

memorandum

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DATE: June 17, 1983

REPLY TO: Endangered Species Coordinator
ATTN OF: Pierre, South Dakota

SUBJECT: Cooperative Whooping Crane Tracking Project

TO: Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

Attached is a resume of whooping crane sightings reported to our office. Thank you for your cooperation in monitoring the migration of the whooping crane.

Maurice E. Anderson

Attachment

WGJ:slk

Distribution

- Endangered Species, Salt lake City, UT
- Jim Nelson, Bismarck, ND
- Endangered Species, Billings, MT
- Regional Director, Denver, CO
- Regional Director, Albuquerque, NM
- Law Enforcement District #5, Independence, MO
- Law Enforcement District #4, Denver, CO
- Cleveland Vaughn, SRA, Omaha, NE
- John Cooper, SRA, Pierre, SD
- David Kraft, SRA, Bismarck, ND
- Cornelis Vendel, SRA, Lenexa, KS
- Director, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD
- Rod Drewien, Soda Springs, ID
- Central Flyway Representative, Lakewood, CO
- Refuge Manager, Aransas NWR, Austwell, TX
- Refuge Manager, Medicine Lake NWR, Medicine Lake, MT
- Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD
- State Supervisor, Lincoln, NE
- Manager, Field Stations (39), SD, ND, KS, NE



COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT
(February-May 1983)

Whooping crane migrations are monitored Spring and Fall of each year. Sighting reports are forwarded to the Endangered Species Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pierre, South Dakota, by private individuals, Audubon, other organizations, State and Federal Conservation Agencies, and Canadian Wildlife Service and their cooperators in Saskatchewan and adjacent provinces.

Cooperation throughout the whooping crane flyway continues to be excellent. The identification of color-marked birds is providing new information each migration. We can't overemphasize the importance of observers looking closely for the colored leg bands. Since 1977, thirty-seven chicks have been color-marked. Additional marking and radio tagging is anticipated in 1983.

Whooping crane departures from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, a sighting report summary, a map of degree-block sighting locations, and maps showing the migration route of two radio-tagged young birds and their parents are included with this narrative resume. Repeat sightings of the same birds at the same location during a stopover period are not included when known to be repeats. Only sightings classified as confirmed, based on whooping crane recovery plan criteria, are shown in the report. Probable and unconfirmed sightings are not shown. All U.S. reports received are on record in the Pierre Endangered Species Field Office and are available upon request.

A total of 73 whoopers arrived at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge last fall. This total included 67 adults and subadults and 6 young-of-the-year. The mortality of 2 young during the winter reduced the population to 71 birds.

A dead subadult female was found May 14, 1983, five miles south of Edam, Saskatchewan, Canada. Probable cause of death was a viral infection.

Two family groups with radioed young were successfully monitored all the way to Wood Buffalo National Park (see attached maps). The families, which departed Aransas on April 9 and 11, arrived at Wood Buffalo on April 22 and about May 3. Sightings (stopover sites) resulting from the radio-tracking project are included in this report.

Recorded confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes started April 6, 1983, in the United States and April 20, 1983, in Canada. The last confirmed sighting was on May 2, 1983. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (6); Alberta, Canada (1); Montana (1); North Dakota (5); South Dakota (2); Nebraska (3); Kansas (6); Oklahoma (1); and Texas (3). A total of 28 confirmed sightings were recorded.

Details of Spring 1983 reported color-marked whoopers are as follows:

<u>Color Combinations*</u>	<u>Observation Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1977; R-G; 599-09802 and 1978; Nil-W; 599-09812 and 1978; RWR-O; 599-09816 and 1979; BWB-G/R; 599-09828	April 12, 1983	Stafford County, Kansas. Quivira NWR.
1981; G(radio)-R/W; 629-01809	April 25, 1983	9 miles south of Gladman, Sask., Canada. 1-19-W2
1977; Nil-R; 599-09807	May 1, 1983	Sheridan County, Montana. 3 miles north of Westby. T36N, R58E, Sec. 1, NE $\frac{1}{4}$.
Two birds with blue and red bands; incomplete	April 22, 1983	Sask., Canada. NW24-12-3-W3
1982; G(radio)-W/R; 629-01812	April 9-10, 1983	Milam County, Texas. Near Thorndale.
	April 10-11, 1983	Clay County, Texas. Near Lake Byers.
	April 11-14, 1983	Sheridan County, Kansas. 12 miles north and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of Hoxie.
	April 14-15, 1983	Furnas County, Nebraska. 1 mile north of Hendley.
	April 15-18, 1983	Custer County, Nebraska. 3 miles north-northeast of Callaway.
	April 18-19, 1983	Perkins County, South Dakota. 5 miles south-southwest of Prairie City.
	April 19-20, 1983	Williams County, North Dakota. 25 miles northwest of Williston.
	April 20-21, 1983	8 miles south-southwest of Biggar, Sask., Canada.
	April 21-22, 1983	14 miles north of Ft. McMurray, Alb., Canada.

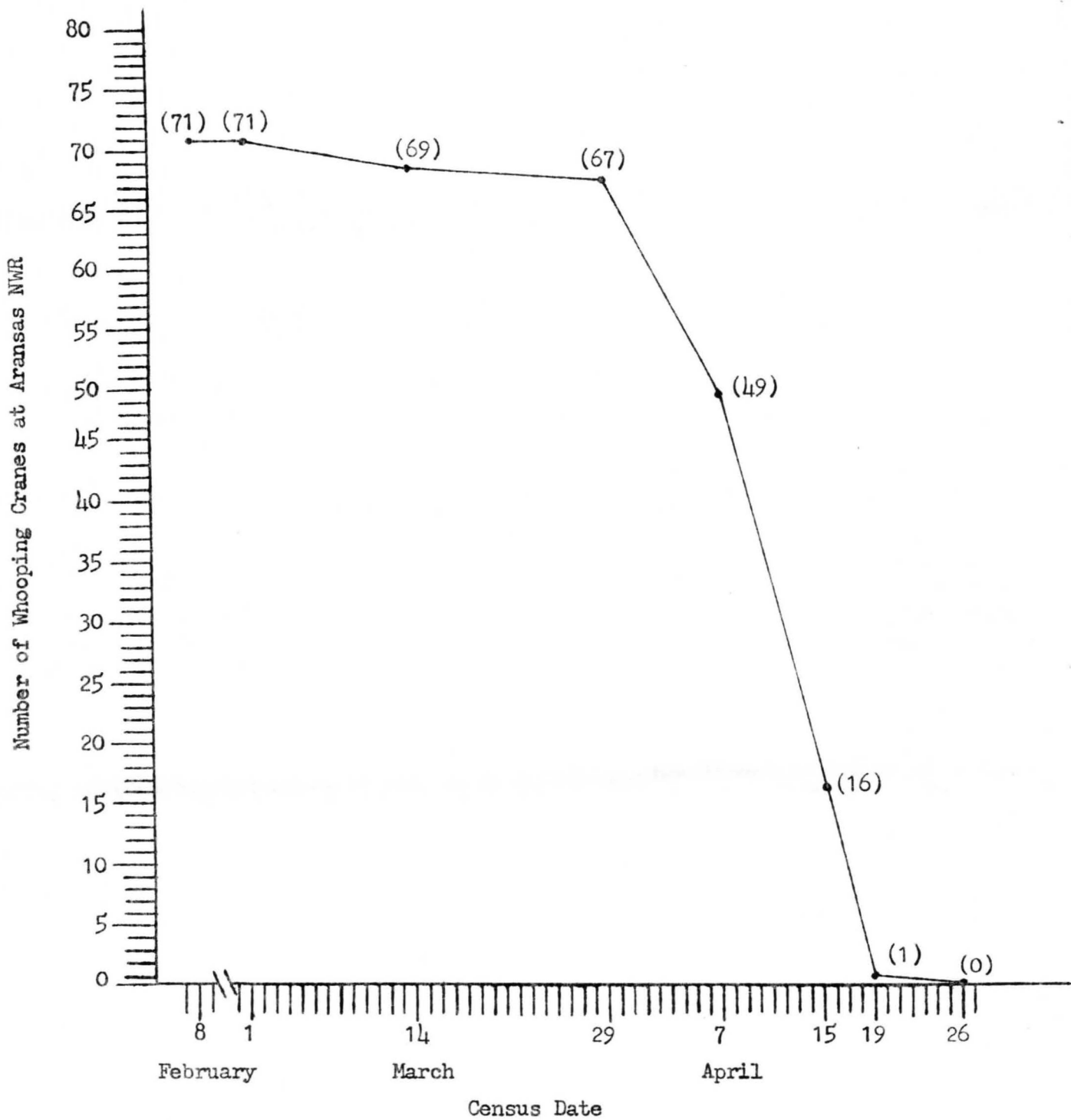
1982; W-R(radio); 629-01810 and	April 11-12, 1983	Wichita County, Texas. Near Electra.
1978; RWR-B; 599-09814	April 12-16, 1983	Barber County, Kansas. 7 miles northeast of Kiowa.
	April 16-17, 1983	Stafford County, Kansas. Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.
	April 17-18, 1983	Mitchell County, Kansas. 5 miles southeast of Beloit.
	April 18-19, 1983	Mellette County, South Dakota. 12 miles northwest of White River.
	April 19-20, 1983	Williams County, North Dakota. 8 miles northwest of Williston.
	April 20-30, 1983	5 miles northeast of Minton, Sask., Canada.
	April 30-May 1, 1983	15 miles west and 1½ miles north of Meadow Lake, Sask., Canada. 60-19-W3.

