

Grus Americana

Whooping Crane Conservation Association

Volume 57, Number 2

Whooping Cranes Getting their Day in Court



Whooping Crane L8-11 (left) and mate L7-11 on nest with newly hatched LW1-17 in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana, April 2017. Male L8-11 was fatally shot by Gilvin P. Aucoin Jr. in July 2018. Photo: Eva Szyszkoski/LDWF

Historically, shootings were a major cause for the decline of the Whooping Crane. Museum collecting, the millinery trade, and other factors drove the market for shootings. Those economic drivers no longer exist, but unfortunately, shootings still occur. Since 1967, when the Whooping Crane was designated as a federally endangered species, there have been 33 confirmed shooting incidents taking 43 individual Whooping Cranes. The majority (73%) of these confirmed shooting incidents have taken place in the reintroduced populations.

There are a few theories for why we might be seeing this, as follows.

- 1) Birds in the reintroduced populations are marked and monitored at a much higher level than the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population, making our ability to detect shooting incidents higher in the reintroduced populations.
- 2) Whooping Cranes in the reintroduced populations are unfamiliar to local people, who likely did not grow up with the presence of Whooping Cranes. There is no sense of local pride in having Whooping Cranes, nor is there awareness about the consequences for shooting a Whooping Crane.

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1966-2020

50+ Years of Whooping Crane Conservation

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Thank you Jim Lewis, welcome Jane Chandler !

WCCA Treasurer **Jim Lewis** has decided to step down from his role with the WCCA. His career working with cranes spans 50 years. After starting with crane activities at the Oklahoma Coop Unit in 1969, including editing and publishing crane conference proceedings, his many years as Whooping Crane Coordinator with US Fish and Wildlife Service, and serving as a Trustee for the WCCA, Jim has served as WCCA Treasurer since ~2003.

Jim — the WCCA and crane community are indebted to you. Your service helping cranes is remarkable, and I wish to express our gratitude for all that you have accomplished.

Meet **Jane Chandler**, the new Treasurer of WCCA. Jane has 26 years of experience working with captive cranes at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, most of them as the flock manager. She retired in 2014 and now lives in South Carolina. Jane is an avid birder and naturalist (butterflies and other insects, plants; you find it and Jane will try to identify it). She is also an accomplished artist, specializing in the painting and decoration of beautiful gourds. Jane has been a member of WCCA for over 30 years, and we are absolutely thrilled that she has volunteered to accept the position of Treasurer.

Tom Stehn, WCCA President



Become a WCCA Trustee

The WCCA is run almost entirely by volunteers, and the devotion put into this effort is much appreciated. For anyone wanting to help and become a Trustee on the Board for a 5-year term, please indicate your possible interest to current President Tom Stehn at tstehn@cableone.net. Participation mostly involves occasional email correspondence with other Board members. We can always use the help. — Tom Stehn, WCCA President

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Editor: Daryl Henderson

Address: Whooping Crane Conservation Association, 2950 7th Ave, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 2J4, Canada

Telephone: 778-871-6229

Email: nysquirrel1@gmail.com

Web Site: <http://whoopingcrane.com/>

President: Tom Stehn

Secretary: Tom Leiden

Treasurer: Jane Chandler

Webmaster: Ian Walters

Board of Trustees: Brian Johns, Lorne Scott, Tom Stehn, Walter Sturgeon

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The views expressed in *Grus Americana* are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the positions of the WCCA.

WCCA Membership for 2020

Joining the WCCA is easy and your membership directly benefits North America's tallest bird. With your membership, you will also receive the WCCA newsletter, and we provide you with up-to-date comprehensive news and other items of interest about Whooping Cranes by way of our web site (www.whoopingcrane.com).

Membership Levels, USA and Canada

Annual — \$20.00

Sustaining — \$50.00

Lifetime — \$300.00

Payment can be made online by credit card (via PayPal) through our web site (www.whoopingcrane.com); you do not need a PayPal account to pay by credit card.

