Photo by Don Henise



In the fall of 1986 I received several reports of a white crane in the Waterloo area, Jackson County, possibly a Whooping Crane. Subsequently I observed a mostly white Sandhill Crane 17 October in a flock of 47 Sandhill Cranes in Waterloo Township. Its plumage was white except for pale gray feathers on the upper neck. Otherwise, the color of legs, bill and forehead, and its size were normal for a Sandhill Crane. Additional observations of the leucistic crane were made 25 and 29 October and 16 November within 4 miles of the 17 October sighting, often with flocks of >200 Sandhill Cranes.

I received a report 26 November 2012 of possibly two Whooping Cranes in northern Jackson County. It was determined that one of the birds was Whooping Crane 37-07, which had been released in Wisconsin as part of the Eastern Migratory Whooping Crane reintroduction program.

I found the second white crane in a flock of 185 Sandhill Cranes about five miles distant from the Whooping Crane. It was observed and photographed by several people. The

plumage of this bird was very pale gray-white except for a pure white cheek and chin, a pale gray upper neck and occiput and a few scattered pale gray feathers on the back and wings. The bill and legs appeared black; papillose skin of the forehead, lores and anterior crown were reddish; and eyes were orange -all normal for Sandhill Cranes, as was its size.

There were nearly 25,000 Sandhill Cranes and one Whooping Crane counted 27-30 October 2012 during the late autumn Michigan crane survey , but there were no reports of a leucistic Sandhill Crane during the survey.

Care should be taken when accepting reports of a Whooping Crane from the general public because they may have mistakenly seen a leucistic Sandhill Crane. Special attention should be made of the color of the malar and post occiput regions of the head, and body height to distinguish the two species when standing. Of course, in flight the black primaries of Whooping Cranes are distinctive.

**Ronald Hoffman**  
**6142 Territorial Rd.**  
**Pleasant Lake, MI 49272**  
*ronandjoanhoffman@yahoo.com*

## **Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge**

During the winter 2012-13, one cohort of six capture-reared juveniles was transferred to the refuge for acclimation and release at the South Gautier Pen.

The February 2013 population was 107 cranes, including 92 banded. There were 51 males, 45 females, and 11 unknown. There were 52 in the Gautier area (east), 37 at Ocean Springs (west), and 18 at Fontainebleau (south). The oldest know marked crane was 23 years old.

We conducted all nest searches by foot or kayak. There was no helicopter funding in 2013. We surveyed 38 different areas, (compared to an average of 100 the previous three years). There was a record 39 nests in 2013, involving 25 pairs. We transferred 25 eggs and one chick to the Audubon Species Survival Center, most for rearing to release back to the refuge. There was at least one new nest territory, St. Paul, off the refuge near the historic Bear Pond site, described in the 1930s. At least four cranes were first-time breeders (male or female). Three chicks fledged with at least one more possible, including one from the new St. Paul territory. Unfortunately, the female was struck and killed by a vehicle days after the chick fledged.

University of New Orleans graduate student Linda Salande, under guidance of Dr. Jerry Howard, began her field work to develop a crane habitat suitability model. Dr. David Holt, University of Southern Mississippi, completed initial work on GIS data development of refuge vegetation classification. Melissa Perez began work as the new refuge Park Ranger.

**Scott Hereford, Gautier, MS**

## **Regional Reports *continued***

### **National Whooping Crane Environmental Education Program**

The International Crane Foundation (ICF) recently launched an initiative to develop a National Whooping Crane Environmental Education program. This program, aimed at 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, teachers, families, and the general public, will involve interactive multi-media tools to engage people in Whooping Crane conservation. We started this work in Texas through a partnership with Hamline University's Center for Global Environmental Education and Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies.

A team of Texas teachers helped us to develop and pilot the first part of this national program, which focuses on the estuary ecosystem in the Coastal Bend of south Texas where the Whooping Cranes winter.

We will develop and test similar programs with educators in the other two Whooping Crane populations—the reintroduced eastern migratory population and the non-migratory cohort introduced in Louisiana. To facilitate information-sharing with our Texas teachers and educators in Louisiana, ICF launched an educator-exchange program and teacher training workshop this past February. This program was sponsored by ICF, the Harte Research Institute, and Texas-based Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program. Eight Coastal Bend educators visited the Whooping Crane reintroduction site at White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in southern Louisiana and met with education staff from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to learn about their Whooping Crane environmental education programming and share environmental education teaching tools and techniques.

