



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
2604 ST. PATRICK, SUITE 7
GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA 68803



June 24, 1987

MEMORANDUM

TO: ARD(FWE), Region 6 MAIL STOP 60153
Denver, CO

FROM: Field Supervisor
Grand Island Field Office

SUBJECT: Cooperative Whooping Crane Tracking Project

Des Lacs Complex	Action
Project Leader	
Asst. Proj. Leader	<i>Thz</i>
Des Lacs Refuge	<i>et</i>
Lostwood Refuge	
Crosby District	
Lostwood District	
Refuge Asst.	
Shop	
Files	Destroy

Attached is a resume of whooping crane sightings reported to our office during the 1987 spring migration. Thank you for your cooperation in monitoring the migration of the whooping crane.

Dennis Brechler

Attachment

WGJ:jh

cc: OES, Washington, D.C.
FWE/SE, Salt Lake City, UT (65411)
FWE/SE, Helena, MT (61130)
Jim Nelson, Bismarck, ND
James Lewis, Whooping Crane Coordinator, Albuquerque, NM
Law Enforcement District #2, Albuquerque, NM
Law Enforcement District #6, Denver, CO
Cleveland Vaughn, SRA, Omaha, NE (69460)
John Cooper, SRA, Pierre, SD (69450)
David Kraft, SRA, Bismarck, ND (69430)
Cornelis Vendel, SRA, Lenexa, KS
Director, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, MD
Rod Drewien, Soda Springs, ID
Central Flyway Representative, Golden, CO
Refuge Manager, Aransas NWR, Austwell, TX
Refuge Manager, Medicine Lake NWR, Medicine Lake, MT (61530)
Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD
Bureau of Reclamation, Bismarck, ND
Manager, Field Stations (35), SD, ND, KS, NE
AWE(ES), Region 6 MAIL STOP 60123

COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT
(March - May 1987)

Whooping crane spring and fall migrations are monitored each year. Sighting reports are forwarded to the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Grand Island, Nebraska, by private individuals, Audubon Society, other private 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. Special thanks go out to each participant.

Identification of color-marked birds is providing new information each migration. Since 1977, 94 birds have been color-marked and details about the color-marked birds can be found in the Spring 1987 migration notice. In 1986, 18 young were color-marked and 17 arrived at Aransas. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of observers looking closely for the colored leg bands.

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 summary. 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 Grand Island Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Office and are available upon request.

A total of 109 whoopers (89 adults/subadults and 20 young) were reported at Aransas on December 31, 1986. We had reported in the fall tracking report that an additional subadult had been confirmed in southwestern Oklahoma. We now believe that this bird was actually the color-banded chick, which failed to arrive at Aransas, and was subsequently confirmed at another location in southwestern Oklahoma. This chick migrated with sandhill cranes to the Platte River in central Nebraska, where it spent 34 days. One chick died at Aransas during late winter, bringing the number of Aransas/Wood Buffalo birds migrating north to 109.

A majority of the whoopers departed Aransas between April 7 and 10. The migration progressed slowly, with some prolonged stays by birds in Nebraska. Easter weekend featured strong south winds from Texas to Canada, which moved the birds quickly into Canada. During the week of May 3, twenty-four nesting pairs (each with 2 eggs) were confirmed on the breeding grounds. There are currently 29 active nests.

A record number of spring sightings (with the exception of spring 1984, which was aided by the radio-tracking project) were made in the United States. Confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes started March 17 in the United States and April 18 in Canada. The last sighting report was on May 1. Sightings were reported from Oklahoma (2); Kansas (5); Nebraska (10); South Dakota (3); North Dakota (2); Montana (1); and Saskatchewan, Canada (14).

