



United States Department of the Interior

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

JAN 27 1988

DES LACS HQ

MEMORANDUM

January 22, 1988

Des Lacs Complex		
Protective Order		
Des Lacs Refuge		
Leshwood Refuge		
Lansby District		
Leshwood District		
Refuge Asst.		
Shop		
Files		
	Destroy	

TO: AWF, Region 6 MAIL STOP 60120
Denver, CO

FROM: Nebraska State Supervisor
Grand Island, Nebraska

SUBJECT: Cooperative Whooping Crane Tracking Project

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

Attachment

WGJ:jh

- 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

(September - December 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, 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.

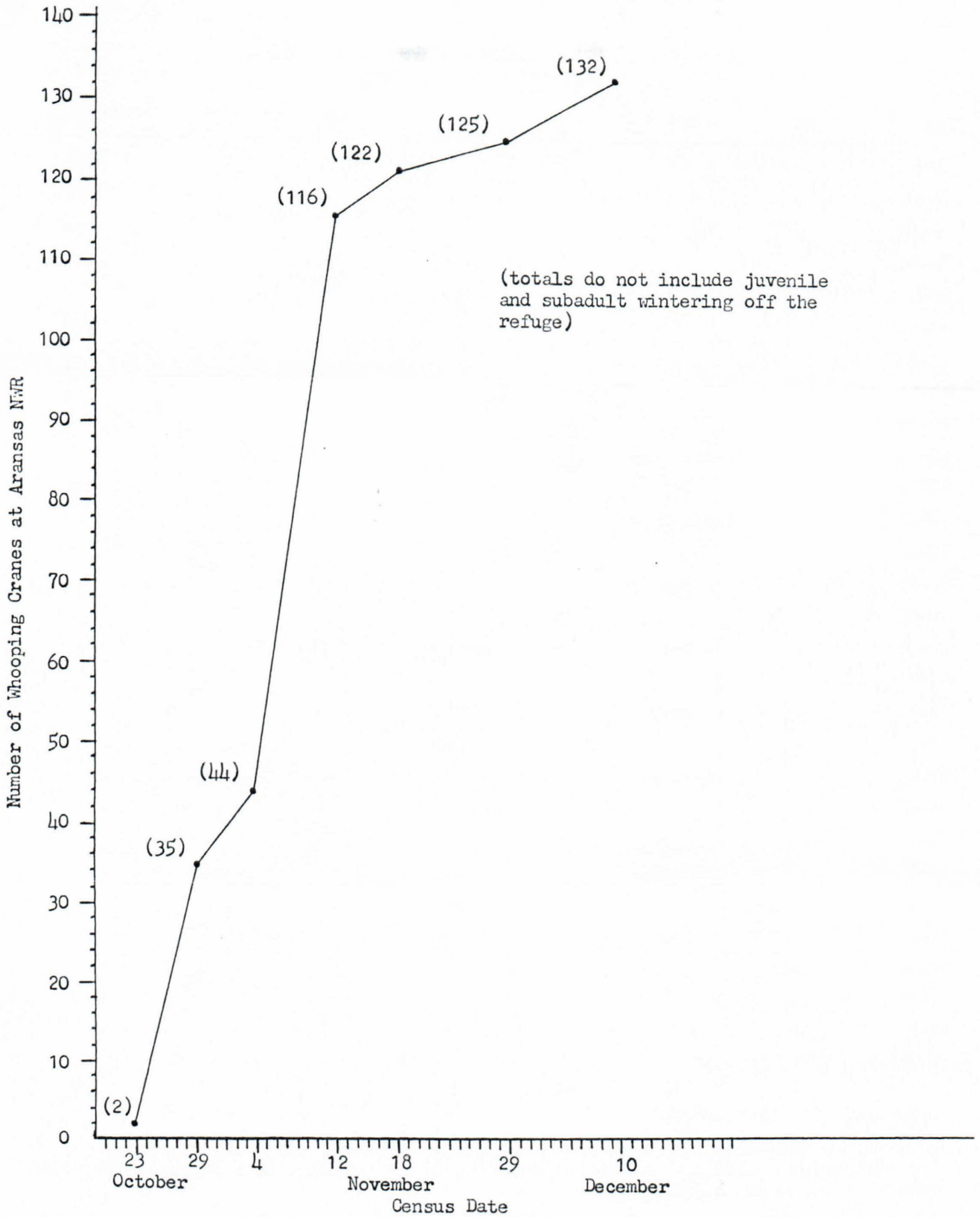
Identification of color-marked birds is providing new information during each migration. Since 1977, 115 juvenile whooping cranes have been color-marked on the breeding grounds; of these, 77 have been accounted for this winter. In 1987, 21 young were color-marked and 20 arrived at Aransas. One color-marked chick is wintering off the refuge. 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.

