

Crane Net News

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The newsletter of North East Asian Crane Site Network

International Children Art Exhibition at the Town Hall of Tomigusuku-son,
Okinawa, Japan, October 2000

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Foreword – The Crane Network in the 21st century

Noritaka Ichida
Chairman
Crane Working Group



Mr. Ichida and Miss Kaori Matsui (Wetlands International Japan),
at the eve of the launch of the Crane Network, March 1997

Dear friends,

I have the pleasure to welcome you to the second issue of the Crane Net News, the newsletter for the North East Asian Crane Site Network.

You may know the Crane Network was launched in 7 March 1997 at Beidaihe, China. I am happy that we have made a lot of progress in the last three years. We now have eighteen network sites in all six range countries along the crane migration routes in North East Asia. We held a workshop on crane research in Russia in 1998, a symposium on site conservation in the Republic of Korea and a training course in Russia in 2000. The Crane Network will be more active in the 21st century, to build up bridges of conservation among countries. Thank you very much for all who have supported the network.

The Crane Working Group was established in July 1998. In February 2000 we had the second Working Group meeting in the Republic of Korea, and we devoted most of our time to discuss the Action Plan for 2001-2005.

We wish to develop the Crane Network gradually to include at least 20 more sites by the year 2005, and expand our geographic scope to cover the range of Black-necked Crane in western China. At the Korean meeting all members of the Crane Working Group agreed since the sites

important for cranes in North East Asia are also important to the globally threatened Oriental Stork *Ciconia boyciana*, we should also work on conservation of this species.

The main focus of the Crane Network in the next five years will be improvement of site management, education and work with local communities for conservation. We are very grateful to the support from the Environment Agency of Japan, the Japan Fund for Global Environment, the Société des Eaux Minérales d'Evian of the Danone Corporate Group, France and the French Global Environment Facility to training courses and workshops on these subjects. I would like to thank Ms Alison Duncan of the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, the BirdLife partner in France, to help in application of the French funds for the Crane Network. I do hope this will strengthen the communication and cooperation among networks in the North East Asian and African-European flyways.

We are also happy to know that the International Crane Foundation, an old friend and partner to crane conservationists in Asia, is conducting the GEF Project on the conservation of the eastern population of Siberian Crane under the framework of the Crane Network. With all the support from site managers and conservationists in the region, we believe we will achieve the best results in our activities.

When I am writing this foreword I learnt our old friend, Dr. George Archibald, is retiring from the President of the International Crane Foundation. Everybody working on conservation of cranes knows and loves George, he has contributed much to conservation of crane throughout the world. I do hope George will find more time in his academic pursue, and it is nice that he would continue his work in Asia.

I would also like to congratulate Jim Harris to be promoted to be the President of ICF. Jim has been taken part in the Crane Network activities from the beginning and is still giving excellent advice at the Working Group. I am sure with the help of Jim we will move a big step forward in the conservation of crane in Asia.

From the start we have been receiving great supports from the Environment Agency of Japan to establish the Crane Network, which was initiated from the satellite tracking of crane migration in the early 1990s by the Wild Bird Society of Japan. Government agencies of the region, namely the State Committee for Environmental Protection of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Nature and the Environment of Mongolia, the State Forestry Administration of the People's Republic of China, the Nature Conservation Center of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, have also been kindly supporting the activities of the Crane Network. Their support and guidance is essential for the success of crane conservation in North East Asia.

However, the fundamental elements of any network are individuals. We need your support and suggestions for improvement of our activities. Please let us have your comments, and help us to conserve cranes and important habitats in North East Asia.

The 20th century is a century of reconsideration of our own life-style. We now understand we should conserve and co-exist with nature. On the eve of a new century, we are happy to see the changes in human attitude. With your help, we can make this a much better century to live in, and the cranes, a symbol of happiness and longevity, will be seen flying freely in more and more places.

Report from the Crane Working Group

The Crane Working Group was formed in July 1997 with the following members:

National Representatives

Vladimir Andronov	Russian Federation
Natsagdorjiyn Tseveenmyadag	Mongolia
Wang Wei	People's Republic of China
Park U-il	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Kim Jin-han	Republic of Korea
Noritaka Ichida	Japan

Crane Specialists

Nikolai Germogenov (Russia)	Breeding Ground Specialist
Qian Fawen (China)	Wintering Ground Specialist
James Harris (ICF)	IUCN Crane Specialist



The Crane Working Group and the Flyway Officer in Seoul, February 2000

1. The Crane Working Group had the first meeting at Muraviovka Nature Park, Russia in September 1998. At the meeting, Chairman and Vice-chairman of the Working Group were elected:

Chairman	Noritaka Ichida
Vice-chairman	Wang Wei

At this meeting drafting of a Research Handbook on cranes was approved and a joint winter census on cranes was also prepared (Please refer to the report of joint census at the newsletter). By-law of the Working Group has also been drafted and adopted in early 1999.