We hope to host the LDWF education staff and K-12 educators in the Texas Coastal Bend this winter as we further develop the National Whooping Crane Environmental Education program. Education, with audiences in Texas, Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast where Whooping Cranes roost, feed, and sometimes find themselves in close quarters with people, is the key to protecting one of North America's most endangered birds.

**Joan A. Garland**  
***Education Outreach Coordinator***  
**International Crane Foundation**  
**Baraboo, WI**

## Aransas–Wood Buffalo Whooping Crane Telemetry Projects

The Whooping Crane Tracking Partnership began in 2008 as a research project to use Platform Transmitting Terminals with Global Positioning System capabilities (GPS-PTTs) as a means to advance knowledge of whooping crane breeding, wintering, and migratory ecology including threats to survival and population persistence and to provide reliable scientific knowledge for conservation, management, and recovery of whooping cranes. The Partnership is comprised of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Crane Trust, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey, with support from the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, International Crane Foundation, and Parks Canada. Partners agree the opportunity to mark wild whooping cranes with GPS technology will greatly enhance our knowledge of whooping cranes and enable us to assess risks they face during their entire life cycle.

To date we have captured and attached GPS-PTTs to 31 juvenile whooping cranes at breeding sites in Wood Buffalo National Park and 24 adult and 2 juvenile whooping cranes at wintering sites at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Capture teams consist of individuals with experience handling endangered cranes, including a licensed veterinarian. At capture, the veterinarian performs a health check on each crane, which includes a general external examination, blood collection for pathogen, toxin, and genetic screening, and fecal collections for parasite evaluation. Captured birds are marked with a GPS-PTT attached with a two-piece leg band that weigh approximately 72 grams, which represents <1.5% of body weight of adult whooping cranes. The GPS-PTTs have solar panels integrated on all exposed surfaces to maximize battery recharge and provide an equipment lifespan of approximately 3–5 years. Transmitters are programmed to record 4 GPS locations/day which provides us detailed information on roosting sites, diurnal use sites, and general flight paths. Transmitters upload new data on a 56-hour schedule which generally allows us to identify mortality events fairly quickly when they occur. As our sample of marked cranes is reaching peak numbers, GPS-marked cranes provided >15,000 locations during winter 2012-2013. Expectations and excitement among research partners has increased and we have begun to explore the volume of rich information provided by marked individuals.

In addition to collecting information provided by the GPS-PTTs, the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey and Crane Trust are conducting a ground-based study spanning from northern Texas to North Dakota to evaluate habitats telemetry-marked whooping cranes have used as stopover sites during migration. The ground-based stopover site evaluations allow researchers to collect time-sensitive data that would be difficult or impossible to measure remotely and have enabled us to learn a great deal about conditions surrounding stopover sites that may have attracted whooping cranes to the area. Where many stopovers occur on privately owned lands, these evaluations depend largely on landowners allowing researchers access to their properties and we are grateful for the access landowners have provided us during the past several migration seasons. Upon completion of the research projects, the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program plans to use information obtained via telemetry and at stopover sites to create and manage similar habitats along the central Platte River in Nebraska.

**Dave Baasch**  
**Platte River Recovery Implementation Program**

## Regional Reports *continued*

### Update on the Eastern Migratory Population of Whooping Cranes

*Winter 2012/2013 and Spring 2013* — Late wintering distribution, including 4 ultralight-led (UL) juveniles at a winter release site, was Florida (13), Kentucky (8), Tennessee (11), Indiana (45), Illinois (6), Alabama (16), Georgia (3), and state undetermined (6; 2 of the latter had not been reported since the previous winter). Winter mortalities included 1 male and 1 female direct autumn-released (DAR) juveniles and 1 female UL juvenile in Florida and 1 adult male in Tennessee. Spring mortalities consisted of 3 adult females and 1 female DAR juvenile. An additional adult female is missing and suspected dead.