For payment of Canadian dues, please send your cheque (payable to *Whooping Crane Conservation Association*) to:

Whooping Crane Conservation Association, Box 995, Indian Head, Saskatchewan, S0G 2K0

For payment of US dues, please send your check to: Whooping Crane Conservation Association, 125 Millwood Ln, North Augusta, SC, 29860

- 3) Whooping Cranes in the reintroduced populations are living in areas that are more highly populated by humans, and are therefore more likely to encounter people.

Regardless of whether these theories hold true, shootings are a preventable source of mortality. Every individual crane that is taken from the population represents a huge loss, since Whooping Cranes are a long-lived species with a low reproductive rate.

The population that has had the largest impact from shootings is the Louisiana non-migratory population; 24% of known mortality in the Louisiana non-migratory population is attributed to shootings, the highest percentage of any of the reintroduced or wild populations. The population has had 10 confirmed shooting incidents taking 14 individual cranes, the highest number of any population. This is particularly alarming since Whooping Cranes have only been present in Louisiana during this study period since 2011. Whooping Cranes stay in Louisiana all year round and have wandered far from their original release area, now being spotted in every parish in the state as well as in east Texas, which might account for some portion of the higher number of shootings. However, experts working on this population agree that the mortality from shootings is unacceptably high and needs to be addressed or this reintroduction will not succeed.

There is a very common misconception that these criminal acts have been conducted by hunters; only 21% of cases have been associated with a hunting season, and in all of the cases that were associated with a hunting season, the perpetrator was found to be in violation of an existing hunting regulation, meaning that he was poaching, even if he had shot a legal game species. None of the cases in Louisiana have been in association with a hunting season.

In half (5/10) of the Whooping Crane shooting incidents in the Louisiana non-migratory population, authorities were able to identify a perpetrator. This is lower than the national average of 60%. Sentencing results for all cases are outlined in the table on page 4, with Louisiana non-migratory population cases highlighted. One case is still pending prosecution.

The International Crane Foundation has increased our courtroom advocacy efforts for the past few years. This includes encouraging Whooping Crane supporters to attend court hearings, working with community leaders and conservation organizations to write letters to the court, educating members of the court system, and working with the media to raise awareness about the results of these court cases.

The results of our efforts have been mixed. In Texas in 2016, Trey Joseph Fredericks was given a \$25,850 fine, along with five years' probation and 200 hours of community service for the crime of shooting two Whooping Cranes from the Louisiana non-migratory population. In that case we felt that justice had been served. More recently, Gilvin P. Aucoin, Jr. was given two years' probation and 120 hours community service as punishment for shooting a Whooping Crane in Louisiana. He was not administered any fine.



A group of crane supporters gathered at the Western District Court of Louisiana in Lafayette in September 2019 for the arraignment hearing of Gilvin P. Aucoin, Jr. Representatives from the International Crane Foundation, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, National Audubon Society, Audubon Louisiana, Louisiana Ornithological Society, Orleans Audubon Society, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Baton Rouge Audubon Society, Lafayette Paddle Club, and Louisiana Wildlife Federation have all come to court to show their support for Whooping Cranes.

Sentencing from sixteen Whooping Crane shooting cases that resulted in successful prosecutions from 1967-2016 in the wild populations: the Aransas-Wood Buffalo Population (AWBP), the Florida and Louisiana Non-Migratory Populations (FNMP and LNMP), and the Eastern Migratory Population (EMP). The *Law* column indicates which law was used for prosecution in each case: Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Endangered Species Act (ESA), state law, or unknown. Cases involving LNMP birds are highlighted in gray.

