

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
memorandum



DATE: June 21, 1985  
Acting  
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 1985 spring migration. Thank you for your cooperation in monitoring the migration of the whooping crane.

*Wallace Johnson*

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
- Bureau of Reclamation, Bismarck, ND
- Manager, Field Stations (35), SD, ND, KS, NE

Des Lacs Complex	Action
Project Leader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asst. Proj. Leader	
Des Lacs Refuge	
Lostwood Refuge	
Crosby District	
Lostwood District	
Refuge Asst.	
Shop	
Files	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Destroy	

COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT  
(March-May 1985)

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, sixty chicks have been color-marked. Thirty-three color-marked birds were observed at or near Aransas National Wildlife Refuge during the winter of 1984-1985. Additional color-marking is anticipated in 1985.

Whooping crane departures from 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 United States reports received are on record in the Pierre Endangered Species Field Office and are available upon request.

It is estimated that 86 cranes completed the fall migration (71 adult/subadult and 15 chicks). One 1982 radioed bird (G-W/R) was found dead on the refuge on November 15, 1984. Another radioed bird, Y-Y/R (1983), has been missing since November 21, 1984, and is presumed dead. The chick which wintered with sandhill cranes northeast of Aransas departed between March 20 and 25. A total of 84 whoopers began the spring migration.

The migration progressed rapidly into Canada with no major storms encountered in the United States. A number of birds were held up briefly in Nebraska by adverse weather and wind over the Easter weekend, allowing for a number of sightings in Nebraska.

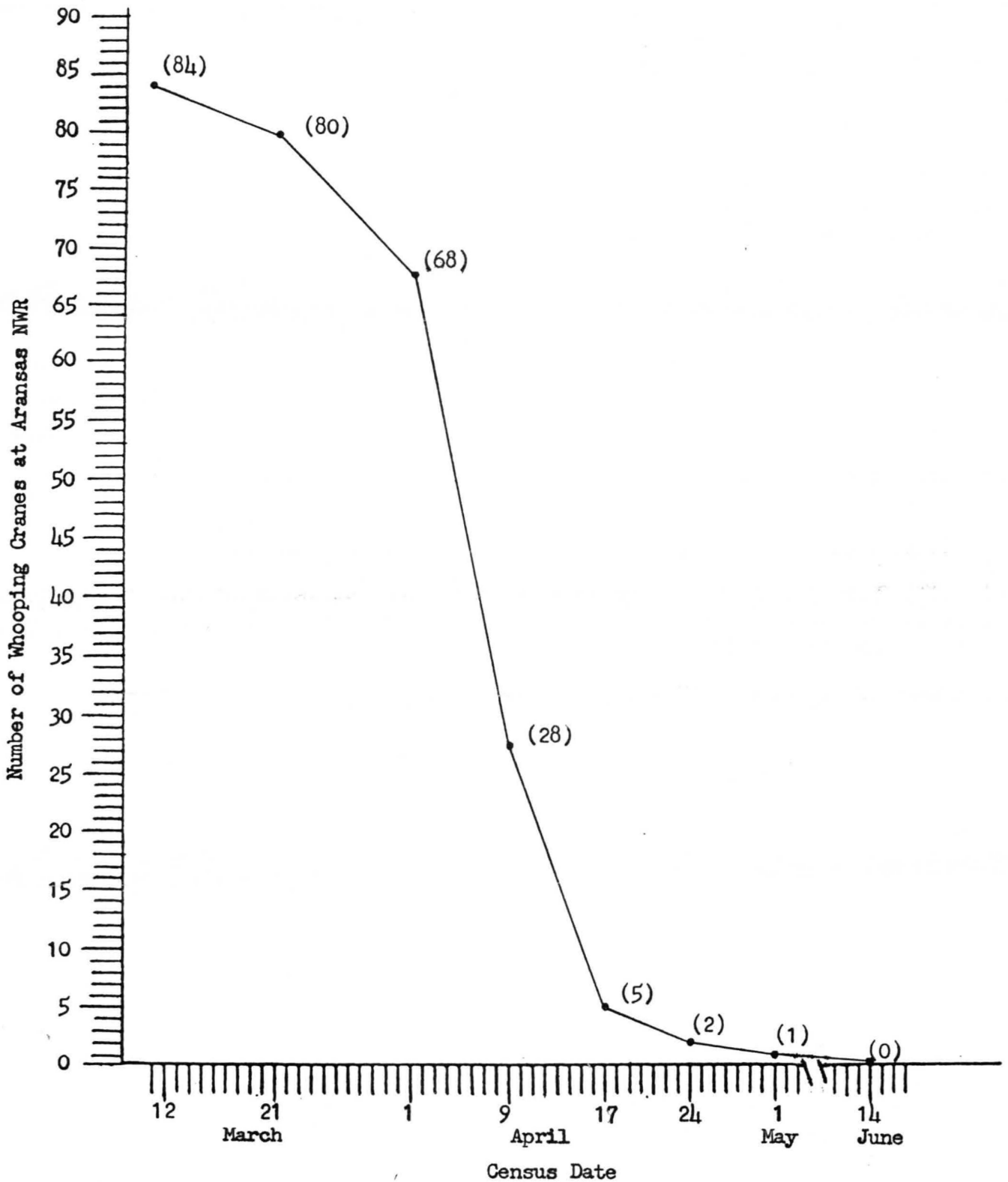
Recorded confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes started April 4, 1985, in the United States and April 22, 1985, in Canada. The last confirmed sighting was on May 4, 1985. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (7); North Dakota (2); Montana (1); Nebraska (7); Kansas (3); and Oklahoma (1). A total of 21 confirmed sightings were recorded.

Details of Spring 1985 reported color-marked whoopers are as follows:

<u>Color Combinations*</u>	<u>Observation Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1977; B-R 599-09808	April 6, 1985	Barton County, Kansas. 1½ mi. north and 2½ mi. east of Susank. T16S, R13W, Secs. 14, 15, and 16.
1983; R-Y (radio); 599-09822 and 1983; Y-B/B; 599-09819 and 1982; R/R-B; 629-01816	April 6-8, 1985  April 22-23, 1985	Stafford County, Kansas. Quivira NWR. T21S, R11W, Sec. 20.  Sheridan County, Montana. 3½ mi. north and 3½ mi. west of Dagmar. T33N, R57E, Sec. 9.
1979; BWB-R; 599-09823 and 1984; W-B; 629-01823 and 1984; Y-WBW 629-01827	April 22-23, 1985	Saskatchewan, Canada. 3 mi. east and 1¼ mi. north of Meadow Lake. SW4-60-16-W3.

\*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).



Chronological Departures from Aransas NWR, Texas; Spring, 1985  
 (Includes chick that wintered with sandhills near El Campo, TX, and started migration between March 20 and 25)

SPRING 1985 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS\*  
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date**	OK	KS	NE	ND	MT	Sask., Canada
4-4	C2-1	C3-0				
4-6		<u>C3-0</u> ; <u>C2-0</u>				
4-7			C2-0; C2-1; C5-0			
4-8			C4-0; C3-0; C2-0			
4-9			C2-0			
4-11				C1-0		
4-19				C1-0		
4-22					<u>C3-0</u>	C3-0
4-24						<u>C2-2</u> ; C3-0; C1-0
4-25						C1-0
4-29						C1-0
5-5						C3-0

TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS

1	3	7	2	1	7
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GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 21

\*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.

WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT, SPRING 1985  
 (USFWS, PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA)