*The color of the left leg band appears first and the right leg band second.
The metal FWS band number follows the color-marking description.

Thanks, again to the many cooperators. Use-site evaluations were continued this Spring; your continued assistance is essential to the success of the evaluations. Please contact the Endangered Species Office in Pierre, South Dakota, if observation details are desired (Post Office Box 250, Zip 57501, Commercial telephone: 605/224-8692 or Federal Telecommunications Systems: 782-5226).

Addendum to Fall 1982 Tracking Report:

An additional confirmed Canadian sighting was received for the Fall of 1982. Two birds were observed September 23, 1982, near Pelican Lake, Saskatchewan. One bird was color-banded left-blue, right-red (1977; 599-09808).



Chronological Departures from Aransas NWR, Texas; Spring, 1983

SPRING 1983 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS*
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date**	TX	OK	KS	NE	SD	ND	MT	Sask., Canada	Alb., Canada
4-6		<u>C</u> <u>1</u> -0							
4-9	<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -1								
4-10	<u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>								
4-11	<u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>								
4-12			<u>C</u> <u>7</u> -0; <u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>						
4-14				<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -1					
4-15				<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0; <u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>					
4-16			<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -1			<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0			
4-17			<u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>			<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0			
4-18			<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0						
4-19						<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -1; <u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>			
4-20						<u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u> ; <u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0; <u>C</u> <u>4</u> -1			
4-21							<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -1; <u>C</u> <u>2</u> - <u>1</u>		
4-22									<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -1
4-25								<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -0	
4-30								<u>C</u> <u>1</u> -0	
5-1							<u>C</u> <u>1</u> -0		
5-2								<u>C</u> <u>1</u> -0	

TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS

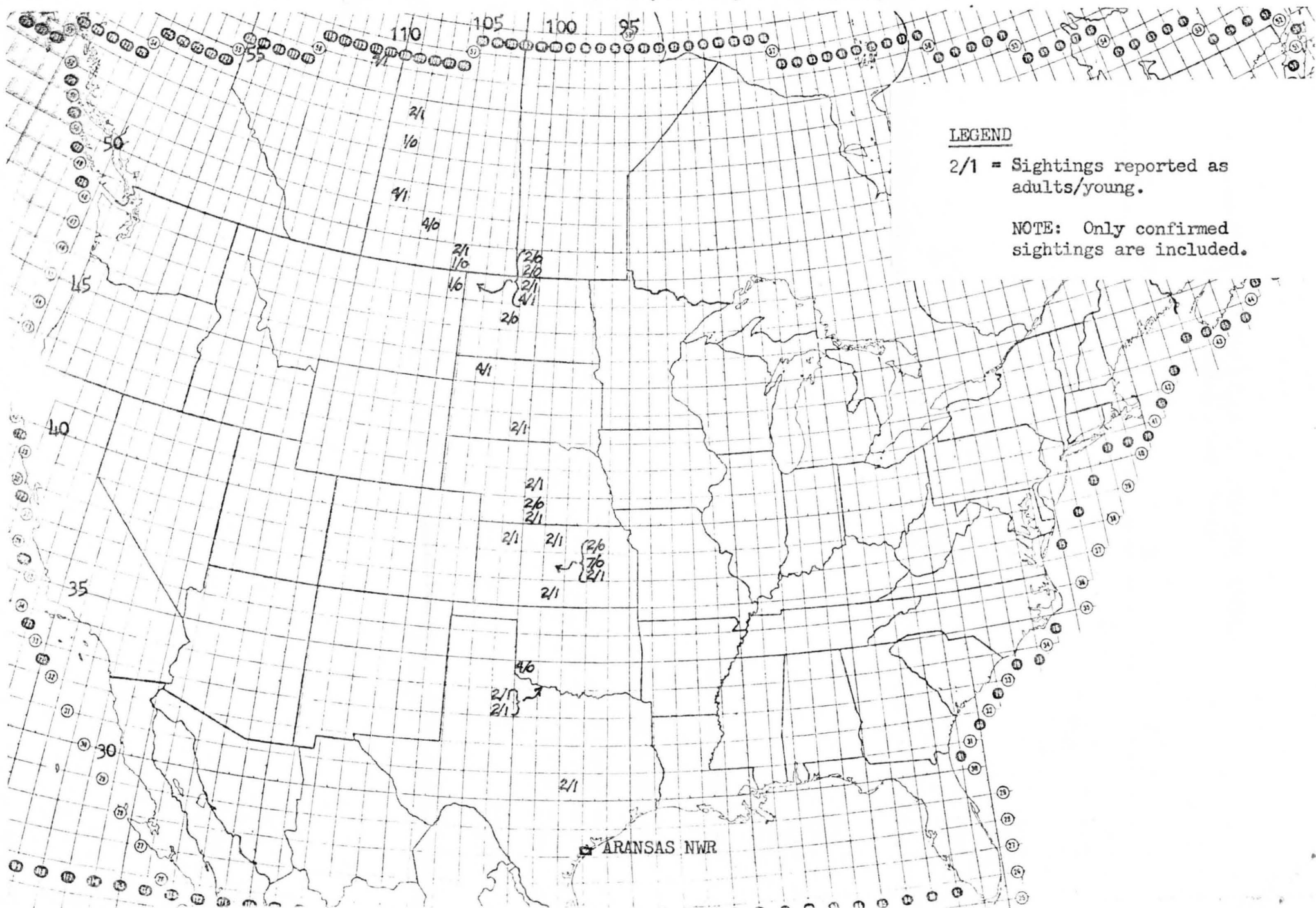
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GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 28

*Each report classified as confirmed (C) and represented by number of whooping cranes reported: adult-young, young reported color-marked are underlined once; birds color-marked during period 1977-1981 are shown as adults and underlined twice. Sightings from radio-tracking project are included.

**First date of sighting used when bird(s) at location several days.

WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT, SPRING 1983
(USFWS, Pierre, South Dakota)



Spring 1983 Migration Route of
Radio-Tagged Whooping Crane Color-Marked Green(radio)-White/Red



Spring 1983 Migration Route of
Radio-Tagged Whooping Crane Color-Marked White-Red(radio)