Law	State	Date	Hunter related	Fine	Jail time	Probation	Community service	Hunting privileges revoked
ESA	TX	Jan 2016	No	\$25,850	No	5 years	200 hours	5 years
ESA & MBTA	SD	Apr 2012	No	\$85,000	30 days	2 years	Yes, hours unknown	2 years
MBTA	TX	Nov 2003	Yes	\$2,000	6 months	No	None	Indefinitely
MBTA	AL	Jan 2011	No	\$425	No	No	None	No
MBTA	TX	Jan 2012	Yes	Unknown	No	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
MBTA	IN	Jan 2012	No	\$5,000	No	3 years	120 hours	3 years
MBTA	TX	Jan 2013	Yes	\$5,000	No	1 year	\$10,000 community service payment to Friends of Aransas and Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuges	No
MBTA	WI	Jul 2013	No	\$2,000	No	Unknown	None	2 years
MBTA	LA	Nov 2014	No	\$500	45 days	No	None	No
MBTA	LA	Jul 2018	No	\$0	No	2 years	120 hours	2 years
State	FL	Nov 2000	No	\$0	75 days	2.5 years	200 hours	Unknown
State	IN	Nov 2009	No	\$1 + \$504.50 in court fees	No	Unknown	None	Unknown
State	LA	Oct 2011	No	\$0	No	None	Unknown number of hours at White Lake Conservation Area	No
Unknown	KS	Nov 2004	Yes	\$3,000	No	2 years	50 hours	2 years
Unknown	TX	Apr 1991	No	\$23,100	No	No	None	No
Unknown	TX	Jan 1989	Yes	\$21,000	No	No	None	No

The judge in Aucoin's case felt deeply moved by the letters she read from the International Crane Foundation, Audubon Louisiana, Louisiana Ornithological Society, and New Orleans Audubon Society. She read our documentation out loud for the court record, and was specifically moved by the fact that the financial investment in each individual Whooping Crane in Louisiana is \$93,701.67, a dollar amount that many different organizations, including state and federal governments along with non-profit organizations, contribute to.

Although she was moved by these facts and our deep emotional investment in this species, she felt that Aucoin would not be able to pay a fine due to his financial situation, so she did not administer one. Aucoin was also highly cooperative with the authorities, another factor leading to such a light punishment. The International Crane Foundation feels that taking such a weak stance on this crime sends the wrong message to other potential perpetrators, regardless of Aucoin's personal circumstances.

While the International Crane Foundation was disappointed by the results of this case, we did make great strides in building a relationship with the US Attorney's Office in the Western District of Louisiana, an office that is now prosecuting another person for shooting two Whooping Cranes. We have developed a good relationship with the US Attorney's office for the Western District of Louisiana, and we met in person with their office alongside several conservation organizations to exchange information. Staff from the US Attorney's office told the group that they needed to learn more about this issue from us, and thanked us for taking the time to educate them about why Whooping Cranes are so valuable to us. It was a valuable meeting, and we have continued to build on that relationship.

We are hoping for better with this next case, and we will be pushing for jailtime, along with a high fine. Kaenon Constantin has pled "not guilty" to a violation of the Lacey Act in association with the shooting of two Whooping

Cranes in May of 2016. His trial is currently waiting to be rescheduled in the court of Magistrate Judge Patrick J. Hanna. The International Crane Foundation strongly supports the administration of jail time and a high fine for Constantin.

In November 2019, another shooting incident took place in Jefferson Davis Parish. Authorities have yet to identify a perpetrator in that case. Without deterrence created by stiff penalties, we likely will not see a decrease in the shooting rate in Louisiana. The International Crane Foundation will continue to educate members of the criminal justice system about the financial investment that goes into each individual Whooping Crane, along with the hundreds of hours that we and our conservation partners spend on saving this species from extinction.

To contribute directly to our outreach and education efforts, along with our courtroom advocacy on behalf of cranes, please go to <https://www.savingcranes.org/whooping-crane-outreach/>.

By Elisabeth Condon, Whooping Crane Outreach Coordinator at the International Crane Foundation

In the Northwest Territories, Whooping Cranes Lead the Way in Social Distancing

Yellowknife, NWT (27 April 2020) — Researchers are worried a lack of adequate wetlands means endangered Whooping Cranes are migrating in larger-than-normal flocks, leaving them more susceptible to mass mortality.

That's the bad news. The good news is the cranes spend some of their year in and around Wood Buffalo National Park, where local experts say they still have room to spread out.

Rhona Kindopp is Parks Canada's manager of resource conservation in Fort Smith. She says once the cranes make it to Wood Buffalo National Park, they each have nesting space that can be from two to five square km in size (i.e., 200-500 ha or 500-1200 acres).

