



United States Department of the Interior

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

June 23, 1988

MEMORANDUM

TO: AWE, Region 6 MAIL STOP 60120

FROM: Field Supervisor
Nebraska-Kansas Field Office

SUBJECT: Cooperative Whooping Crane Tracking Project

Des Lacs Complex	Action
Project Leader	
Asst. Proj. Leader	
Des Lacs Ref. Leader	
Lostwood Refuge	
Crosby District	
Lostwood District	
Refuge Asst.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Attached is a resume of whooping crane sightings reported to our office during the 1988 spring migration. Thank you for your cooperation in monitoring the migration of the whooping crane.

Dennis B. Neuhler

Attachment

WGJ:jg

cc: OES, Washington, D.C.
FWE, Salt Lake City, UT
FWE, Helena, MT
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)
Refuge Manager, Salt Plains NWR, Jet, OK
Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD
Bureau of Reclamation, Bismarck, ND
Manager, Field Stations (35), SD, ND, KS, NE
FWS/FWE, Tulsa, OK

COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT

(March - May 1988)

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, the Audubon Society, other private organizations, State and Federal conservation agencies, and the 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 during each migration. Since 1977, 115 juvenile whooping cranes have been color-marked on the breeding grounds; of these, 78 were accounted for last winter. In 1987, 21 young were color-marked and 20 arrived at Aransas. One color-marked chick wintered off the refuge. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of observers looking closely for the colored leg bands.

Whooping crane departure from 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.

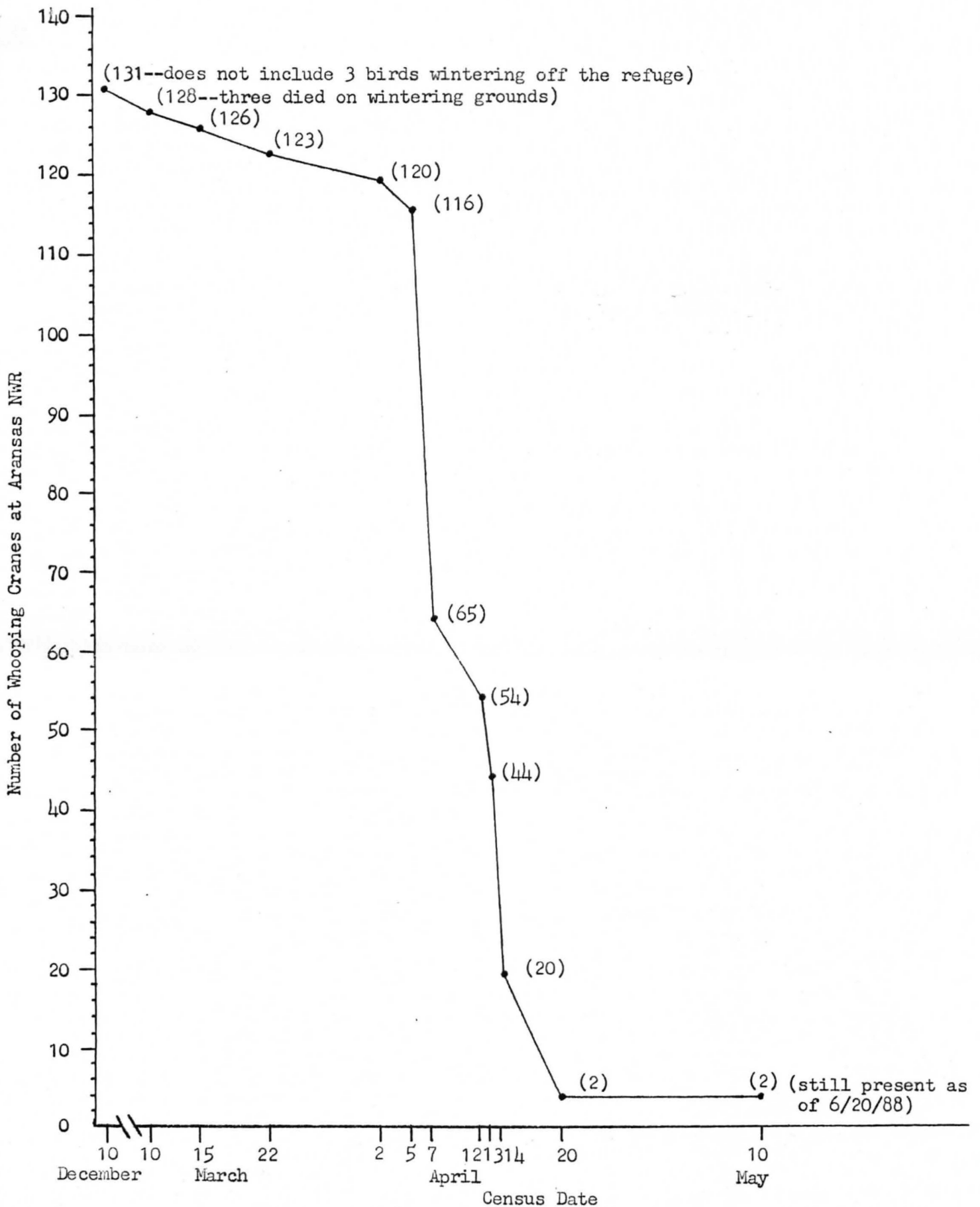
A total of 131 whoopers (107 adults/subadults and 24 young) were reported at Aransas on December 10, 1987. A 1987 chick and 1986 subadult wintered in Texas off of the refuge. A 1985 subadult left the refuge in November and was not observed until during migration. Two adults from family groups and one subadult died on the wintering grounds. A total of 131 whoopers (106 adults/subadults and 25 young) were estimated to begin the spring migration. However, at the time of this writing, two 1986 subadults were still in Aransas.