2. The second meeting of the Working Group was held in Suncheon and Seoul, Republic of Korea in February 2000.

The main topic of discussion at this meeting is the drafting of the Action Plan for the Crane Network 2001-2005. The Action Plan has been adopted at the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee of the Wetlands International Asia Pacific held in Okinawa in October 2000. If you are interested to get a copy of the Action Plan, please contact the Crane Flyway Officer at: simba@wing-wbsj.or.jp

Summary of national reports at the Second Working Group meeting:

Russia

- A general survey has been conducted in 1999 to estimate the number and distribution of cranes in the Russia. It was found that the population of Hooded and White-naped Cranes were stable but the Red-crowned Crane population was slowing declining.
- Two new nature reserves have been established: Norsky Nature Reserve (211,000 ha) for protection of Hooded Crane and Bolonsky Nature Reserve (103,600 ha) for protection of Red-crowned Crane. Khasan Nature Park (9,000 ha) has been established for reintroduction of Red-crowned Cranes.
- Children art exhibition and other education activities have been conducted in nature reserves in Far East Russia in 1999. More than 1,200 people participated.
- A team of Russian scientists visited crane wintering grounds at Poyang and Yancheng, China in January 2000.

Mongolia

- Joint study with researchers from Daursky Nature Reserve (Russia) in north-eastern Mongolia in summer 1999. New breeding sites of White-naped Cranes were discovered at Kerulen River. The breeding population of White-naped Cranes was estimated to be 400 pairs in Mongolia.
- Mongolia is now working on a book on shadow lists of Ramsar Sites in Mongolia.
- Steppe fire is still the biggest threat to cranes.

China

- A working group in China has been established. The National Bird Banding Center has drafted the Action Plan on behalf of the State Forestry Administration for crane conservation. This is a major national wildlife project and the Chinese Government is funding this project.
- A special survey on wildlife is now conducting in China. New sites for cranes are likely to be discovered.
- China is working with ICF on study of Black-necked Cranes in Tibet.
- China has signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Siberian Cranes. The project is also regarded as an important project by the State Forestry Administration.
- There are 76 nature reserves for the conservation of cranes in China (10% of reserves under the administration of the State Forestry Administration).

Republic of Korea:

- From the results of crane census conducted in 1999/2000. There were 372 Red-crowned Cranes at Cholwon. The number of Hooded Cranes at Suncheon had reached a new maximum of 115 birds. A few Hooded Cranes also found wintering at Chonsu Bay.
- Cranes at Cholwon is affected by construction of new roads and more disturbances at the central area. Now many cranes stayed at the western part of Cholwon where disturbance is low.
- A joint study has been conducted by the National Institute of Environmental Research and

the Wild Bird Society of Japan on Hooded Cranes in Suncheon for three years since 1997. Cranes were found to form feeding territories in the winter of 1999/2000. This was not observed in previous years.

- 21 cranes were killed by poisoning in Korea in March 1998. Since then the government raised public awareness on poisoning. The pesticide manufacturers are studying to put color and smell on pesticide to warn birds. The research is still going on.

Japan:

- Census from Hokkaido and Kyushu revealed new maximum numbers of numbers of Red-crowned Cranes (about 700) in Hokkaido and a total of 11,618 cranes wintering at Izumi, including about 3,000 White-naped Cranes (the second highest count in history). Single Siberian Crane and Demoiselle Crane are also seen wintering at Izumi in the winter of 1999/2000.
- 20 Hooded Cranes were found to winter at Yashiro in 1999/2000. This is a slight increase from 17 birds in 1998/1999.
- The Wild Bird Society of Japan worked with North Korea to build a visitor center at Mundok, a site of the North East Asian Crane Network..
- At the Ramsar Convention Conference held in Costa Rica, May 1999, Japan has jointly supported recommendation with Australia on conservation of migratory waterbirds. It calls for greater multilateral cooperation on the conservation of migratory waterbirds in the Asia-Pacific region.

ICF:

- A GEF project has been proposed on wetlands important for both the eastern and western populations of Siberian Cranes. The eastern population is within the geographical scope of the Crane Network. The GEF project will be coordinating with the Crane Network and focus at reserves in Kytalyk, Song-nen plains of North East China and Poyang.
- ICF is providing more information from the library and e-mail. Catalog of material is now on line and accessible through internet. More and more information will be available on the ICF website. The GEF project will also have a website.

3. The third Crane Working Group Meeting was held in Okinawa, Japan on 17 October 2000.

The main focus of this meeting was to finalize the draft of the Crane Network Action Plan 2001-2005.

a. Action Plan for the Crane Network.

The plan has fifteen actions highlighted. It has been approved in principle and will be published in early 2001.

b. Workshops on education and visitor arrangement at Network Sites:

Two consecutive workshops have been proposed for designing public education and visitor management for sites important for cranes. The first workshop will be held at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China from 14 to 19 March 2001. The second workshop will be held in Kushiro, Japan in February 2002.

c. International Crane Day.

At the second working group, an International Crane Day was proposed. At this meeting it was agreed that 7 March, the date when the North East Asian Crane Site Network was launched in 1997, should be the International Crane Day. The first International Crane Day is to be

celebrated on 7 March 2001.

d. Color banding scheme

This banding scheme was suggested by Mr. Kiyoaki Ozaki of the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology and adopted after discussion of the Crane Working Group. It basically follow the present color banding scheme in North East Asia, which was adopted at the International Workshop : Cranes and Storks of the Amur River in 1992.

Russia (except Daursky area):	White
Mongolia and Daursky area in Russia:	Green
China:	Red
North and South Korea:	Blue
Japan:	Yellow.

e. Certificate

A certificate for the sites of the North East Asian Crane Site Network has been designed by Ms Asako Miyasaka of Wild Bird Society of Japan. It will be presented to the representatives from the sites on 14 March 2001 at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China.