That reduces the risk of disease or a natural disaster harming their numbers.

"They're quite territorial, like they are on the wintering grounds, but even more so on the nesting grounds, so they are quite dispersed," said Kindopp.

There are only about 500 Whooping Cranes in the remnant wild population, migrating each year between wintering grounds at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas and their breeding grounds in Wood Buffalo.

Typically the birds migrate alone, in pairs, or in families or small flocks, noted lead researcher Andrew Caven and his team in a recent paper.* The study examined the apparent increasing size of crane groups crossing America's great plains.

While the Whooping Crane population has been increasing – up from just 22 wild cranes in the 1940s – Caven believes migratory flock size is increasing at a rate that exceeds population growth.

That means if a natural disaster or disease swept through the flock, it could kill a huge number of the still-small population.

Telemetry to illuminate how flocks disperse

Kindopp said larger flocks haven't been recorded by Fort Smith residents in recent years, even as an increasing number of cranes have been observed.

This tallies with Caven's research, which found large numbers of the cranes were most likely to congregate in the centre of the migration corridor between Texas and Alberta.

***A.J. Caven, M. Rabbe, J. Malzhan, A.E. Lacy (2020) Trends in the occurrence of large Whooping Crane groups during migration in the great plains, USA. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e03549>**



Whooping Crane habitat in Wood Buffalo National Park. Photo: John McKinnon/Parks Canada

Kindopp did, though, note the remoteness of Wood Buffalo National Park affects our ability to observe the cranes' behaviour.

"We're not observing them come into the park because the park is so big and there's just not people everywhere to make those kinds of observations," she said.

That means we don't know when exactly the birds start to disperse into smaller groups or pairs.

As researchers mark more birds with cellular telemetry units – technology that tracks birds' locations – they'll have a better idea of what the cranes' migration looks like in remote areas.

Counting cranes under Covid-19

As for a natural disaster taking out some of the Whooping Crane population in the national park, Kindopp says that has always been a concern – but as the population grows, it has lessened.

"Natural disasters can take many different forms. In the park, the habitat that they're in is very remote and forest fires are a natural part of that landscape," she said.

"And so the birds are adapted to being in that landscape, and therefore, by default, adapted to a fire-type landscape." Whooping cranes are expected to begin arriving in Wood Buffalo National Park within the next few weeks.

Typically, Parks Canada works with the Canadian Wildlife Service to monitor the cranes in their nesting grounds in May. Officials are planning how to safely do that while abiding by Covid-19 restrictions.

"We don't want to have that gap in that data set," said Kindopp. "It's a long data set, it's an international collaboration between Canada and the US on protecting the species and promoting its conservation.

"So we feel getting that information is a necessity. We're working hard to figure out how to do it."

Article by Sarah Pruys, Cabin Radio, Yellowknife, NWT (cabinradio.ca), with minor editing.

Aransas—Wood Buffalo Whooping Crane Population Summary 2015-2019

Breeding season	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
No. of nests detected at WBNP (May)	68	78	98†	87	97
Additional territorial pairs (non-nesters)	20-24	18	?	?	?
No. of fledged chicks detected (August)	23	45*	63**	24	37
Average no. of chicks per nest [#]	0.34	0.57	0.64	0.28	0.38
Estimated no. of birds at Aransas NWR in the primary survey area‡	329 95% CI 293-371 (early winter survey, Cessna)	431 95% CI 371-493 (early winter survey, Kodiak)	—	—	—
	463 95% CI 392-549 (late winter survey, Kodiak)	489 95% CI 428-555 (late winter survey, Kodiak)	505 95% CI 439-576 (late winter survey, Kodiak)	504 95% CI 412-660 (late winter survey, Kodiak)	506 95% CI 343-678 (late winter survey, Kodiak)
Estimated no. of juveniles at Aransas NWR	38 95% CI 33-43	50 95% CI 36-61	49 95% CI 42-58	13 95% CI 10-19	39 95% CI 26-52

†Most nests ever recorded. *One family with twins; **four families with twins.

[#]20-year average is approx. 0.48 chicks per nest.