Details of Spring 1987 reported color-marked whoopers are as follows:

Color Combinations*	Observation Date	Location
1986; WbW-O 629-01848	March 17 - April 19, 1987	Kearney Co., Nebraska. 3 mi. south of Gibbon I-80 interchange. T8N, R14W, Sec. 24
1986; R-Y 629-01855	April 9-17, 1987	Wheeler Co., Nebraska. 2 mi. east, 1 1/4 south of Hwy. 70/281 jct.
1986; O-R 629-01847 and	April 9-10, 1987	Sheridan Co., Kansas 3 mi. north, 3 west, 1/2 north of Hoxie.
1978; Nil-W 599-09812	April 22-23, 1987	Sheridan Co., Montana. 2 mi. west of Dagmar. T33N, R57E, Sec. 27.
1984; W-B 629-01823 and	April 13-16, 1987	Adams Co., Nebraska. 6 mi. south, 2 west of Doniphan. T8N, R10W, Sec. 11.
1983; B/W-R/B 599-09820	April 16, 1987	Hall Co., Nebraska. Mormon Island, south of Grand Island. T10N, R10W, Sec. 34.
1986; O-Y 629-01849 and	April 13-15, 1987	Ford Co., Kansas. 4 mi. north, 1/2 east of Windhorst.
1980; R-R/W 629-01804 and		
1977; Nil-high Silver 599-09801		

Color Combinations*	Observation Date	Location
1985; W-RWR 629-01835	April 13-14, 1987	Ford Co., Kansas. 5 mi. south, 4 east, 1 south of Kingsdown.
and		
1985; RWR-O 629-01840		
and		
1985; WbW-WbW 629-01844		
1985; W-W 629-01839	April 20-22, 1987	Sioux Co., Nebraska. 32 1/2 mi. west, 1 north of Alliance. T25N, R53W.
and		
1984; Y-Y 629-01822		
and		
1984; Y-BWsp 629-01817		
1985; Y-R 629-01832	April 20-28, 1987	Phelps Co., Nebraska. 2 1/2 mi. south, 1/2 west of Elm Creek Platte River bridge. T8N, R18W, Sec. 29.
and		
1985; W-R 629-01836		
and		
1985; B-RWR 629-01837	April 28-29, 1987	Lyman Co., South Dakota. 8 mi, south, 4 east of Presho. T104N, R76W.
and		

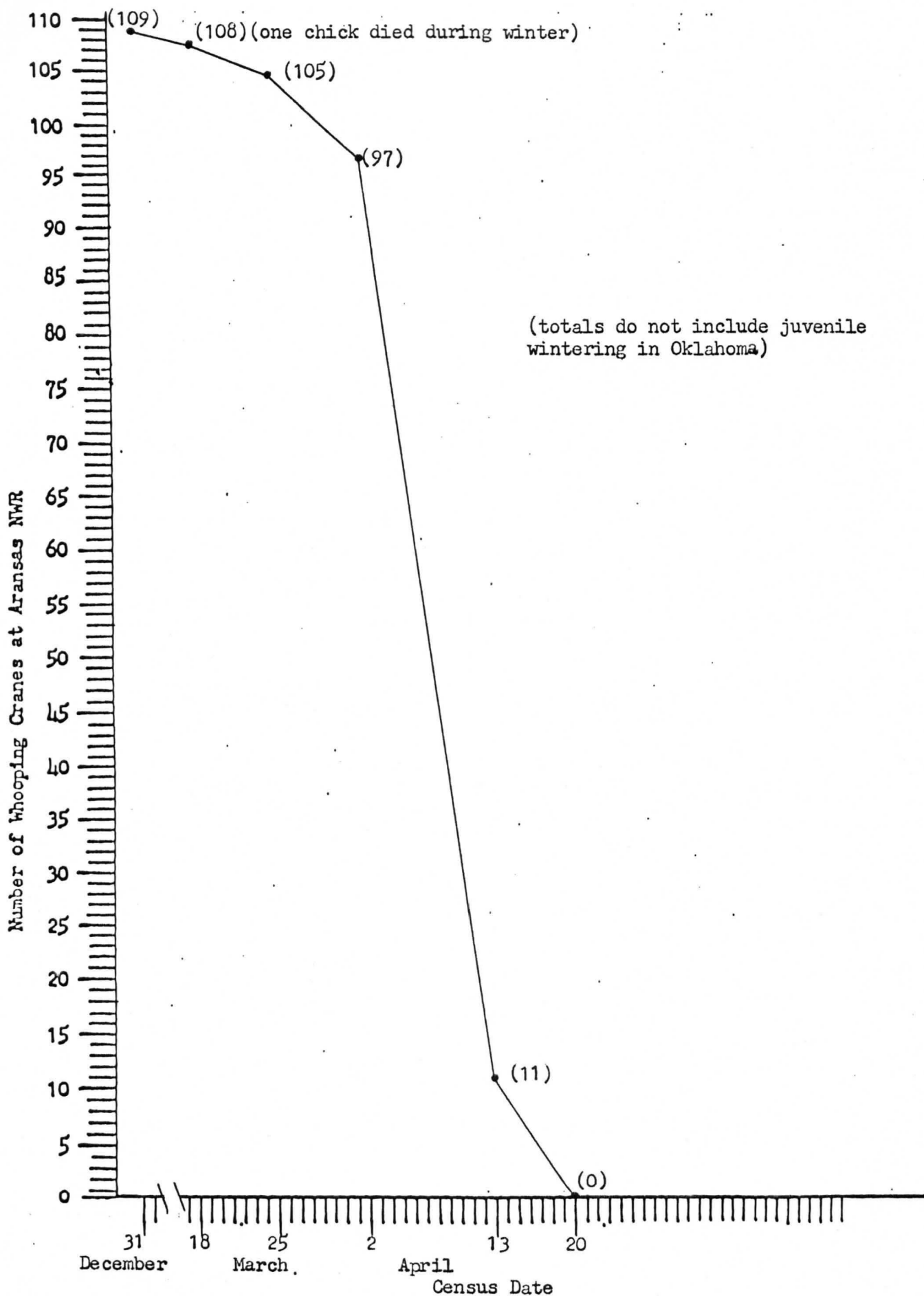
Color Combinations*	Observation Date	Location
1985; BWB-GWG 629-01842	May 1-2, 1987	Saskatchewan, Canada. 3.7 mi. west, 1.2 south of Marquis. SE9, NE9, SW15-19-28- W2.
1986; B-WbW 629-01856	April 18-20, 1987	Saskatchewan, Canada. 1.8 mi. north of Morse. SE29, SW27, NW27, SW28 NW28, SE28-17-8-W3.