*Reproduction* — Following two years of treatment of the Yellow River with the black fly larvicide *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (*Bti*), 2013 was used as a control year to help determine if black flies are causing nest abandonments; thus no *Bti* application was made to rivers surrounding the refuge. Without the *Bti* treatment, black fly numbers were much greater in 2013 than in the previous two years. Black flies were sampled at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge on 23 days, from 16 April 2013 – 6 July 2013 using the same protocols as previous sampling years. Hundreds of thousands of insects were captured and sent to Dr. Peter Adler at Clemson University for identification and enumeration. Final results from Dr. Adler are still pending; however, direct observations of nesting birds this season strongly suggest that black flies are, in fact, associated with or the main cause of Whooping Crane nest abandonment.

Twenty pairs (14 on the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, 3 on State Wildlife Areas and 3 on private property in Wood and Adams Counties) began incubation between 15 and 29 April. Eighteen of the 20 nests failed between 4 and 8 May, coinciding with a mass emergence of black flies. One additional nest failed on 16 May. The final nest, located ~50 miles north of the Necedah NWR hatched out two chicks, which were last seen at approximately 3 and 35 days of age, respectively. One late first nest (on a State Wildlife Area) and two re-nests (one on the Necedah NWR and one on private property) were initiated in late May. Of those three nests, one failed, one was incubated past full term (eggs were non-viable), and one hatched out at least one chick. Eggs were collected from 14 of the 20 failed nests; two additional nests had eggs that remained after abandonment but were destroyed before collection.

For a second year, intensive nest monitoring was accomplished with aerial surveys. Aerial support from the Wisconsin DNR, Windway Capital Corp., and LightHawk are gratefully acknowledged. In total, 83 surveys were completed from 20 April to 25 June 2013. We were able to determine the number of eggs in 22 of the total 23 nests (3 with 1, 19 with 2).

*Current Population Size* — As of 8 August, the Eastern Migratory Population consisted of an estimated 101 birds (55 males and 46 females) including 94 Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin, 2 in Michigan, 3 not recently reported, and 2 long term missing. This total does not include one surviving 2013 wild-hatched chick.

## **Energetics Research**

In an effort to explore other possible contributing factors resulting in low nesting success, the International Crane Foundation (ICF), in collaboration with UW-Madison PhD student Megan Fitzpatrick, completed a third year of data collection examining energy input and output of Whooping Cranes in the Eastern Migratory Population. Information gathered about Whooping Crane diet and behavior, which has not previously been quantified on the breeding grounds, will also contribute to understanding habitats and food resources that are important to breeding pairs and help identify potential routes of toxin ingestion.

Data on two breeding pairs were collected from 7 April – 5 July 2013. Each bird's off-nest activities were observed in half-day sessions for the equivalent of one full day per week during the study period. Each day consisted of two types of data collection (energy input and energy output), alternating every hour. Energy input was estimated via video-recording of foraging behaviors, rates of food acquisition, and individual food items of a non-incubating bird. Factors affecting energy output, such as weather, shade, behavior, water depth, and vegetation height were recorded every 30 seconds for 50 minute intervals. This information will be put into a biophysical model to determine if there is a net energy deficit during the breeding season for Whooping Cranes in this population.

**Eva Szyszkoski, *WCEP Tracking Field Manager***  
**Hillary Thompson, *Intern Manager***  
**International Crane Foundation**  
**Baraboo, WI**

## **Recent Publications Associated with the Florida Non-migratory Whooping Crane Flock**

Converse, S. J., C. T. Moore, M. J. Folk, and M. C. Runge. 2013. A matter of tradeoffs: reintroduction as a multiple objective decision. *The Journal of Wildlife Management* 77: 1145–1156.

Dellinger, T. A., M. J. Folk, and M. G. Spalding. 2013. Copulatory behavior of non-migratory whooping cranes in Florida. *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 125: 128-133.

Folk, M. J., Dellinger, T. A., and E. H. Leone. 2013. Is male-biased collision mortality of whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) in Florida associated with flock behavior? *Waterbirds* 36: 214-219.

**Marty Folk**  
**Avian Research**  
**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

## Regional Reports *continued*

### Louisiana Whooping Cranes – August 2013

It's been a busy spring and summer, with some firsts and some interesting developments as well as a few losses.