‡Aerial surveys conducted later in winter and using a Quest Kodiak aircraft (with improved ground viewing compared to the Cessna) were found to give higher estimates of crane numbers.

Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP) 2015 data are from Bidwell and Conkin (March 2016), *Recovery and Ecology of Whooping Cranes: Monitoring of the Aransas-Wood Buffalo Population during the Breeding Season 2015 Report*; WBNP 2016 data are preliminary results from the Canadian Wildlife Service, with thanks to Mark Bidwell; 2017 nest survey data are from Mike Keizer, Parks Canada; 2017 fledgling data are from CBC News, August 16, 2017 (www.cbc.ca/news); 2018 data are from an article posted by Cabin Radio, Yellowknife, NWT, September 7, 2018 (<https://cabinradio.ca>), citing Rhona Kindopp, Parks Canada; 2019 nest survey and fledgling numbers were reported by Friends of the Wild Whoopers (<https://friendsofthewildwhoopers.org/>), July 12 and August 8, 2019; Aransas NWR winter data are from 'Whooping Crane Updates' at the ANWR website.

Eastern Migratory Population Update

Hillary Thompson, North America Program Crane Analyst, International Crane Foundation

Current population size and status

As of 1 March 2020, the estimated population size of the Eastern Migratory Population is 85 cranes (41 females, 41 males, and 3 of unknown sex). Fourteen of these birds are wild-hatched and the rest are captive-reared. One of the parent-reared cranes released in spring 2019 died on her migration south due to a powerline collision in Illinois.

Fall releases of parent-reared cranes

During October 2019, a parent-reared juvenile raised at the International Crane Foundation, 79-19, was released in Green Lake County, Wisconsin, near a pair of adult Whooping Cranes. Within a couple of days, she was consistently associating with the adult pair, female 67-15 and male 3-17. The trio migrated south together to Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama, where they spent the winter together and occasionally associated with other Whooping Cranes as well. During February 2020, the trio along with three other adults left Wheeler and started their migration north.



Parent-reared juvenile 79-19 with her 'adoptive parents' 67-15 and 3-17.
Photo: Doug Pellerin

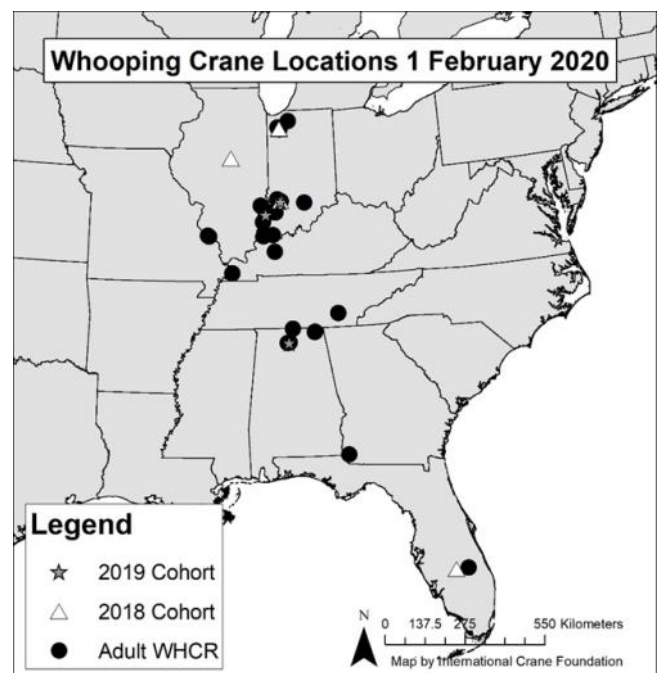
Another parent-reared juvenile raised at the International Crane Foundation, 80-19, was also released in fall 2019. 80-19 sustained a bill injury in captivity that delayed her release until it was clear her bill was healing normally. By the time she was cleared for release, many cranes had already left Wisconsin, so she was taken to Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County, Indiana, and released near a sub-adult group of Whooping Cranes. She also began associating with them within a few days of her release, and spent the winter in southwestern Indiana with 5 other Whooping Cranes. As of 1 March 2020, 80-19 and her associates are still in Indiana, but will likely start migrating north very soon!