The next working group meeting will be held at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China in March 2001.

Activities of the Crane Network - Report from the Flyway Officer

Simba Chan
Crane Flyway Officer

Muraviovka Workshop and Research Handbook

A research workshop was held at Muraviovka Nature Park in early September 1998. Please refer to a separate report on this newsletter on the Workshop.

The first Crane Working Group meeting was also held at Muraviovka at the same period.

At the Workshop it was discussed and decided to hold a joint census in January 1999. Please refer to report on this newsletter.

Another output of the Workshop is the Research Handbook compiled by Dr. Sergei Smirenskii with helps of other national compilers (Qian Fawen, Dr. Kim Jin-han and Dr. Katsunori Shioya). Jim Harris, Elena Smirenskii, Dr. Li Fengshan and other experts at the International Crane Foundation has offered great help and support to Dr. Smirenskii in drafting and commenting the text. The Handbook is published in English and Russian. The production of this handbook is financially supported by the Japan Fund For Global Environment.

Waterbird Symposium for Japanese local governments

On 10 March 1999, Environment Agency of Japan arranged a symposium and invited local government officers, especially from Japanese cities with Ramsar Site. Flyway officers of the Crane, Anatidae and Shorebird networks made presentations on the networks and discussion

with local government officers to get their support on waterbird conservation.

Atlas of Key Sites for Cranes of North East Asian Flyway

The Atlas of Key Sites for Cranes in the North East Asian Flyway was compiled and published in May 1999. The Atlas has been sent to range countries of the Crane Network and crane researchers. The production of the Atlas is financially supported by the Environment Agency of Japan and Wetlands International Japan. An updated edition of the Atlas is available here. Suggestions and corrections are welcomed.

Attending the Ramsar Conference in Costa Rica

In May 1999 the Crane Flyway Officer attended the Ramsar COP7 Meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica to make presentation to Asian participants to promote the migratory waterbird networks. The travel is financially supported by the Environment Agency of Japan.

Suncheon Symposium and Meeting, February 2000

The Flyway Officer worked closely with Dr. Kim Jin-han and Dr. Yuri Darman on the preparation of the Suncheon Symposium. We visited Suncheon City in January 1999 and got the approval from the Mayor of Suncheon to organize the Symposium.

The Symposium was held in February 2000 (Please refer to a separate report in this newsletter). The second Working Group meeting was also held at the Suncheon and Seoul at the same period.

The symposium is financially supported by the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Korea, Government of Suncheon City and the Japan Fund for Global Environment.

Attending Amur 2000 Conference

Amur 2000 is an international conference co-organized by IUCN and WWF on the conservation of Oriental Storks. The Crane Working Group had discussed and decided to cover conservation issue of the Oriental Stork under the Crane Network, and the Crane Flyway Officer attended the Conference in early July 2000. The Conference was held on a ship on the Amur River. About 90 participants from Russia, China, Japan, USA and Belgium attended the Conference. Action Plan for conservation of the Oriental Stork is being drafted. The Crane Flyway Officer is keeping close contact with the IUCN experts on drafting of the Action Plan so proposed activities of the Crane Network will be noted to avoid duplication.

Training course at Khingansky Nature Reserve

A training course was held at Khingansky Nature Reserve, Amur Province, Russia from 12 to 17 September 2000. The training course was on site management technique at the breeding grounds of cranes. Please refer to a separate report on this newsletter.

The training course was financially supported by the Japan Fund for Global Environment.

Action Plan for the Crane Network 2001-2005

An action plan for the activities of the Crane Network in the coming five years (2001-2005) has been drafted and circulated for comments. The final draft has been discussed and adopted at the International Waterbird Conference in Okinawa in October 2000.

Activities planned in the near future.

Two workshops will be held on public education and visitor management at the Crane Network Sites. The first workshop will be held at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China in March 2001.



Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve

The second workshop will be held in Kushiro, Japan in February 2002. Primary sponsorship of the workshops has been generously provided by the Société des Eaux Minérales d'Evian of the Danone Corporate Group, France and the French Global Environment Facility. The City Government of Kushiro has also agreed in principle to cover local costs of the workshop in Kushiro.

The over-concentrated wintering cranes at Izumi has caused a lot of concern from wildlife biologists and conservationists. A meeting on possible solutions to this problem is proposed to be held in China in conjunction to the Yellow River Delta Workshop. This meeting will invite experts from the wintering countries: China, Korea and Japan. Their recommendation will be discussed at the Yellow River Delta Workshop and circulated to crane experts for suggestions.

Website of the Crane Network

The newsletter, a brief report of the Muraviovka Workshop and the Crane Atlas are now placed on the Website.

http://www.wing-wbsj.or.jp/english/newsletter/crane_net/crane_news_eng.html

Year 2000 Report of Crane Specialist Group and various members of the Crane Specialist Group

(Extracted parts on the recovery project of Whooping Crane and report on the status of cranes in Asia)

By George Archibald

Whooping Cranes

The rarest of cranes, the Whooping Crane of North America, reached an all-time high during the winter of 1999-2000 of 388 birds: 188 in the migratory population between Canada and the USA, 3 in the Rocky Mountains, 106 in captivity, and 91 in the new non-migratory population in Florida. In March of 2000, one pair of cranes in Florida hatched two chicks, one of which has survived to date. This is the first production since the releases of captive birds in Florida began in 1993. Ten other pairs of cranes in Florida look promising. Water level in wetlands in Florida has been low the past two years. When normal water levels return, many pairs are expected to breed. Plans are being developed by using ultra-light aircraft starting in 2001 to establish a new migratory population that would breed in Wisconsin and winter in Florida.