#### 2010 Cohort

Sadly, the 2010 cohort is down to just a single survivor, as L5-10 was shot and killed in Red River Parish in mid-April. While we are dis-heartened to have had another bird shot and killed in a senseless act of vandalism we once again felt the support of the community, in Louisiana and beyond, as they expressed their outrage over this incident. Additionally, numerous individuals and organizations contributed to a reward fund that now totals \$15,000 for information that leads to the conviction of the person(s) who committed this crime. Though the case remains open we are incredibly grateful for the support shown to the project and to these birds as well as the financial contributions to the reward fund that sends a clear message that this sort of crime will not be tolerated.

The now, sole survivor, L3-10, continues to do well. When last reported he had paired with L4-11 and in fact these two were observed building two nests this spring. Although nothing came of the nests, which was not unexpected given the young age of the individual birds, we viewed the nest building as a very positive sign and first step of what's to come in the future. Unfortunately, this pair has since separated and each bird has been associating with others in the population but we hope that some additional pairs will develop by next spring.

#### 2011 Cohort

All 12 members of the 2011 cohort continue to do well with none lost since last August, meaning 75% of the original group have now survived over 1.5 years since their initial release in December of 2011. The groupings remain mostly the same; there is a group of 3 that remains together, though I keep waiting for the extra male to be kicked out of the trio leaving a pair that will hopefully show some signs of breeding this spring. There are 2 single females and then there is a group of 7 which earlier this summer had shown some signs of splitting up but now seems to almost be back together as a large group again. Perhaps the most interesting event of the spring, well one of the more interesting events (aside from the nests that were built and the 2012 birds going to Texas) was that 7 birds from this cohort went through their first molt and happily all survived and are now flying again. Especially interesting is that the group of 7 moved back to White Lake, split up into several smaller groups while 4 of these birds molted, and then all moved back to their normal area in Avoyelles and Rapides Parishes after the molting birds could fly again. The group of 3 also molted and they likewise moved to a different area – a larger and more remote rice field, while molting and then once able to fly again, moved back to their usual location. We are curious to see how pairs will develop out of these larger groups and especially for the group of 7, if any of them will return to the marsh to nest, as they did this year to molt.

#### 2012 Cohort

The 2012 cohort has kept us on our toes since they dispersed away from the White Lake (WLWCA) marsh at the end of January/early February. This group, more than either of the previous cohorts has used a wider variety of habitats in addition to using more coastal marsh habitats as compared to the agriculture habitats chosen by the 2010 and 2011 birds. After initially

leaving the release site in three separate groups, the group of 8 and the 4 youngest males got back together just north of the WLWCA property and then moved south as a group of 12 to the Rockefeller Refuge and then split up once again from there. To the delight of Rockefeller manager, Tom Hess, who was instrumental in helping organize and get this reintroduction project off the ground for LDWF, one female has remained on the refuge all spring and summer. A group of 4 birds moved west but stayed along the coast and settled in a private marsh in Cameron Parish for several months before one bird was found dead and the other 3 moved to a new location ~ 15 miles east. (The bird that was found dead was not predated or shot and necropsy results are still pending.) A group of 5 birds moved north into agriculture fields in Jefferson-Davis Parish, not far from where some of the older whooping cranes are settled but after a while they moved back to White Lake and used both marsh and agriculture fields in several of the different leased sections of the WLWCA property. The final 2 birds also moved north though sadly 1 of them disappeared and his transmitter stopped working so he is presumed dead though searches from both the air and ground did not turn up a carcass or his transmitter. The final 2 birds were the first 2 that left the release site and were using coastal marsh in St. Mary's Parish; that is until they went to TX!

Toward the end of April data from the transmitters of cranes L3 & 5-12 indicated they were in TX. This wasn't that surprising because there have been other birds that have gone to TX before, but what ended up being surprising is how far into TX these birds went, they settled near Dallas, and how long they've stayed, they're still there! Then about a month later, at the end of May, the group of 5 birds also moved into TX, and also settled near Dallas. The 2 groups initially remained separate till the end of June when the pair met up with the group of 5 and they associated as a loose group of 7 for about 3 weeks before separating, with the group of 5 moving to a new location in Ellis County, TX where they remain. We are very grateful to staff from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and in particular their Whooper Watch volunteers who have done an excellent job monitoring these birds and providing us with updates. While the birds appear to be doing well they are supposed to be LA birds, not TX birds so stay tuned for future developments of this story!