2019 wild-hatched cohort

W1-19, the oldest wild-hatched Whooping Crane from the 2019 cohort, left Juneau County, Wisconsin with her parents 12-11 and 5-11 during November 2019. The family group was spotted in Gibson County Indiana during November, but they have not been seen since then. We don't know where this pair typically spends the winter, but we expect them to show up again on the breeding grounds very soon.

W14-19 also left Juneau County, Wisconsin with her parents 12-03 and 12-05 during November 2019. This family group spent the winter in Knox County, Indiana, where they remain as of early March 2020.

W19-19, the youngest wild-hatched Whooping Crane from the 2019 cohort, also headed south with parents 9-05 and 13-03 during November 2019. This family group wintered near



Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Greene County, Indiana, and often associated with other Whooping Cranes including parent-reared crane 80-19.

Winter distribution 2019-2020

To the best of our knowledge, 27 Whooping Cranes spent the winter in Indiana, 7 in Illinois, 2 in Tennessee, 8 in Kentucky, 20 in Alabama, 2 in Georgia, and 2 in Florida. There was also one Whooping Crane from the Louisiana Non-migratory Population in Morgan County, Alabama this winter. The highest concentrations of cranes this winter were at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama, Goose Pond Fish and Wildlife Area in Indiana, and on private lands in southwestern Indiana and southeastern Illinois.

A breeding season update from Hillary: as of June 1st, at least 14 chicks have hatched and up to 10 are still alive. — Ed.

Louisiana Whooping Crane Update

Eva Szyszkoski, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

2019 cohort – Eleven captive-reared juveniles (8 males, 3 female) were released into the Louisiana population in the winter of 2019/20. They arrived at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area, Gueydan, from the Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center in New Orleans on 12 November. They received their permanent bands and transmitters the day of their arrival and were placed in the top-netted portion of the release pen until their release on 26 November (see photo on page 11).

Captures – Five free-flying cranes were captured for banding or transmitter replacement on 11 days of attempts from 17 October 2019 – 3 March 2020.

Reproduction – Nesting in Louisiana began early in 2020, with the first nest initiated on 2 February in Jefferson Davis Parish: 11 days earlier than in 2019. This nest did not produce any chicks, with the pair sitting past full term on nonviable eggs. One additional nest was also completed by 9 March, with that pair also sitting past full term. We continue our use of data-logging eggs (*Advanced Telemetry Systems Inc.*) to collect real-time incubation data in wild nests in Louisiana.

Long distance movement – Female L4-17 once again spent the summer in Oklahoma and returned to her previous wintering area at the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge in northern Alabama by 1 or 2 December where thousands of Sandhill Cranes and numerous Whooping Cranes from the eastern migratory population also were wintering. She left Alabama and returned to northern Louisiana by 6 March.

Mortalities – Mortalities from September 2019 through February 2020 included one yearling male, two juvenile females, and one adult female in Louisiana. One mortality (yearling male) was due to gunshot.

Current Population Size – As of 10 March 2020, the Louisiana non-migratory population consisted of a maximum of 75 individuals (39 males, 36 females). Estimated distribution includes 71 in Louisiana and 4 in Texas.



Male L12-16 checks out the camera set up on his and L5-14's nest in Jefferson Davis Parish.

For the latest, see Whooping Crane Families 2020: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqOyaHdTal0>

Florida Whooping Crane Update

Tim Dellinger, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

We are still holding at 10 Whooping Cranes, we think. Our 2019 chick is now 1 year old. It has remained with its 20-yr-old mom since the dad was killed two months after the chick hatched. No other Whooping Crane males are available in the area, so the mom and chick will likely remain together. We have two pairs remaining in our population and neither have built platforms this spring, but it's a long season in Florida and we remain hopeful. Also, no deaths to report and our oldest crane is now 27!

We're trying to get bands on the 2019 chick and 2016 twins, but it's slow going. We may have luck with one of the twins when we are free to travel again. Our goal is still to translocate some of the wild-hatched cranes to Louisiana.



The 2019 unbanded chick and its mother.