Arrivals at Aransas occurred from October 23 through December 10. A total of 132 whoopers (108 adults/subadults and 24 young) were reported at Aransas on December 10, 1987. Since their arrival at Aransas, two adult birds from family groups have disappeared, and are presumed dead. The number of birds at Aransas, as of January 1, 1988, was estimated to be 130. An additional chick is wintering alone, near Amarillo, Texas, and a subadult is wintering north of Aransas with sandhill cranes. This subadult is the 1986 chick which spent last winter with sandhill cranes in Oklahoma. These cranes bring the number of Aransas/Wood Buffalo birds surviving to 132. One-hundred nine whoopers departed for the breeding grounds last spring and 25 young fledged during the summer. Under optimum conditions, a total of 134 whoopers were anticipated at Aransas this fall. There was apparently no oversummer whooper mortality, a circumstance which has not occurred since 1976.

The first dates recorded for confirmed observations of migrant whooping cranes were September 6 in Canada and October 4 in the United States. The last sighting report of migrant whoopers was on December 4. Sightings were reported from Saskatchewan, Canada (9); North Dakota (2); South Dakota (2); Nebraska (8); Kansas (11); Oklahoma (15); and Texas (2). A total of 49 confirmed sightings were recorded. A record number (40) of confirmed sightings were reported in the United States.

The initial front of migrating whoopers arrived in Kansas on October 20 and 21. Twenty birds were observed at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge, Kansas, on October 21, and at least 14 additional birds were confirmed in the Great Bend, Kansas, area on October 22 and 23. Many of the Kansas birds moved on to Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, Oklahoma, where 11 whoopers were observed on or near the refuge on October 23. The major influx of birds at Aransas began October 27 and approximately 80 percent of the Aransas arrivals occurred between October 27 and November 12. The last family did not arrive at Aransas until about December 10, setting late date fall migration records in both Nebraska and Kansas enroute.