### **2013 Cohort**

Currently there are 12 whooping crane chicks at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center being raised for release in Louisiana this winter. Initially there were several more chicks but despite everyone's best efforts not all of them have survived. Our fingers are crossed for the remaining 12 to stay healthy and we look forward to welcoming them to their new home later this year. And as always we are grateful to the fantastic crew at PWRC who works so hard to raise all these birds and keep them all healthy!

As of 9 August, 2013 there are 25 whooping cranes (10 males, 15 females) in Louisiana (and Texas).

***Sara Zimorski  
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries***

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# Cranes in the News

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## Tennessee to Allow Hunting of Sandhill Cranes

In a retrograde step, and despite majority public opposition<sup>1</sup>, officials of the Tennessee Fish and Wildlife Commission voted 14-0 on Friday 23 August to allow hunting of Sandhill Cranes in part of the state. The hunt would run from Nov. 28 to Jan. 1. Permits would be issued to up to 400 hunters, and each hunter would be allowed three birds. Hunters will be required to take a test proving they can distinguish a Sandhill Crane from a Whooping Crane. Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge would be off limits, but the Commission declined to establish a buffer zone around the refuge.

One could question the propriety of holding a crane hunt, followed only weeks later by an extremely popular celebration of live cranes, the Tennessee Sandhill Crane Festival at Hiwassee, both supported by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

In 2011, neighboring Kentucky voted to allow annual hunting of Sandhill Cranes in that state from mid-December to mid-January (*The Unison Call*, vol. 22. no. 1).

<sup>1</sup>Of the 1076 public comments received by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, 888 (82.5%) voiced opposition to the hunt (source: [knoxnews.com](http://knoxnews.com)).

## California Delta Water Tunnel Project Threatens Crane Habitat

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is undertaking a massive water-diversion project in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta. Known as the Bay Delta Water Conservation Plan, the project aims to address longstanding conflicts over water supplies to Southern California and species conservation in the Delta. Two large (up to 40 ft. diameter), 30-mile long tunnels would be built to divert water from the Sacramento River near Hood and deliver it to existing pumping facilities in the south Delta near Tracy.

However, in a major revision of the plan announced on 15 August, the tunnels would be moved east from their originally proposed route and now pass under the length of Staten Island, a 9100-acre tract of farmland owned by The Nature Conservancy and operated under a conservation easement — and an important area for California’s Greater Sandhill Cranes. Besides the noise and other disturbances from construction that could last up to 5 years, also proposed for the island and inimical to cranes are: two or more ventilation/access shafts to service the tunnels (each with footprints up to 90 acres); two expansive areas (1274 acres) for storage and processing of the material extracted from the tunnels; new high-voltage power lines.

In a bizarre twist, the conservation easement for the island is actually owned by the DWR, raising legal questions about the Staten Island route. Mike Sweeney, executive director of The Nature Conservancy of California said, “We’re not going to roll over here and let them do whatever they want. We protect our property interests vigorously, and we’ll do that in this case. We’ve got conservation objectives to maintain. It’s a public trust we take very seriously.

One small consolation from the route realignment is that it lessens the impact of the project on Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, another important Delta area for cranes.

Sources: Bay Delta Conservation Plan ([www.baydeltaconservationplan.com](http://www.baydeltaconservationplan.com)); *The Sacramento Bee* ([www.sacbee.com](http://www.sacbee.com)); [recordnet.com](http://recordnet.com)

*Daryl Henderson, Editor*

**BYLAWS**  
**of the**  
**NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKING GROUP, INC.**

Incorporated 1 December 1988  
Revised January 2013

ARTICLE I

Section 1. Purpose of Corporation. The purpose of this corporation shall be as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation. These bylaws specify various matters affecting the operation and governance of the Corporation.

Section 2. Objectives of Corporation. The objectives of the corporation are to:

- Sponsor a North American Crane Workshop every 3–4 years.
- Promulgate technical information, including a published Proceedings of the North American Crane Workshop and a semi-annual newsletter.
- Address conservation issues affecting cranes and their habitats.
- Promote appropriate research on crane conservation and management.
- Promote a better understanding and appreciation of cranes and their habitats among the general public.