Asian Cranes

The State Forestry Administration (SFA) of China has launched an ambitious China Crane Survey, that will assess numbers, distribution, and habitats for cranes during breeding, migratory, and wintering periods. Given the size of China and its significance for cranes, this survey will provide invaluable information for crane and nature reserve management as well for designation of new nature reserves. In addition, strategies are needed for cranes outside protected areas. As part of the larger effort, Dr. Mary Anne Bishop, ICF Research Associate, assisted the SFA and Tibet Forestry Bureau in conducting a 12-day survey of wintering Black-necked Cranes in south-central Tibet. The team counted 4,277 cranes, an increase of 9% over 3,910 cranes counted by Dr. Bishop in 1992.

The eastern population of Siberian Cranes appears to be holding at approximately 2500-3000 individuals. There are concerns, however, about high rates of human development and water diversion programs that might negatively impact wetlands in China that are critical to the survival of these cranes. Unfortunately, in the central population of Siberian Cranes, only a single pair returns to winter in Keoladeo National Park in India and to breeding grounds in western Siberia near Kunovat. In the western population, seven cranes including one juvenile were reported wintering in the waterfowl trapping complex near Fereydoon Kenar on the Caspian lowlands of Iran. At least a few other birds are believed to winter elsewhere.

A flourishing captive population of Siberian Cranes has been established and many captive-produced birds and eggs are available for experimental release programs in western Asia.

Profile of Network Sites: Lake Khanka and Xingkai Hu reserves

Lake Khanka and Xingkai Hu are bordering nature reserves at Lake Khanka (or Xingkai Hu) on the eastern Sino-Russian border. Since early 1990s the two reserves have made efforts to promote communication and establish a trans-boundary reserve. The following are summaries of the site reports from the Muraviovka Workshop, September 1998:

Lake Khanka Nature Reserve (presented by Yuri Sushicky):



Lake Khanka. Taken in July 1992

Established in 1990. 334 species of birds have been recorded, including 4 species of cranes. The nature reserve is 111,000 ha in area (38,000 ha core area, 73,000 ha buffer zone.) It is part of the 310,000 ha Ramsar Site at Khanka.

Recent counts revealed about 70 breeding Red-crowned Cranes in the area surveyed (about 75% of the reserve area), and an additional 50 non-breeding summer birds. 4 breeding White-naped Cranes are also present but most of the White-naped Cranes are migratory. Up to 300 White-naped Cranes can be seen in one flock during migration.

President Boris Yeltsin has signed an agreement with China on the joint conservation of Xingkai-Khanka during his visit to China in April 1996. There had been several meetings between Chinese and Russian sides of the lake on research and management since then.

Monitoring methods in Khanka: No aerial surveys have been carried since 1993. Ground survey on biology. Has also invited some scientists from Ussurisk to help to carry out some researches. About 40% of the area is covered annually. When the result is compared with those from aerial survey, it is found that the ground survey data are very close to that of aerial survey.

Xingkai Lake National Nature Reserve (presented by Feng Shangzhu)

The Xingkai Lake Nature Reserve was established as a provincial level nature reserve by the Heilongjiang Province in 1986. In 1991 the nature reserve management office was established. In 1994 it is upgraded to the national level, approved by the State Council of China. The nature reserve is for protection of Red-crowned Crane, other rare birds and wetland ecosystem. Total area of core area and buffer zone and lake surface of Xiao Xingkai Lake is 222,488 ha.

The river mouth of Song'acha River is an important feeding site for wintering waterbirds because it is not frozen in winter. During the migration in March, tens of millions of birds stop-over at the Song'acha river mouth. 35 thousand were counted in one day in 1995. The river mouth is also important as feeding stop-overs for cranes. Several hundred can be seen in one day during migration.

There are about 50 breeding Red-crowned Cranes at Xingkai Lake. The main site is also near the Song'acha River Mouth near the Russian border. In recent years the trend of Red-crowned Crane population is decreasing. Only about 30 breeding Red-crowned Cranes were recorded in 1998.

Research workshop at Muraviovka, Russia



From 9 to 13 September 1998, about 30 crane researchers and workers of crane reserves from five countries (Russia, China, Republic of Korea, Japan and USA) attended a Research Workshop held at Muraviovka Nature Park, Russia. The first Working Group meeting of the Crane Network was also held during the workshop.

The following activities had been discussed and planned for 1998 to 1999:

1. Joint winter census of cranes (Please refer to another report).
2. Publish a research handbook

Participants to the workshop had also suggested and discussed the following activities. These are references to the future activities of the North East Asian Crane Site Network:

- Building up a data base for North East Asia.
- Winter census: Joint synchronous census had planned in January 1999.
- Migration stop-over counts: At migration stop-over sites, maximum counts are recorded for each year.
- Compilation of existing data on counts done in previous years.
- General study of breeding grounds on how climatic and environmental factors affect breeding success. For example, the adult/juvenile ratio of wintering cranes at Izumi and the conditions at Khingansky.
- Study on the age ratio of crane both at the wintering ground and the known breeding ground to deduce the mortality of young cranes during migration. But this is not easy, as identification of young cranes in the field might be difficult.
- Color-banding scheme. Should follow the color used now (Red for China, Yellow for Japan etc.) but need to identify a color for Korea. Also to design a color banding scheme that color on one leg represents the country and color combination on the other leg identifies the individual or the site.
- Exchange visits between sites. In principle the host covers the local expenditures and the visitors pay for their own travel expanses.
- Study on non-breeding cranes in summer.
- E-mail links to network sites.