Chronological arrivals at Aransas NWR, Texas; Fall 1987

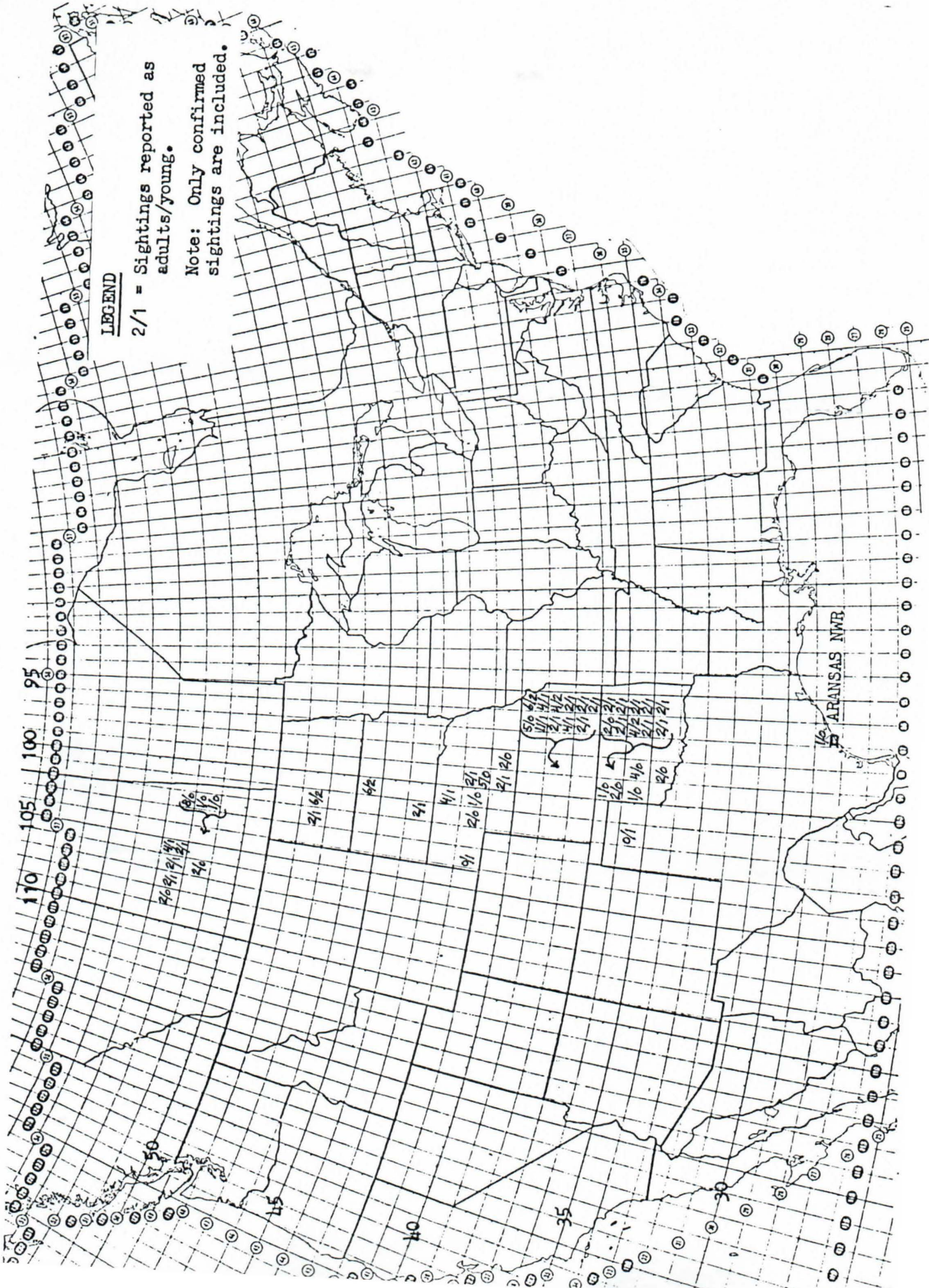
FALL 1987 WHOOPING CRANE TRACKING PLOT REPORTS*
(Confirmed Sightings Only)

Date**	TX	OK	KS	NE	SD	ND	Sask., CA
9-6							8-0
9-12							<u>2-1</u>
9-18							1-0
9-26							2-0
10-4				<u>2-0</u>			
10-18							<u>1-0</u>
10-20							<u>2-1</u>
10-21			<u>11-1</u> ; <u>2-1</u> ; <u>4-1</u>	<u>2-0</u>			<u>4-1</u>
10-22			<u>5-1</u>				<u>2-1</u>
10-23		2-0; <u>2-1</u> ; <u>4-2</u>	<u>6-2</u>				
10-24		2-1	<u>4-1</u>				<u>2-0</u>
10-26		1-0; <u>4-0</u> ; 2-1					
10-28			4-2			<u>6-2</u>	
10-29		<u>2-1</u>					
10-30			<u>2-1</u> ; <u>2-1</u>				
10-31		2-1	2-1	4-1; <u>2-1</u>	2-1		
11-1						<u>2-1</u>	
11-2		2-1					
11-3				5-0			
11-4		4-1; 2-0					
11-5					<u>6-2</u>		
11-6		2-0; <u>2-1</u>					
11-7				1-0			
11-8				0-1			
11-9		1-0		<u>2-1</u>			
11-10	0-1						
11-30	1-0						
12-4			<u>2-1</u>				
TOTAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS							
	2	15	11	8	2	2	9
GRAND TOTAL OBSERVATIONS=49							

*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.

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

WHOOPIING CRANE TRACKING PROJECT, FALL 1987
 (USFWS, Grand Island, Nebraska)



LEGEND

2/1 = Sightings reported as adults/young.

Note: Only confirmed sightings are included.