ARTICLE II

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Powers. Subject to the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation of the corporation, these Bylaws and the laws of the State of Wisconsin, the affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. Composition of the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall be composed of persons elected by the membership at the general membership meeting held at the time of the North American Crane Workshop (hereafter, Workshop).

Section 3. Number and Tenure. The number of Directors shall be seven (7). Unless sooner removed as provided in the Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws, each Director shall hold office for a term that extends from one Workshop to the next Workshop, or until his or her successor shall have been designated.

Section 4. Meetings. Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall be held at least once a year. Special meetings may be held at other times as called by the President or the majority of the Board of Directors.

(a) Notices. Notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors, specifying the place, date and hour of each meeting, shall be given to each Director by written notice delivered in person, by email, or other form of wire or wireless communication, at least two (2) days before the time set for such meeting. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose, of any meeting of the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of such notice of such meeting.

(b) Waiver of Notice. The transaction of any meeting of the Board of Directors, however called and noticed or wherever held, shall be as valid as though had at a meeting duly held after regular call and notice, if a quorum is present and if, either before or after the meeting, a written waiver of notice of the meeting, containing the same information as would have been required to be included in a proper notice of the meeting, is signed by (a) each Director not present at the meeting and (b) each Director present at the meeting who objected to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened. All such waivers shall be filed with and made a part of the minutes of the meeting.

Section 5. Quorum. A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board.

Section 6. Action without meeting. An action required or permitted to be taken at a Board meeting may be taken without a meeting if the consent in writing (including electronic forms) setting forth the action is signed by two-thirds of the Directors then in office. Record of this action and consent will be retained by the Secretary as part of the corporation's records.

Section 7. Compensation. Directors, as such, shall not receive any stated salaries for their services, but by resolution of the Board of Directors, a fixed sum and expenses of attendance, if any, may be allowed for attendance at each regular or special meeting of the Board; but nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any Director from serving the corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation therefor.

Section 8. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors and any directorship to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of Directors, shall be filled by the Board of Directors. A Director elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired term of his/her predecessor in office.

### ARTICLE III.

#### OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the corporation shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and a Treasurer, each of whom shall also be a Director of the corporation. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, except the offices of President and Treasurer and the offices of President and Vice President.

Section 2. Election and Term of Office of the Board. The officers of the corporation shall be elected by the Board of Directors at the first board meeting following each general membership meeting. If the election of officers shall not be held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as conveniently possible. New offices may be created and filled at any meeting of the Board of Directors. Each officer shall hold office until his successor shall have been duly elected.

Section 3. Removal. Any officer elected or appointed by the Board of Directors may be removed by the a majority of Board of Directors whenever, in its judgment, the best interests of the corporation would be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the officer so removed.

Section 4. President. The President shall be the principal executive officer of the corporation and shall in general supervise and control all of the business and affairs of the corporation. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors. He or she may sign, with the Secretary or any other officer of the corporation authorized by the Board of Directors, any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments that the Board of Directors has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Directors or by these bylaws or by statute to some other officer or agent of the corporation; and in general he or she shall perform all duties incident to the office of President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board of Directors from time to time

Section 5. Vice President. In the absence of the President or his inability or refusal to act, the Vice President performs the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President or by the Board of Directors.

Section 6. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall perform the following functions:

- a) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds and securities of the corporation.
- b) Receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the corporation from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such moneys in the name of the corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the Board of Directors.
- c) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the Corporation's properties and business transactions, including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, gains, losses, capital and surplus.
- d) Render interim statements of the condition of the finances of the Corporation to the Board of Directors upon request, and render a full financial report at the annual meeting of the Board of Directors and at the general membership meeting.
- e) File corporation and tax forms as required by the State of Wisconsin and the United State Internal Revenue Service.

- f) Perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the President or by the Board of Directors.
- g) The Treasurer need not be bonded.

Section 8. Secretary. The Secretary shall record and distribute the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors and the General Membership meetings; be custodian of the corporate records of the corporation; and in general perform all duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President or by the Board of Directors.

#### ARTICLE IV

##### MEMBERS

Section 1. Membership. Members shall be considered active upon payment of annual dues, as established by the Board of Directors. Members will be recognized as Active, Sustaining, or Contributing Members, based on the established dues levels.