- Exchange of printed materials among sites.
- Exchange of experience on involvement of local communities on management and establish a volunteer system at the sites.
- Studies on chemical contamination. Simple method is to collect feathers of cranes.
- Establish close communication on news of migration, especially among sites along the same migratory route

The workshop is organized jointly by the Muraviovka Nature Park and Wild Bird Society of Japan, with financial support from the Japan Fund for Global Environment.

Joint census in wintering cranes in North East Asia, 1-15 January 1999

At the Crane Network Research Workshop held at Muraviovka Park, Russia, in September 1998, it was suggested a joint synchronic census of cranes should be taken in the wintering grounds for better estimation of the populations of different species of cranes. The Working Group of the Crane Network discussed and suggested the dates should be set from 1 to 15 January 1999. This period is chosen also because wintering cranes should be stable – after the arrival of the latest and before the departure of the earliest birds. As the census aims to reveal the total population of wintering cranes, it is not confined to Crane Network sites only. Researchers were also encouraged to collect information on other threatened waterbird species, notably the Oriental Stork. The continued joint census will provide valuable information to the database of cranes in North East Asia, and for recommendations on conservation of cranes and important sites

Census results

Location	<i>G. leuco</i>	<i>G. japon</i>	<i>G. vipio</i>	<i>G. monac</i>	<i>G. grus</i>	<i>A. virgo</i>	Others
CHINA							
Poyang Lake NR	268			32	37		
Yellow River Delta NR		70	11		121		
Shengjin Lake NR	6			174	1		
DPR KOREA							
Ryongyon		39		1			
Chongdan		4					
Panmun Plain		3					
Kosong		7					
RO KOREA							
Cholwon		(372)*	411				
Imjin River		2	31				
Kanghwa Island			13		2		
Cheonsu Bay				12			
Suncheon Bay			1	80			
Chunam Reservoir			2				
JAPAN							
Eastern Hokkaido		685*					
Yashiro				17			
Imazu			1				
Oosumi Peninsula			1				
Izumi			2,770 (2,535)**	7,341 (7,904)**	3		1 Sandhill 1 hybrid (5 hybrids)**

* Numbers from census done in February

** Numbers from different census in January.

From the above figures we can deduce the number of the Japan-Korean population of following species:

Species	Estimated number	Census result
White-naped Crane:	3,300 – 3,500 birds	3,230 birds
Hooded Cranes:	approx. 8,000 birds	8,013 birds.
Eurasian Cranes:	Less than 20 birds	5 birds
Sandhill Cranes:	Less than 10 birds	1 bird
(Hybrid of Hooded and Eurasian Crane):	Less than 20 birds	5 birds
Red-crowned Crane in Korea (wintering):	approx. 400 birds	>372 birds
Red-crowned Cranes in Japan (resident):	approx. 700 birds	685 birds

Since the coverage in China is low, it is not suitable to deduce the number of cranes in North East Asia. However, Korea and Japan were well covered. From the number obtained from Korea and Japan we can be rather confident that the known wintering population of cranes migrating along the Korean Peninsula should be close to the actual populations.

The number of Hooded Cranes should be very close to the real wintering population in Korea and Japan because they do not seem to winter near the DMZ. There should be no errors caused by underestimation because of inaccessible sites or overestimation because of same birds counted both by North and South Korea.

For the wintering White-naped Cranes in Korea, this situation is more difficult because most of them winter at the DMZ. The census of January 1999 in North Korea did not reveal any White-naped Cranes. So we can take the highest count from South Korea as the population from the Korean Peninsula.

There are some Red-crowned Cranes counted in North Korea during the census. As the censuses had not been done synchronously. It is possible that some birds had been double counted. The total number of Red-crowned Cranes counted in North Korea was 53 birds in late (25-27) January 1999 and 40 in late (26 and 27) February 1999. The number of Red-crowned Cranes in South Korea was 233 in January and 372 in early February. The total numbers cannot be summed up from these figures but it is reasonable to give a rough estimation of about 400 birds.

Supporting organizations and persons

In China, census is coordinated by Mr. Qian Fawen of the National Bird Banding Center with the support from the researchers from the following nature reserves:

Yellow River Delta Nature Reserve: Lü Juanzhang, Shan Kai and Zhu Shuyu;

Poyang Lake Nature Reserve: Wu Xudong, He Shouqing, Wang Xiaolong, Zhao Jinsheng, Tu Jishui, Zhang Biao, Nie Zhijian, Zeng Nanjing, Ye Yuanlin, Wu Jiandong and Huang Zuyou.

Shengjin Lake Nature Reserve: Xu Wenbin.

In Democratic People's Republic of Korea, census was conducted by Prof. Pak U-il and his colleagues at the Nature Conservation Center. Prof. Chong Jong-ryol has kindly provided results of the census.

