

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

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DATE: July 6, 1984
REPLY TO: Endangered Species Project Leader
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 during the 1984 spring migration. 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, Helena, MT
Regional Director, Denver, CO
Regional Director, 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 (37), SD, ND, KS, NE

COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT
(February-May 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 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, forty-seven chicks have been color-marked. Twenty-six color-marked birds were observed at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge during the winter of 1983-1984. Additional color-marking is anticipated in 1984.

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 2 radio-tagged yearlings and a family with radioed chick are included with this narrative resume. Sightings (stopover sites) resulting from the radio-tracking project are also included in this report. 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 75 whoopers arrived at Aransas National Wildlife Refuge last fall. This total included 68 adults and subadults and 7 young-of-the-year. No mortality was noted during the winter and 75 whoopers began the spring migration.

Two radioed yearlings (migrating together) and a family group with radioed chick were monitored during the spring migration (see attached maps). The family departed Aransas on April 6 and arrived in the North Battleford, Saskatchewan, area on April 18. On April 26, the adults left the chick and apparently headed for the breeding grounds. The lone chick was located near Blaine Lakes, Saskatchewan, east of Krydor, on April 29 when the monitoring project ended. It departed Blaine Lakes between May 9 and 11 and has subsequently been observed on the breeding grounds.

The two radioed yearlings departed Aransas on April 9, spent 22 days near North Platte, Nebraska, and were located in northwestern Alberta on May 17 when the monitoring ceased.

Many of the migrating whoopers were delayed in Kansas and Nebraska during the second week of April because of unfavorable winds and poor weather conditions. On April 15, 25 whoopers were confirmed on the

ground in Kansas and 7 in Nebraska. A group of 12 whoopers was confirmed in northwestern Kansas. Most of the birds began migrating again on April 16 and 17, moving rapidly into Canada. As a result, very few sightings were reported in the Dakotas.

Recorded confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes started April 1, 1984, in the United States and April 18, 1984, in Canada. The last confirmed sighting was on May 11, 1984. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (5); Alberta, Canada (1); North Dakota (5); South Dakota (1); Nebraska (8); Kansas (9); Oklahoma (1); and Texas (4). A total of 34 confirmed sightings were recorded. Twenty-two of these sightings were a direct result of the radio-tracking project.

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

<u>Color Combinations*</u>	<u>Observation Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1982; W-R(radio); 629-01810	April 9, 1984	Departed Aransas NWR.
and	April 9-10, 1984	Bosque County, Texas.
1982; G(radio)-W/R; 629-01812		Lake Whitney.
	April 10-11, 1984	Clay County, Texas, Red River. 9 mi. north of Ringgold.
	April 11-17, 1984	Barber County, Kansas. 3½ mi. east of Lake City.
	April 17-18, 1984	Trego County, Kansas. West end of Cedar Bluff Reservoir. T15S, R22W, Sec. 5, NW¼.
	April 18-May 9, 1984	Lincoln County, Nebraska. 8 mi. west of North Platte on Hwy 30 from Hwy 83 Jct. and 2 mi. north. T14N, R31W, Sec. 7 & 18.
	May 9-11, 1984	Hettinger County, North Dakota. 8 mi. southwest of Mott.
	May 11-12, 1984	Williams County, North Dakota. Backwaters of Lake Sakakawea near Williston Sewage lagoon, southeast of Williston.
	May 12-13, 1984	Divide County, North Dakota. 1 mi. north of Wildrose.
	May 13-14, 1984	Last Mountain Lake, Sask., Canada. 10 mi. east of Holdfast. T23, R23, Sec. 17, SW¼.
	May 14-17, 1984	Near Cowper Lake, Alberta, Canada.