Corrections to Fall 1986 Tracking Report:

- (1) Change 1986;Y-R;629-01859 to 1986;O-Y;629-01849
- (2) Change 1984;WbW-R;629-01828 to 1986;WbW-O;629-01848

*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 Mr. Wally Jobman, Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Office in Grand Island, Nebraska, if observation details are desired (2604 St. Patrick Avenue, Suite 7, Grand Island, Nebraska 68803; commercial telephone: 308/381-5571; or FTS: 541-6571).



Chronological departures from Aransas NWR, Texas; Spring, 1987. All observations after March 18 by boat or ground, certified aircraft unavailable.

SPRING 1987 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS*
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date**	OK	KS	NE	SD	ND	MT	Sask., CA
3-17			0- <u>1</u>				
4-3	2-0						
4-4	<u>4</u> -1		2-0				
4-9		<u>2</u> -1; <u>4</u> -1	2- <u>1</u>				
4-11			3-0				
4-13		<u>2</u> -1; <u>3</u> -0; 2-0	<u>2</u> -0; 2-1	2-0			
4-16			<u>2</u> -0				
4-17					4-0		
4-18					4-0		2- <u>1</u>
4-19				2-1			
4-20			<u>4</u> -0; <u>4</u> -0				<u>3</u> -0; 3-0
4-22						2- <u>1</u>	3-0; <u>3</u> -0; 2-0
4-23							3-0; 3-0; 1-0
4-25							<u>4</u> -0
4-26							10-0
4-28			<u>4</u> -0	<u>4</u> -0			
4-29							<u>2</u> -0
4-30							1-0
5-1							<u>4</u> -0
TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS							
	2	5	10	3	2	1	14

GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 37

*Each report represented by number of whooping cranes reported: adult-young, young reported color-marked are underlined once; birds color-marked during period 1977-1985 are shown as adults and underlined twice.

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

A map of Arkansas overlaid with a grid. The horizontal axis at the top is labeled 110, 105, 100, 95. The vertical axis on the left is labeled 35, 40, 45. County boundaries are shown as solid lines. Numerous small circles containing numbers are plotted across the state, representing bird sightings. Some larger numbers are placed directly on the grid intersections. A legend box in the upper right corner contains the following text:

LEGEND

2/1 = Sightings reported as adults/young.

Note: Only confirmed sightings are included.

The label "ARKANSAS NWR" is located near the southeastern border of the state.

LEGEND

2/1 = Sightings reported as adults/young.

Note: Only confirmed sightings are included.