In Republic of Korea, census was coordinated by Dr. Kim Jin-han and conducted by the National Institute of Environmental Research.

Information of Japan is compiled by Dr. Fumio Matsumoto and Dr. Katsunori Shioya.

The census in eastern Hokkaido was conducted by the Union of Conservation and Research of Red-crowned Crane at the Akan International Crane Center. The census on 4 December 1998 was conducted by local government offices, schools, Kushiro Zoo, wardens and feeders of feeding stations and rangers. 1,099 persons (including 949 teachers and students from local primary and junior highschools) took part in the December census.

The census at Yashiro was coordinated by Kumage-cho Tsuru Ikoi No Sato, with supports from local volunteer groups and schools.

The census at Izumi on 13 January 1999 was coordinated by The Kagoshima Crane Research Society and the Foundation of Kagoshima Environmental Research and Service. The census team includes Dr. K.Shioya, N.Nakagami, Y.Kato, H.Moriyama, Y.Miyazaki, K.Kihara, Y.Ikimori, N.Mizoguchi, S.Okada, T.Watanabe, T.Yonezawa, Y.Arikawa, C.Kobayashi. The census on 7 January 1999 was conducted by Crane Conservation Society of Kagoshima, coordinated by M. Takeshita.

Note:

Oriental Stork

63 birds recorded at Shengjin Lake Nature Reserve, China on 14 January 1999. Form mixed flock with Eurasian Spoonbills.

6 birds recorded at Cheonsu Bay (Seosan reclaimed area), South Korea during the census.

International symposium at Suncheon

In the winter of 1996, about 80 Hooded Cranes were discovered wintering at Suncheon Bay in the southern coast of Korea. At the same time population of Hooded Crane formerly wintering near Taegu disappeared because of increasing disturbance from agriculture. The Suncheon population becomes the only regular wintering Hooded Cranes in Korea. In the winter of 1999/2000 the number of wintering Hooded Cranes has risen to about 120. The site is also important for conservation of many other waterbird species, particularly Saunders' Gull (about 1,000 birds wintering, the biggest wintering concentration of this species.)

However, the site is not yet protected, and local farmers worried establishment of protected area will put restrictions on them. They are generally not favor establishment of protected areas.



Suncheon Bay. Taken in February 2000

Conservation of the cranes in Suncheon has been a topic of discussion between the Environment Agency of Japan and the Korean authorities (Forestry Administration in 1997-1998 and Ministry of Environment in 1999.) As a result of the discussion between the governments, Research Center of WBSJ has been working with Korean researchers on field study of the wintering biology of Hooded Cranes in Suncheon since the winter of 1997. It is hoped in the long run Suncheon can be developed into another important wintering site for cranes.

An international symposium on conservation of Suncheon Bay was held at Suncheon City on 24 February 2000. This symposium was jointly organized by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, the City Government of Suncheon and Wild Bird Society of Japan. The Japan Fund for Global Environment supported the travel costs of international participants.



Suncheon symposium. 24 February 2000

The main purposes of the symposium are to show how cranes and people can co-exist, and why establishment of nature reserve is not a threat to the local community. Examples of the relationship between nature reserves and local communities in Japan, Russia, China and other countries were given in order to promote understanding on this issue among local community, particularly those who opposed conservation of the site..

The symposium was held at the City Hall of Suncheon, with speakers from Korea and overseas. About 200 audience attended the symposium and there were good discussions between the audience and speakers.

Forum on conservation of Suncheon Bay. 25 February 2000

On 25 March 2000 a forum was held at the Suncheon City Government Office. Representatives from the Central Government (Ministry of Environment), Suncheon City Government, NGOs in Suncheon, local communities at Suncheon Bay and members of the Crane Working Group from Russia, Mongolia, China, Japan and USA discussed the conservation of Suncheon in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

It is still too early to designate the area as a protected area, and mutual understanding and consensus must be reached for long term conservation. However, this is a very useful first step to get mutual understanding and agreement.

An exhibition of about 160 children paintings on crane conservation from Russia, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea and Japan was held at the City Hall of Suncheon during the symposium.

The Management Training Course at Khingansky State Reserve, Russia

At the meetings of the Crane Network, it had been discussed that training was important to workers of Network Sites. For this reason a training course for management of breeding grounds was held at Khinagnsky Nature Reserve from 12 to 16 September 2000.

The site of Khingansky was chosen because it is one of the best nature reserves in Russia. Participants from other Russian reserves, Mongolia and China could learn from the experience of Khingansky.

The training course was conducted by four instructors: Mr. Tetsuro Kaji from the Environment Agency (Japan) region office in eastern Hokkaido, Dr. Andronov from the Khingansky Nature Reserve, Mr. Scott Hereford from the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge and Mr. Simba Chan of WBSJ. About 20 participants from Russia and China participated at the training course.



On the first two days there were presentations of case studies from Russia, USA and Japan. An excursion was held on 15 September for showing the reintroduction facilities of cranes and storks, and facilities in preventing spring fire at Khingansky. Spring fire is a major threat to the breeding birds of the reserve, and Mr. Hereford had an informative presentation on fire management in southern USA. The participants were very interested in the principles of fire management and how controlled burning could stop wild fire.

On the last two days there were presentations on habitat management, relations with local communities, monitoring and education. Many questions were asked. The atmosphere of discussion was high.