1983; R-Y(radio); 599-09822	April 6, 1984	Departed Aransas NWR.
and 1980; R-R/B; 629-01801	April 6-7, 1984	Clay County, Texas. 5 mi. west-southwest of Henrietta.
and 1980; R/B-R; 629-01805	April 7-8, 1984	Clay County, Texas. 5 mi. west-northwest of Byers. Old Charlie Lake.
	April 8-9, 1984	Comanche County, Oklahoma. 5 mi. southwest of Apache.
	April 9-13, 1984	Lane County, Kansas. 6 mi. east of Dighton.
	April 13-15, 1984	Ellis County, Kansas. 8 mi. southeast of Hays.
Note: 1981; G(radio)-R/W; 629-01809 joined group from Graham County, Kansas, to Cherry County, Nebraska.	April 15-16, 1984	Graham County, Kansas. 11 mi. north-northeast of Wakeeney.
	April 16-17, 1984	Cherry County, Nebraska. 5 mi. southwest of Brownlee.
Note: R-R/B and R/B-R not observed with R-Y(radio) after April 17.	April 17-18, 1984	McKenzie County, North Dakota. 26 mi. southeast of Watford City.
	April 18-19, 1984	3 mi. southwest of Alticane, Sask., Canada.
	April 19-26, 1984	4 mi. southwest of Spruce Lake, Sask., Canada.
Note: radioed chick alone.	April 26-27, 1984	4 mi. south of Livelong, Sask., Canada.
	April 27-May 9, 1984	Blaine Lakes, 3 mi. east-southeast of Krydor. Sask., Canada.
1977; R-G; 599-09802 and 1979; BWB-G/R; 599-09828	April 11-16, 1984	Sheridan County, Kansas. 3½ mi. west and 2 mi. south of Selden. T6S, R30W, Sec. 26.
1983; Y(radio)-Y/R; 599-09832	April 12-17, 1984	Webster County, Nebraska. 4½ mi. east and 1½ mi. south of Red Cloud. T1N, R10W, Sec. 10.

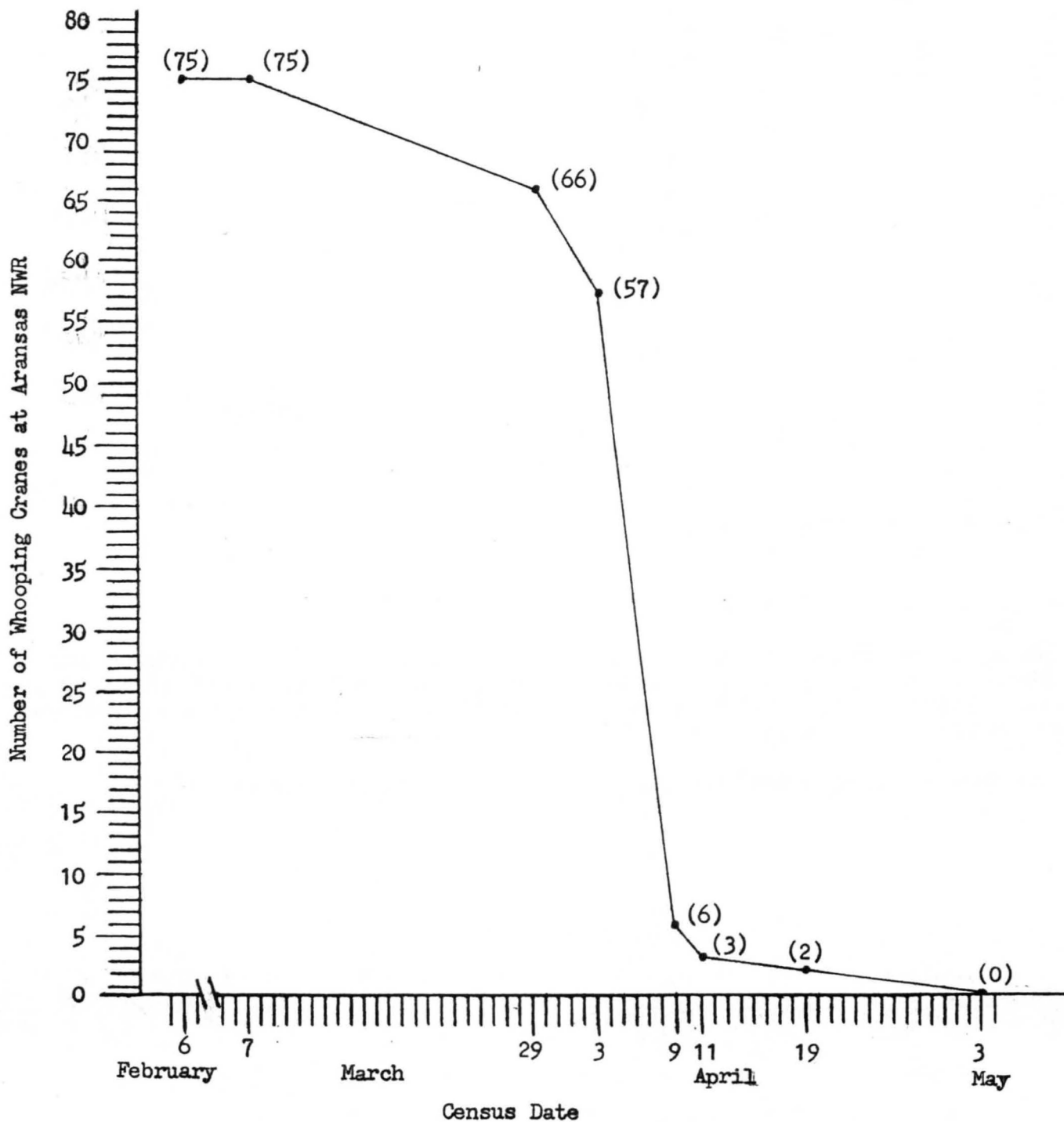
1983; Y-B/B; 599-09819 and 1977; B-R; 599-09808	April 11-16, 1984	Rawlins County, Kansas. 4½ mi. east and 8½ mi. north of McDonald. T2S, R35W, Sec. 6, NW¼.
1983; B with W spiral-R; 599-09833	April 16-17, 1984	Gosper County, Nebraska. 2 mi. west and 3 mi. north of Elwood. T8N, R23W, Sec. 26, SW¼
1982; R/R-B; 629-01816	May 4-7, 1984	Brule County, South Dakota. 14 mi. south of Kimball. T101N, R68W, Sec. 22, E½ & Sec. 23, W½.
	May 11, 1984	McLean County, North Dakota. ½ mi. east of Audubon NWR. T148N, R82W, Sec. 34, E½ and Sec. 35, W½.

