



United States Department of the Interior

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

June 24, 1986

MEMORANDUM

To: Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

From: Field Supervisor
Grand Island Office Complex, Nebraska

Subject: Cooperative Whooping Crane Tracking Project

	Action
Des Lacs Complex	
Project Leader	
Asst. Proj. Leader	
Des Lacs Refuge	
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 1986 spring migration. Thank you for your cooperation in monitoring the migration of the whooping crane.

Debra Bullock

Attachment

WGJ:jh

Distribution

ARD/SE(FA), Region 6 MAIL STOP 60150
FWS/SE, Salt Lake City, UT (65411)
FWS/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
ARD/HR, Region 6 MAIL STOP 60120
FWS/ES, Manhattan, KS (64411)
Jim McCollum, Quivira NWR, KS (64620)
Ed Pembleton, Natl. Audubon Society, Manhattan, KS



COOPERATIVE WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT
(March - April 1986)

Whooping crane spring and fall migrations are monitored each year. Sighting reports are forwarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Grand Island Field Office Complex, 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 and for the excellent site evaluations.

Identification of color-marked birds is providing new information each migration. Since 1977, 76 birds have been color marked and details about the color-marked birds can be found in the spring 1986 migration notice. According to Aransas National Wildlife Refuge surveys, 44 of the 96 wintering cranes were banded. Additional color-marking is anticipated in 1986.

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 Grand Island Field Office Complex and are available upon request.

An estimated 97 cranes completed the fall migration (81 adult/sub-adult and 16 chicks). One 1984 subadult, BWSP-Y, was last seen at Aransas in November 1985 and is assumed to be dead. An unbanded single is estimated to have arrived about the middle of January. Two additional cranes (B-W 1984 and BWSP-BWSP 1984) were located, from December 25, 1985 to March 31, 1986, near Jones Cr., Texas. This is about 50 miles southeast of El Campo, Texas, where B-W (1984) wintered as a chick. A total of 96 whoopers began the spring migration.

On March 4, in Woods County, Oklahoma, 4 whoopers were seen flying with sandhill cranes. The sighting was made by an experienced observer and, although personnel at Aransas are confident that the first whoopers did not leave the refuge until at least March 22, we do consider the sighting as confirmed.

The Grays Lake whooper that stopped near Hudson, Colorado, last fall was observed in the same area this spring (April 15-29, 1986).

Departures from Aransas began about one week earlier than normal. About three-fourths of the confirmed U.S. sightings were reported during the period April 1-7. The April 2 North Dakota sighting was the earliest recorded confirmed sighting for the State. Probably as a result of the early migration, an above average number of sightings were reported in Saskatchewan. A severe spring snowstorm with near blizzard conditions struck the Dakotas and southern Saskatchewan April 12-14, resulting in the loss of a number of shorebirds in central South Dakota.

Recorded confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes started March 4, 1986, in the United States and April 10, 1986, in Canada. The last confirmed sighting was on April 25, 1986. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (14); North Dakota (1); Nebraska (5); Kansas (1); Oklahoma (1); and Texas (1). A total of 23 confirmed sightings were recorded.