On 17 September, the participants visited Arkhara, the closest city to Khingansky, and were

greeted by about 150 students from local schools. A celebration was held and there were performance of dance, songs, poetry, drama and painting on cranes. The participants have learned a lot on how to work with local communities.



The training course is successful, not only in conveying information and knowledge, but also in giving a chance of the participants to understand how other reserves operates.

The training course is organized by the Amur branch of Socio-ecological Union, Khingansky Nature Reserve and Wild Bird Society of Japan, with funds generously provided by the Japan Fund for Global Environment and additional support form the Environment Agency of Japan.

International children art exhibition

The idea was first started in Russia as (Crane, the Bird of Peace website: http://www.ramsar.org/w.n.crane_bkgd.htm).

In February 2000, a brand new exhibition of about 160 painting from Russia, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea and Japan started at the Suncheon symposium.



The exhibition was opened by Mr. Shin Jun-sig (Right), Mayor of Suncheon City, on 24 February 2000.

The exhibition moved to Okinawa in October 2000, in conjunction to the International Workshop on the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001 – 2005.



Paintings from students of Yancheng, Jiangsu Province, China,
at the exhibition in Okinawa. October 2000

In late 2000 the exhibition is held in Mongolia. It will move to the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China in March 2001.

The exhibition is organized jointly by the Amur Socio-ecological Union and the North East Asian Crane Site Network. The City Government of Suncheon and the Government of Tomigusuku-son, Okinawa had kindly offered venue for exhibition. Paintings were collected by Dr. Vladimir Andronov (eastern Russia), Dr. Nikolai Germogenov (Sakha Republic of Russia), Mr. Natsagdorjiyn Tseveenmyadag (Mongolia), Mr. Wang Wei (Jiangxi Province, China), Mr. Wang Hui (Yangcheng Nature Reserve, China), Dr. Kim Jin-han (Republic of Korea), Mr. Osamu Harada (Hokkaido, Japan) and Mr. Mikio Suematsu (Yashiro, Japan). Dr. Kim Jin-han and officers of the Suncheon City Government set up the exhibition and translated the titles into Korean in Suncheon. Mr. Yukihiro Kawamitsu, Mr. Naohide Uehara and Miss Saya Murakami helped to organize the exhibition in Okinawa, and Miss Ayano Sueyoshi worked on the Japanese translation.

**A joint effort to reveal relationships among cranes, other waterbirds,
water levels, and aquatic food plants at Poyang Lake, China.**

Li Fengshan,
International Crane Foundation



Poyang Lake in Jiangxi Province of China is one of the most important areas in Asia for wintering waterbirds (for example, the lake supports 98% of the world's Siberian Cranes, 60% of the world's White-naped Cranes, and 50% of the world's Swan Geese). Cranes and other waterbirds wintering here appear extremely vulnerable to changes in the ecology of wetlands both inside and outside Poyang Lake Nature Reserve. Nature reserve management is hampered, unfortunately, by the lack of basic, essential information about the relationships linking wintering waterbirds with water levels and distribution of food plants such as *Vallisneria spiralis* that are essential for Siberian Cranes *Grus leucogeranus* and many other waterbirds at the reserve. Research is needed to understand these relationships to assure the long-term survival of the Siberian Cranes and other wintering waterbirds.

To address this need, the Poyang Lake Nature Reserve (PLNR) and the International Crane Foundation (ICF) proposed that a cooperative research and conservation program be implemented at Poyang Lake. This cooperative project titled Studies of Ecological Relationships Among Cranes and Other Large Waterbirds, Water Levels, and Aquatic Food Plants at Poyang Lake was approved by the State Forestry Administration of China in early 1999.

The goal of this project is to study relationships among waterbirds, water levels, and food plants as a basis for conservation planning for threatened wetlands at Poyang Lake. Specifically, this project aims to:

understand the relationship connecting cranes with water levels and distribution and abundance of water plants;

determine the dynamics of crane population distribution and fluctuation at Poyang Lake nature reserve and within the whole Poyang Lake basin; and

after sufficient data is collected, make specific, practical waterbird conservation and management recommendations for PLNR and the whole Poyang Lake basin.

Four lakes in the area -- Dahuchi, Shahu, Meixihu and Sixiahu -- are selected as study sites because they reflect different substrates, sizes, human-use patterns, response to the 1998 flood, and historical use by cranes. In each lake, two vegetation transects were set up and density and biomass of food plants (mainly *Vallisneria*) are sampled during plant growing season, and, in winter, winter buds of *Vallisneria* are sampled along the transects. Water levels and turbidity are recorded in each lake. In rainy season when the above lakes are mingled with Poyang Lake, water level data on Ganjiang and Xiuhe rivers are purchased. Numbers and locations in each lake of cranes and some large water birds, such as Oriental White Storks, White Spoonbills, Tundra Swans, and Swan Geese are recorded. Relevant meteorological data are also purchased to model changes in water levels of the small lakes in winter due to precipitation and evaporation.

Three aerial surveys on cranes and large waterbirds for the whole Poyang Lake basin have been conducted by PLNR, two in winter 1998/1999 and one in February 2000. In addition, project staff from PLNR will be undertaking graduate and undergraduate training as part of this effort.

Financial support for this project has been provided by the Jiangxi Forestry Department, the Cracid Breeding and Conservation Center, the Brehm Fund for International Bird Conservation, and ICF members.