*Year banded; color of left leg band appears first and right leg band second; FWS band number.

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 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 Fall 1983 Tracking Report:

An additional North Dakota sighting was confirmed. One bird was observed October 13, 1983, 5 miles west of Mercer, North Dakota.



Chronological Departures from Aransas NWR, Texas; Spring, 1984

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

Date**	TX	OK	KS	NE	SD	ND	Sask., Canada	Alb., Canada
4-1				C2-0				
4-6	<u>C1</u> -1		C2-0					
4-7	<u>C1</u> -1			C2-0				
4-8		<u>C1</u> -1						
4-9	C2-0		<u>C1</u> -1	C2-0				
4-10	<u>C2</u> -0							
4-11		<u>C1</u> 0-2; C2-0; <u>C1</u> -0; <u>C2</u> -0						
4-12				C2-1				
4-13			<u>C1</u> -1					
4-15			<u>C2</u> -1					
4-16				C2-1; <u>C2</u> -1				
4-17			C2-0	C3-0		<u>C2</u> -1		
4-18				<u>C2</u> -0			C3-1	
4-19							C3-1	
4-26							<u>C0</u> -1	
4-27							<u>C0</u> -1	
5-4					<u>C1</u> -0			
5-9						<u>C2</u> -0		
5-11						<u>C1</u> -0; <u>C2</u> -0		
5-12						<u>C2</u> -0		
5-13							C2-0	
5-14								<u>C2</u> -0

TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS

4	1	9	8	1	5	5	1
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GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 34

*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 1977-1982 are shown as adults and underlined twice. Sightings from radio-tracking project are included.

