

10N18 1985

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
memorandum

DATE: January 15, 1985

REPLY TO: Acting  
ATTN OF: Endangered Species Project Leader  
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 during the 1984 fall migration. Thank you for your cooperation in monitoring the migration of the whooping crane.

*Wally Jobman*

Attachment

WGJ:slk

Distribution

- Endangered Species, Salt lake City, UT
- Jim Nelson, Bismarck, ND
- Endangered Species, Helena, MT
- Regional Director, Denver, CO
- James Lewis, Whooping Crane Coordinator, Albuquerque, NM
- Law Enforcement District #2, Albuquerque, NM
- Law Enforcement District #6, 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 (35), SD, ND, KS, NE

Des Lacs Complex	Action
Routing	
Project Leader	
Asst Proj Leader	<i>[initials]</i>
Des Lacs NWR	<i>[initials]</i>
Lostwood NWR	
Lake Ilo NWR	
Crosby WMD	
Lostwood WMD	
Perk	
Pop	

COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT  
(September - December 1984)

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 25 confirmed U.S. sightings broke the previous record of 24 sightings reported in fall 1983. Special thanks go out to each participant and for the excellent cooperation in doing site evaluations.

The identification of color-marked birds is providing new information each migration. Since 1977, 60 birds have been color-marked. Details about the color-marked birds can be found in the fall 1984 migration notice. We can't overemphasize the importance of observers looking closely for the colored leg bands. In 1984, 13 young were color-marked and 5 or 6 young were not color-marked, making a total of 18 or 19 young birds. Fourteen young, including 9 color-banded and 5 unbanded, arrived at Aransas. One color-banded young bird was confirmed with sandhill cranes about 65 miles northeast of Aransas, for a total of 15 young.

All 5 surviving radioed birds arrived at Aransas. On November 15, radioed crane G-W/R (1982) was found dead on the refuge. Predation was the suspected cause of death. A 1983 radioed bird, Y(radio)-Y/R, has not been observed since November 21. As of January 7, 1985, transmitters were still functioning on one 1983 bird, one 1982 bird, and one 1981 bird (very weak signal). Radioed birds were not monitored during this migration.

Whooping crane arrivals at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, a sighting report summary, and a map of degree-block sighting locations 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.

An unbanded adult of a family group suffered a wing injury in Emmons County, North Dakota. The bird was caught on November 2 and sent to the National Zoo in Virginia. The remaining adult and chick departed the area on November 5 and arrived at Aransas on November 16.

Arrivals at Aransas occurred from October 21 through December 7. A total of 83 whoopers (69 adults/subadults and 14 young) were reported at Aransas on December 7, 1984. The young bird located northeast of Aransas brings the total young to 15. Therefore, the Aransas/Wood Buffalo population is estimated at 84. Seventy-five whoopers departed for the breeding grounds last spring. Eighteen or nineteen young were believed to be present in August. Under optimum conditions, a total of 93 or 94 whoopers were anticipated at Aransas this winter. During the fall migration, one adult was injured and caught in North Dakota and one subadult was found dead at Aransas. Four adults/subadults and 3 or 4 young of the total anticipated were unaccounted for as could be determined on January 7, 1985.

Recorded confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes started September 4 in Canada and September 15 in the United States. The last sighting report was on December 28. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (11); North Dakota (6); South Dakota (3); Nebraska (3); Kansas (7); Oklahoma (5); and Texas (1). A total of 36 confirmed sightings were recorded.

Details of Fall 1984 reported color-marked whoopers are as follows:

<u>Color Combinations*</u>	<u>Observation Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
BWB-R (unlikely, seen in ND with chick and other adult)	September 25 - October 2, 1984	Saskatchewan, Canada. SW16-42-6-W3.
1979; BWB-R; 599-09823 and 1984; W-B; 629-01823	October 19 - November 5, 1984	Emmons County, ND. 4 mi. south & 6½ west of Linton. T132N, R77W, Sec. 31, SW¼. Note: Unbanded adult injured & caught 11/2. Other adult & chick departed 11/5.
O-Nil (incomplete)	October 1, 1984	Saskatchewan, Canada. SW4-19-1-W3.
1977; Nil-R; 599-09807 (not seen at Aransas since winter 1978-79)	October 4-5, 1984  October 8-9, 1984	Saskatchewan, Canada. Axe Lake. 29-24-W2.  Saskatchewan, Canada. 2½ mi. south & 4 east of Imperial.
1983; Y-B/B; 599-09819 and 1983; R-Y(radio); 599-09822 and 1982; R/R-B; 629-01816 and 1983; BW Spiral-R; 599-09833	October 9-14, 1984  October 21-27, 1984	Saskatchewan, Canada. SE9-50-10-W3.  Mountrail County, ND. 8 mi. east & ½ south of New Town. T152N, R91W, Sec. 22.
1982; W-R(radio); 629-01810	October 8-13, 1984	Saskatchewan, Canada. Arlington Beach. 24-24-W2.
1978; RWR-Nil (current appearance Nil-FWS metal band above knee); 599-09810 and 1984; Y-BW spiral; 629-01817	October 20-26, 1983	Burke Co., ND. 3 mi. southeast of Woburn. T162N, R90W, Sec. 32.

1979; R-BWB (current  
appearance Nil-BWB);  
599-09824  
and  
1984; Y-Y;  
629-01822

October 28-29, 1984 Logan County, NE.  
14 mi. north & 5 east of Stapleton.  
T19N, R27W, Sec. 3.

1984; WBW-R;  
629-01828

October 29-31, 1984 Stafford County, KS.  
Quivira NWR.

1984: Nil-W (incomplete)

October 31, 1984 Stafford County, KS.  
Quivira NWR.

1984; WBW-Y;  
629-01826

October 24, 1984 Woodward County, OK.  
Fort Supply Lake.  
T24N, R22W, Sec. 28 & 33.

1982; G(radio)-W/R;  
629-01812

October 24-28, 1984 Custer County, OK.  
Washita NWR.

November 15, 1984 Aransas NWR - found dead.

1983; Y(radio)-Y/R;  
599-09832  
and

October 27-28, 1984 Alfalfa County, OK.  
Salt Plains NWR.

1983; B/B-Y;  
599-09818

and  
1980; R/B-R;  
629-01805

and  
1980; R-R/B;  
629-01801

1984; BW spiral-W;  
629-01818

November 3, 1984 Caddo County, OK.  
Ft. Cobb Reservoir.  
T9N, R13W.