New GEF Project Begins on Wetlands for Siberian Cranes

Crawford Prentice
Regional Coordinator
Siberian Crane GEF Project

Following a period of intensive preparation led by the International Crane Foundation (ICF), a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project on the Conservation of Wetlands and Migratory Corridors Required by Siberian Cranes and Other Waterbirds began in March. The PDF B phase of the project will be completed in March 2001 with the submission of a comprehensive five year Full Project proposal.

The project is being implemented through UNEP, and is being coordinated by ICF and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). The project aims to conserve the critical sites that are used by Siberian Cranes for breeding (in Russia), staging during migration (all four countries), and the main wintering grounds (in China and Iran). National experts are carrying out the work in each of these countries.

Plans will be developed to conserve the overall biodiversity at selected wetlands (see table), most of which are of international importance for a variety of reasons. The project will focus on specific management activities at these sites, and will also strengthen coordination of the flyway site networks used by the Siberian Cranes in Eastern and Central Asia, in cooperation with existing initiatives including the CMS MoU on the Siberian Crane, North East Asia Crane Site Network, and the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Strategy.

The first project Steering Committee meeting was hosted in Moscow on 15-17 March by the All Russian Research Institute for Nature Conservation and Reserves. The process for developing the GEF Full Project proposal was reviewed, national workplans were prepared, and mechanisms for flyway coordination discussed. Between May and December, information will be collected on current and planned activities, legal protection status, threats, and the views of local communities at the project sites.

For further information, please contact:

Crawford Prentice, Regional Coordinator, GEF Project, 43/7 Viewcraig Gardens, Edinburgh EH8 9UW, UK. Tel/fax: +44 131 556 9175, Email: cpcranes@aol.com

Claire Mirande, Project Manager, International Crane Foundation, PO Box 447, E11376 Shady Lane Road, Baraboo, WI 53913-0447, USA. Tel: +1 608 356 9462, ext.122, fax: +1 608 356 9465, Email: mirande@savingcranes.org

Table of Sites Selected for Siberian Crane GEF Project

Country	Site Name
China	Poyang Lake Basin (Jiangxi) R*
China	Zhalong Nature Reserve (Heilongjiang) R
China	Xianghai Nature Reserve (Jilin) R
China	Momoge Nature Reserve (Jilin)
China	Keerqin Nature Reserve (Inner Mongolia)
Iran	Fereydoon Kenar & Ezbaran Damgahs
Iran	Ardabil staging area
Kazakhstan	Naurzum Lake System (including Sarykopa Lake System)
Kazakhstan	Kulagol Lake
Kazakhstan	Sonkebay Lake
Kazakhstan	Zharsor Lake and Urkash Lake
Kazakhstan	Tantegir Hollow Lakes System
Kazakhstan	Sypsyn-Agash Lakes System
Kazakhstan	Selected Actiubinski Region Wetlands
Kazakhstan	Selected Atyrau Region Wetlands
Russia	Kytalyk Resource Reserve / Khroma *
Russia	Aldan-Amga Rivers Basin Wetlands
Russia	Kunovat River Basin Wetlands
Russia	Wetlands between Konda and Aymka Rivers (Uvat Region)
Russia	Trans-boundary Wetlands in Tyumen and Kurgan Regions R
Russia	Volga Delta, including Ilmeni lakes wetlands R

R - Ramsar Site; * - NE Asia Crane Site Network

Note 1 - further sites are under review and may be included in the GEF Full Project

Note 2 – levels of project intervention will vary between sites

From the editor

Simba Chan
Crane Flyway Officer

This is the second edition of the Crane Net News, the newsletter of the North East Asian Crane Site Network.

Firstly I must apologize for the delay of publishing the newsletter. We hoped the newsletter would be at least an annual publication. However, to compile a newsletter and have it translated in four or five languages is far from easy. I owed great debts to my colleagues who helped in publishing the last issue, especially to Ms Yuko Inui (who helped all logistics in printing and translated the first newsletter into Japanese), Mrs. Fumiko Shimazaki (who translated the first newsletter into Russian), Mr. Kazuo Koyama and Mr. Yukihiko Kosugi (who helped to put the first issue onto the internet website).

In this issue, I am especially grateful to George Archibald, Li Fengshan and Crawford Prentice who provided interesting information on cranes in this and other regions. I would also like to thank Ms Shiho Miyazaki who helped to put this issue onto the website.

All readers are very welcomed to contribute in this newsletter. Please send us articles you want to share with crane researchers and conservationists throughout North East Asia. We hope this newsletter will build a bridge connecting different countries and languages. That is the reason why although translation of the newsletter is not easy, we would still like to continue to issue the newsletter in different languages.

As we will have more activities in the near future I would like to have a more frequent newsletter issued, probably in electronic form. I would be grateful if you are interested to participate the compilation of the newsletter.

Finally I would like to thank all who have supported the Crane Network with information and advice, particularly the members of the Working Group of the Crane Network.

The production of this newsletter is generously support by the Japan Fund for Global Environment. I express my gratitude on behalf of all the recipient of the newsletter and all who love nature and cranes, for their continue support to the activities of the Carne Network.



The Crane Flyway Office is always very serious at meetings. Taken in July 2000

See you next. Remember conservationists are nice people.

So stay nice.