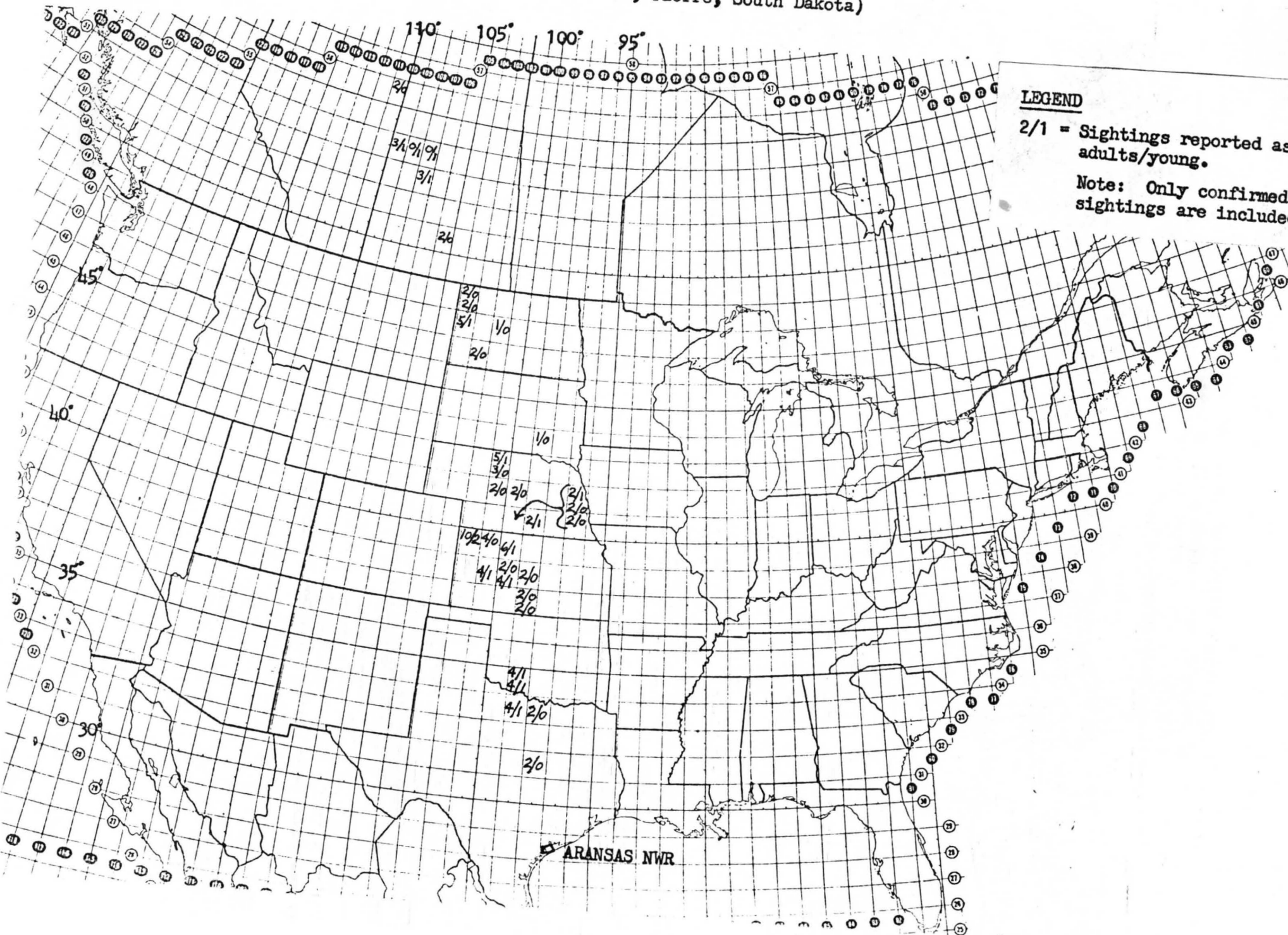
**First date of sighting used when bird(s) at location several days.

WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT, SPRING 1984
(USFWS, Pierre, South Dakota)

LEGEND

2/1 = Sightings reported as
adults/young.

Note: Only confirmed
sightings are included.



Spring 1984 Migration Route of Two Radio-Tagged Yearling Whooping Cranes Color-Marked: White-Red(radio) and Green(radio)-White/Red. (Plots based on Coordinators' telephone log, may be slight differences in final report by tracking crews).



Spring 1984 Migration Route of Whooping Crane Family
With Young Radio-Tagged and Color-Marked: Red-Yellow(radio).
(Plots based on Coordinators' telephone log, may be slight
differences in final report by tracking crews).