Cheniere Foundation Donates \$100,000 to CBBEP's Coastal Bird Program

Cheniere Foundation has stepped up to support the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program's (CBBEP) ongoing efforts to protect coastal birds by contributing \$100,000 to the Coastal Bird Program! The funds were used to support conservation and management work on bird nesting islands in the Coastal Bend region of Texas.

CBBEP's Coastal Bird Program has been working for over 15 years to conserve coastal birds and their habitats. The Program was originally formed to halt declines and restore heron, egret, pelican, and other colonial waterbird populations. Staff address conservation needs through on-the-ground management, public outreach and education, and research and monitoring.

As part of these efforts, the Program manages hundreds of bird nesting islands, often referred to as rookery islands, on the Texas coast from San Antonio Bay to the Lower Laguna Madre. Management efforts focus on improving vegetation available for nesting, reducing predator impacts, and reducing human disturbance. Consistent, annual efforts are vital to managing these rookery islands.

The Coastal Bird Program uses funding from a number of different sources, including local governments, private industry, state and federal agencies, foundations, and private donations, to keep these annual management efforts going. Two years ago, the Program received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund to expand the management work that was being done on bird nesting islands within the Coastal Bend. With this funding the Program was able to accelerate the implementation of certain management actions and have a greater, more immediate, impact on the conservation of waterbirds.

Seeing the benefits that this increased investment provided, the Coastal Bird Program has been looking for opportunities to continue this enhanced level of management. "Funding from the Cheniere Foundation has helped CBBEP's Coastal Bird Program continue their intensive efforts to provide a safe place for colonial waterbirds to nest and raise their young. Proper management of these nesting islands is fundamental to the population growth and recovery of colonial waterbirds, and we are grateful for Cheniere's support," said Dr. Kiersten Stanzel, CBBEP's Director of Partnerships.

Note: The overall thrust of the CBBEP's Coastal Bird Program includes protection and management of coastal prairies and lagoons that would benefit Whooping Cranes and other coastal birds. WCCA has partnered with CBBEP in the recent past. — Ed.



Captive-reared juvenile Whooping Cranes at White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in Louisiana being readied for release November 26, 2019. See Eva's report on page 9. (photo LDWF)

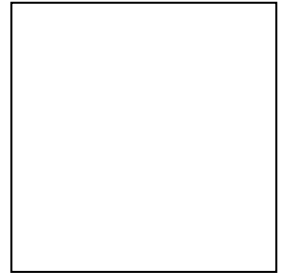
An Opportunity for Association Members

You can help us as we continue to cooperate with other conservation groups in preserving winter habitat for Whooping Cranes! Coastal properties are expensive. The cost of the 720 acres acquired in Texas in November 2016 (see *Grus Americana* vol. 54. no. 2) was slightly over one million U.S. dollars or \$1,389 per acre. We welcome any amount of money that you are able to donate toward purchase of habitat. When you donate, please indicate that you are contributing for the purchase of habitat. Funds can be donated through our website <http://whoopingcrane.com> or by sending a check to the Whooping Crane Conservation Association, 125 Millwood Ln, North Augusta, SC, 29860. WCCA is an all-volunteer, nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation with the purpose of advancing conservation, protection, and propagation of Whooping Cranes. The Association is able to receive funds by gifts, bequests, legacies or transfers and to administer such funds for the benefit of cranes. Donations from U.S. citizens are tax deductible. Thank you for your help for these marvelous birds.

The WCCA wishes to acknowledge the following persons for their special donations received since our last newsletter through January 27, 2020 for the benefit of Whooping Cranes: **Jill Bee, Kelly Credille, ECCC Library, Dale Funk, Michael Helsel, Kathleen Kaska, Mary Mattison, Betty McKinney, Sarah Miner, Bobbie Olsen, Carl Racchini.**

**Whooping Crane Conservation Association
3150 Topping Lane
Hunting Valley, Ohio 44022**

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Members—please update your address if the one shown above is incorrect. Send to the return address above.



A Whooping Crane takes flight in Wood Buffalo National Park.

Photo: John McKinnon/Parks Canada