The first pair of whoopers left Aransas about March 15 and was confirmed on the Platte River in Nebraska on March 24. A majority of the birds departed Aransas between April 6 and 14. The migration progressed quickly into Saskatchewan, where many of the birds remained longer than usual. A total of 47 birds were reported in 18 confirmed sightings between April 11 and May 7 in Canada. Three chicks were left behind at Aransas by their parents and were later observed during migration with other subadults. Two other chicks became separated from their parents during migration, one in North Dakota and one in Saskatchewan. At last report, 30 nests, 28 active and 2 predated, had been located on the breeding grounds.

The first dates recorded for confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes were March 24 in the United States and April 11 in Canada. The last sighting report was on May 14. Sightings were reported from Texas (1); Oklahoma (2); Kansas (1); Nebraska (10); South Dakota (4); North Dakota

(2); Montana (2), Saskatchewan, Canada (17), and North West territories, Canada (1). The combined total of 40 sightings in Canada and the United States is the most recorded for a spring migration since the tracking project began in 1975.

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 Mr. Wally Jobman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 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).



Chronological departures from Aransas NWR, Texas; spring, 1988. All observations by boat or ground, except for March 22 and May 10 aerial surveys, certified aircraft unavailable.

SPRING 1988 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS^a
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date ^b	TX	OK	KS	NE	SD	ND	MT	Sask., CA ^c
3-14		<u>1</u> -0						
3-24				<u>2</u> -0				
3-26				<u>2</u> -0				
4-1				<u>1</u> -0				
4-4				<u>1</u> -0				
4-8	0- <u>1</u>							
4-10			4-1	3-0; <u>2</u> -0				1-0
4-11				3-0				
4-13					4- <u>2</u>			
4-14								2-1
4-15						<u>4</u> -1		3- <u>0</u>
4-17		<u>2</u> - <u>1</u>						
4-18				2- <u>1</u> ;6-0				
4-19					<u>2</u> -0			3-0;2-0
4-20								2-0
4-21					<u>4</u> - <u>1</u>		2- <u>1</u>	<u>3</u> - <u>1</u> ;2- <u>1</u>
4-22								<u>5</u> - <u>0</u> ;2- <u>0</u> ;3- <u>0</u>
4-23							<u>2</u> - <u>1</u>	<u>2</u> - <u>0</u>
4-24						<u>4</u> - <u>1</u>		2- <u>1</u> ;1-0
4-27								<u>4</u> - <u>1</u>
4-28					<u>1</u> - <u>2</u>			1-0
5-1								0- <u>1</u>
5-2								<u>1</u> - <u>2</u>
5-7								
5-14				0- <u>1</u>				

TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS

1 2 1 10 4 2 2 18

GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 40

a--Each report represented by number of whooping cranes reported: adult-young, young reported color-marked are underlined once; birds color-marked during period 1977-1986 are shown as adults and underlined twice.

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

c--Report on 5-2 was in North West Territories, Canada.

WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT, SPRING 1988
 (USFWS, Grand Island, Nebraska)