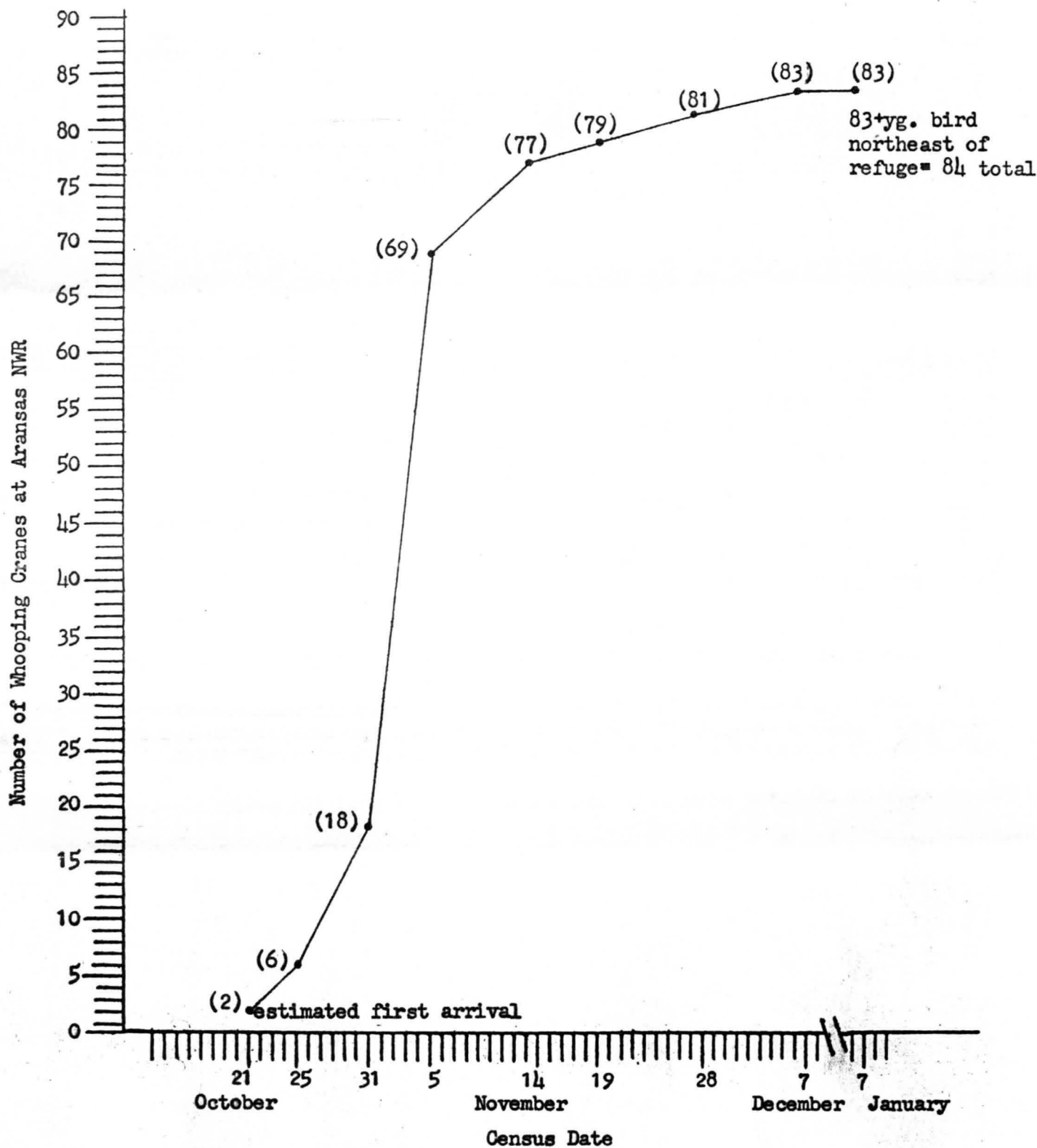
1984; B-W;  
629-01829

December 28-30,  
1984 Wharton County, TX.  
15 mi. south of El Campo.

\*Year banded; color of left leg band - color of right leg band; FWS band number.

Thanks again to the many cooperators. Use-site evaluations were continued this fall; your continued assistance is essential to the success of the evaluations. Please contact the Endangered Species Field 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 Spring 1984 Tracking Report: An additional sighting was confirmed for the spring 1984 migration. Two birds were observed April 11, 1984, in Kearney County, Nebraska.



FALL 1984 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS\*  
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date**	OK	KS	NE	SD	ND	Sask., Canada
9-4						C1-0
9-15					<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -0	
9-18					C2-0	
9-21						C3-0
9-23						C2-0
9-25						<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0
9-29					C2-0	
10-1	C3-0					<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0
10-3		C1-0				
10-4						<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0
10-6						C1-0
10-8						<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0; <u>C</u> <u>2</u> -0
10-9						<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -0
10-18				C2-0		C2-1
10-19					<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -1	
10-20					<u>C</u> <u>2</u> -1	
10-21		C2-0			<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -0	
10-24	C2-1; <u>C</u> <u>1</u> -0					
10-26		C3-0		<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -0		
10-27	<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -0					
10-28			<u>C</u> <u>4</u> -1; C2-0			
10-29		C2-1		C1-1		
10-31		C1-1; C6-0; C2-0	C2-1			
11-3	C2-1					
***						
TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS	5	7	3	3	6	11

GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 36 (includes late TX report)

\*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 1977-1983 are shown as adults and underlined twice.

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

\*\*\*Late report: 12-28, one color-marked young confirmed in TX.

**LEGEND**

2/1 = Sightings reported as adults/young.

Note: Only confirmed sightings are included.

PARANAS NWR

2/1 = Sightings reported as adults/young.

**Note:** Only confirmed sightings are included.