Section 2. General membership meeting. A general membership meeting shall be held concurrent with each Workshop. The purpose of this meeting shall be for electing and installing Directors, receiving reports of officers and committees, and for any other business that may arise. Notification of the general membership meeting will be included in the semi-annual newsletter and in all information and schedules associated with the Workshop.

Section 3. Voting. All members in good standing shall have voting rights on matters dealing with the corporation except those matters expressly delegated to the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Dues. Membership dues shall be paid on a calendar year basis (1 January to 31 December).

Section 5. Removal. A member may be deprived membership for cause by a vote of two-thirds of the Corporation voting at the annual meeting.

#### ARTICLE V

##### COMMITTEES

Section 1. Establishment of committees. The Board of Directors, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors in office, may designate and appoint one or more committees to conduct specific tasks for the corporation. All committees shall be accountable to the Board, under the general supervision of the President. The President is a de facto member of all committees.

Section 2. Committees. Three committees will be established as needed for the planning and conduct of the Workshop: Other committees may be established as needs arise.

Program Committee. This committee shall arrange and conduct the scientific program for the Workshop. The committee chair is responsible for soliciting and organizing scientific presentations, speakers, and moderators; organizing the Workshop schedule in collaboration with the President and other committee chairs; and obtaining necessary logistical support (e.g., audio-visual).

Local Organizing Committee. This committee shall arrange and coordinate local logistical aspects of the Workshop, such as arranging hotel and meeting space, arranging for meals or other necessary logistics, and organizing field trips.

Awards Committee. This committee shall solicit and review nominations for the Lawrence Walkinshaw Award, to be given to the recipient (if one is selected) at the Workshop. This committee may also solicit nominations and give other awards, as approved by the Board of Directors, to be given at the Workshop.

#### ARTICLE VI

##### CONTRACTS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, FUNDS, AND FUND RAISING

Section 1. Contracts. The Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 2. Checks, drafts, etc. All checks, drafts, or orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidence of indebtedness issued in the name of the corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the corporation and in such manner as shall be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed Treasurer and countersigned by the President of the corporation.

Section 3. Deposits. All funds of the corporation shall be to the credit of the corporation in or other depositories as the Board of deposited from time to time such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Directors may select.

Section 4. Gifts. The Board of Directors may accept on behalf of the corporation any contribution, gift, bequest or devise for the general purpose or for any special purpose of the corporation.

Section 5. Loans. No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the corporation and no evidences of indebtedness shall be issued in its name unless authorized by the Board of Directors. Such authority may be general or specific.

## ARTICLE VII

### BOOKS, RECORDS, AND ACCOUNTS

The corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of accounts; minutes of the proceedings of its Board of Directors and committees having any of the authority of the Board of Directors; newsletters; and other publications or documents related to the operations of the corporation. A complete set of records will be maintained at the International Crane Foundation (ICF). Contribution of said materials to ICF will be the responsibility of the Secretary and Treasurer. All books and records of the corporation may be inspected by any director, or his/her agent or attorney, for any purpose at any reasonable time.

## ARTICLE VIII

### FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the corporation shall be from 1 January to 31 December.

## ARTICLE IX.

### BUDGET AND FINANCIAL OPERATION

Section 1. Budget. The financial operation of the corporation shall be conducted in accordance with a budget to be submitted by the President to the Board of Directors for their approval.

Section 2. Audit. A member of the corporation who does not currently serve on the Board of Directors, an outside firm, or other qualified individual shall be designated by the Board to review the books of account, support documents, agreed-upon procedures, or compilation of these annually. The individual or firm shall conduct the review prior to any change in the office of the Treasurer if requested by the incoming Treasurer. A copy of the report shall be furnished to the Board of Directors within 90 days of the close of the fiscal year.