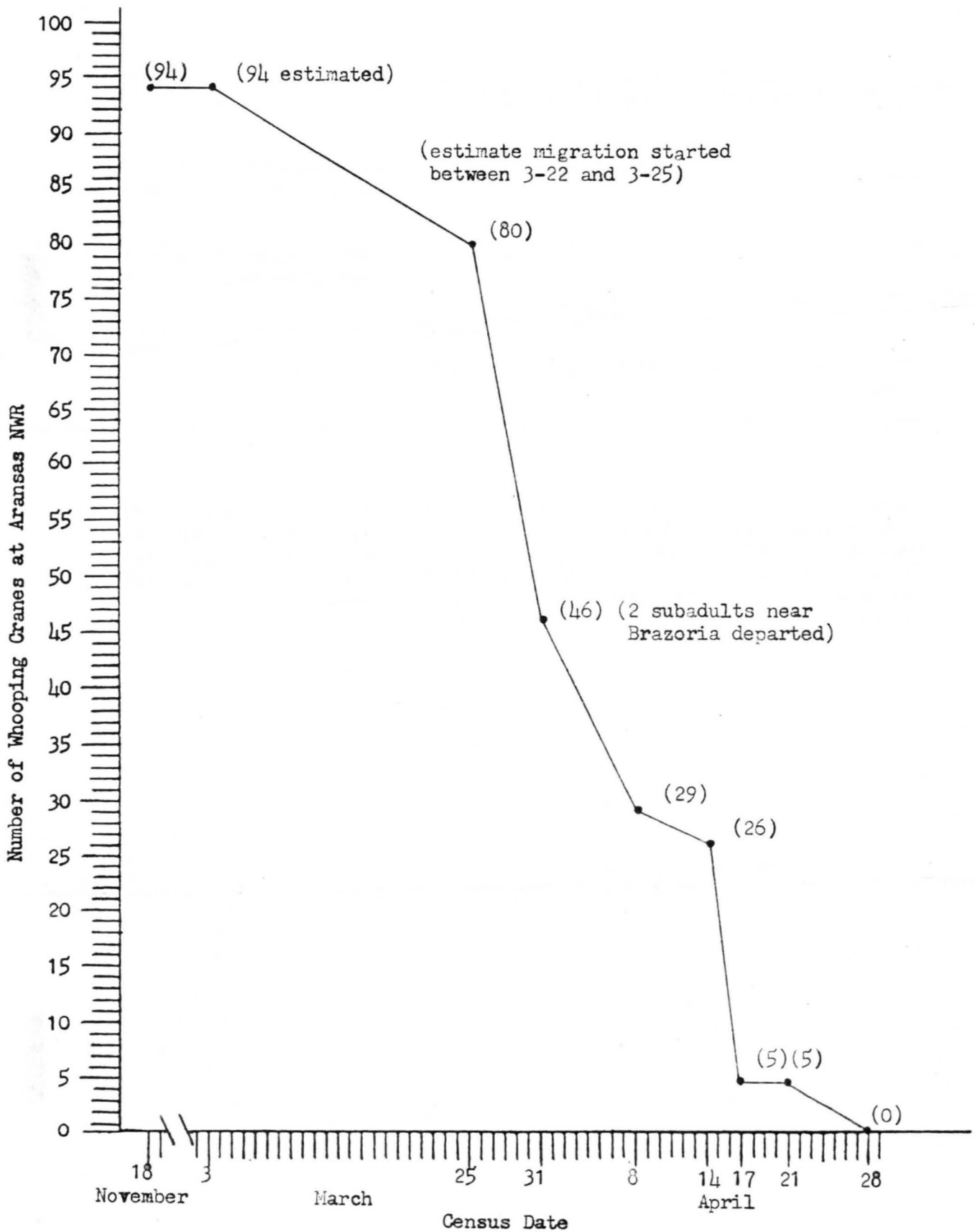
Details of spring 1986 reported color-marked whoopers are as follows:

Color Combinations*	Observation Date	Location
1984; BWSP-BWSP 629-01820 and 1984; B-W 629-01829	December 25, 1985- March 31, 1986	Brazoria Co., Texas 4 mi. south of Jones Cr.
1985; G-Y 629-01830 and 1978; RWR-B 599-09814	April 2-3, 1986 April 3-6, 1986	Furnas County, Nebraska. 2 mi. west and 2 mi. north of Hwy 14/136 intersection. T4N, R21W, Sec. 26, NW 1/4. Lincoln County, Nebraska. 1/2 mi. south and 1/2 mi. west of Maxwell. T13N, R28W, Sec. 29, NE 1/4.
1985; BYB-BYB 629-01834	April 5, 1986 April 11-17, 1986	Custer Co., Nebraska, 4 mi. northwest of Callaway. T16N, R23W, Sec. 20, SE 1/4 and Sec. 33, SE 1/4 Saskatchewan, Canada. 4 mi. east and 2 south of Ardath. 30-9-W3, 30-8-W3.
1983; R-Y (radio) 599-09822 and 1982; W-R (radio) 629-01810	April 7-9, 1986	Blaine Co., Nebraska, 6 mi. north and 3 mi. west of Milburn. T21N, R22W, Sec. 12.

Color Combinations*	Observation Date	Location
1985; W-RWR 629-01835	April 13-17, 1986	Saskatchewan, Canada. 10 mi. north of Colonsay. 36-20-W2.
1984; Y-WBW 629-01827	April 12, 1986	Saskatchewan, Canada. 6 mi. west of Govan. 27-22-W2.

*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 spring; your continued assistance is essential to the success of the evaluations. Please contact the Grand Island Field Office Complex (2604 St. Patrick Avenue, Suite 7, Grand Island, Nebraska, 68803; commercial telephone: 308/381-5571 or FTS: 541-6571) if observation details are desired.



Chronological Departures from Aransas NWR, Texas; Spring, 1986
(does not include 2 subadults wintering near Brazoria, TX)

SPRING 1986 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS*
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date**	TX	OK	KS	NE	ND	Sask., Canada
3-4		4-0				
4-1			2-1			
4-2				<u>2-1</u>	6-0	
4-3				<u>2-1</u>		
4-5				<u>2-1</u>		
4-7				<u>2-0</u>		
4-9	7-0					
4-10						3-0
4-11						2- <u>1</u> ; 2-1
4-12						<u>1-0</u>
4-13						4- <u>1</u> ; 2-0
4-16						4-0
4-20						2-0; 2-0; 2-0
4-21				5-0		2-1; 2-0
4-22						1-0
4-25						4-0
TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS						
	1	1	1	5	1	14

GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS = 23

*Each report represented by number of whooping cranes reported: adult-young, young reported color-marked are underlined once; birds color-marked during period 1977-1984 are shown as adults and underlined twice.

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

WHOOING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT, SPRING 1986
(USFWS, Grand Island, Nebraska)