## ARTICLE X

### INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1. Mandatory Indemnification. The Corporation shall, to the fullest extent permitted or required by the Statute, indemnify each Director and Officer against any and all Liabilities, and advance any and all reasonable Expenses as incurred by a Director or Officer, arising out of or in connection with any Proceeding to which such Director or Officer is a Party because he or she is a Director or Officer of the Corporation. The rights to indemnification granted hereunder shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to indemnification against Liabilities or the advancement of Expenses to which such person may be entitled under any written agreement, board resolution, vote of members, the Statute or otherwise. The Corporation may, but shall not be required to, supplement the right to indemnification against Liability and advancement of Expenses under this Section 1 by the purchase of insurance on behalf of any one or more of such persons, whether or not the Corporation would be obligated to indemnify such person under this Section 1. The term "Statute," as used in this Article, shall mean Sections 181.0871 through 181.0883 of the Wisconsin Nonstock Corporation Law and all amendments thereto which permit or require the Corporation to provide indemnification rights broader than prior to the amendment. All other capitalized terms used in this Article and not otherwise defined herein shall

have the meaning set forth in Section 181.0871 of the Statute.

Section 2. Private Foundation Limitation. Notwithstanding the foregoing, at any time when the Corporation is or becomes a “private foundation” within the meaning of Section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or Section 181.0320 of the Wisconsin Statutes, the following limitation shall apply: No indemnification will be permitted to the extent such indemnification would constitute an act of “self-dealing” or is otherwise subject to excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or is prohibited under Section 181.0320 of the Wisconsin Statutes or any similar successor provision thereto.

Section 3. Limited Liability of Volunteers. Each individual (other than an employee of the Corporation) who provides services to or on behalf of the Corporation without compensation (“Volunteer”) shall be immune from liability to any person for damages, settlements, fees, fines, penalties or other monetary liabilities arising from any act or omission as a Volunteer, to the fullest extent provided by Section 181.0670 of the Wisconsin Nonstock Corporation Law or any similar successor provision thereto. For purposes of this section, it shall be conclusively presumed that any Volunteer who is licensed, certified, permitted or registered under state law and who is performing services to or on behalf of the Corporation without compensation is not acting within the scope of his or her professional practice under such license, certificate, permit or registration, unless otherwise expressly indicated to the Corporation in writing.

#### ARTICLE XI

#### DISSOLUTION

Upon dissolution of the North American Crane Working Group, its Board of Directors shall transfer all assets, accrued income, and other properties to the International Crane Foundation with the understanding that said assets will be held for a maximum of 5 years from the date of dissolution of the corporation, for redistribution to another like organization that may be established within the said 5-year period and that holds similar objectives for crane conservation. If another organization is not established within said period of time, the International Crane Foundation may use or distribute all assets, accrued income and other properties as best determined by that organization’s Board of Directors in accordance with their Bylaws.

#### ARTICLE XII

#### AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed at any regular meeting of the Board of Directors, without notice, or at any special meeting of the Board of Directors if the notice of such meeting contains a statement of the substance of the proposed amendment.

#### ARTICLE XIII

#### CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

Meetings shall be conducted according to Robert’s Rules of Order.

*The Unison Call* is a forum to share updates, news and opinions. It is published twice yearly (spring/summer and fall/winter) by the **North American Crane Working Group**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Both print and electronic (PDF) versions are produced; PDFs of past issues of the newsletter can be downloaded free of charge from our website ([www.nacwg.org](http://www.nacwg.org)). The views expressed in *The Unison Call* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of NACWG. Comments and contributions are always welcome.

*Daryl Henderson, Editor*  
*Stony Brook, NY*  
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*You are invited to join the North American Crane Working Group*

Membership is based on a calendar year.

Dues: \_\_\_\_\_ Active \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ Contributing \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \$

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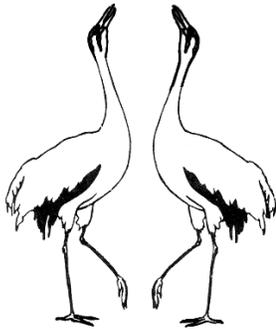
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Mail completed form and check (US\$ payable to **NACWG**) to:

**NACWG, c/o Daryl Henderson, 3 Elm Lane, Stony Brook, NY 11790-2117**



*Return address:*

**North American Crane Working Group  
c/o Daryl Henderson  
3 Elm Lane  
Stony Brook, NY 11790-2117**

**Board of Directors**

**President:** Jane Austin  
**Vice-President:** Richard Urbanek  
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David Aborn  
Felipe Chavez-Ramirez  
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Daryl S. Henderson, *Editor*

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