

Crane Net News

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The Newsletter of the North East Asian Crane Site Network



Education workshop at Kushiro

February 2002

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Contents

Foreword: Conservation of Cranes in China.....	3
From the New Chairman of the North East Asian Crane Site Network.....	5
Reports from the Crane Working Group.....	6
Report on the overall activities of the Crane Network.....	9
Reports of major activities of the Crane Network	
1. Workshops on public education.....	11
2. Wintering Crane Dispersal Project.....	16
Profile of Network Sites: Kiritappu.....	18
New sites to the North East Asian Crane Site Network.....	20
International Crane Workshop in Beijing, August 2002.....	22
Updates on the Siberian Crane GEF Project.....	24
Accounts of cranes and storks on the Asian Red Data Book.....	26
Report from other regions: Cranes in France.....	28
New books and publications.....	32
Rolex award for Enterprise.....	33
From the editor.....	34

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Foreword: Conservation of Cranes in China

WANG Wei
State Forestry Administration
People's Republic of China



Cranes belong to a very special group of birds in the natural ecosystem. Their attractive plumage, sweet calls, and handsome features have enriched our life with poetic colors and stamina of nature. Protection of cranes is not only an important task in biodiversity conservation, it is also a main target of wetland conservation.

China locates in the center of East Asia. With a variety of topography and climates, and a rich resource of wetlands, China has provided many ideal habitats for wintering, breeding and staging of different species of cranes. Of the 15 species of cranes living in the world, 9 species naturally occur in China. These include globally threatened species listed by the Red Data Book of IUCN (2001): Siberian Crane, Red-crowned Crane, Black-necked Crane, White-naped Crane, Hooded Crane and Sarus Crane.

The Chinese Government has taken crane conservation very seriously. More than 70 nature reserves have been established for the protection of cranes. Each year about 70 million yuans (approximately 8.5 million US dollars) are used on crane conservation, including activities such as population survey, banding, breeding, protection and management.

The "Wildlife Protection Law of the People's Republic of China" enacted in 1988 clearly stated how important species were protected under legal measures, and placed all 9 species of cranes in China under the List of Nationally Protected Wildlife. It also regulated local governments at prefecture and province level to plan for education and awareness campaign on wildlife conservation. Dates for

launching the Wildlife Conservation Propaganda Month and the Love Bird Week to promote wildlife conservation awareness in the general public had been chosen according to local situations. In 1984, the Chinese Wildlife Conservation Association founded a Committee on Crane Conservation to organize and develop activities on crane conservation and education. To confront some damaging incidents to cranes in certain areas in China, the State Forestry Administration announced “An Urgent Notification on Strengthening Bird Conservation” in October 1999 to ban hunting, selling, purchasing and exporting wild birds, and has strengthened conservation management on roosting and staging sites. In the last two years, law enforcement campaigns “Operation Hoh Xil (Kekexili) Yihao (Number One Hoh Xil)”, “Operation Nanfang Erhao (Number Two Southern)”, and “Operation Lieying (Hunting Hawk)” by the State Forestry Administration and other law enforcement departments have successfully cracked down illegal practices of poaching and smuggling of wildlife. In 2001, in order to further develop the work on wildlife conservation, for the first time the State Forestry Administration included the Program on Wildlife Conservation and Nature Reserve Construction as one of the six National Major Ecological Programs of Forestry. Crane conservation had been included as one of the fifteen important species conservation projects of this wildlife conservation program. This will greatly enhance the management of the crane conservation program, and will give an unprecedented increase of investment to crane conservation work.

Cranes are long distance migrants, often they have to migrate through several countries. International cooperation in the conservation program is very important. China has respectively signed bilateral protocols on migratory birds conservation with Japan and Australia at national government level. In order to cooperate and communicate with neighboring countries, to exchange experience, and to enhance levels in crane conservation, research and management, China enlisted four national level nature reserves: Xingkai Hu, Yellow River Delta, Yancheng and Poyang Hu (Poyang Lake) to the North East Asian Crane Site Network when it was founded at the International Workshop on Wetland and Waterbird Conservation in North East Asia, held in Qinhuangdao, China in 1997. In 2002, six more national level nature reserves: Zhalong, Xianghai, Sanjiang, Shuangtai Hekou, Shengjin Hu (Shengjin Lake) and Cao Hai were added on the list of the Crane Network by the Chinese Government to promote cooperation. In addition, the State Forestry Administration has been working effectively with international organizations such as the International Crane Foundation, World Wide Fund for Nature and the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) on crane conservation.

Conservation of wildlife is the responsibility to all the people in the world. As the government agency responsible to wildlife management, the State Forestry Administration will continue to regard crane conservation as an important content in our wildlife conservation work. We will cooperate with other countries and relevant organizations and contribute our efforts to protect these magnificent birds.

From the New Chairman of the North East Asian Crane Site Network

Yutaka KANAI

Wild Bird Society of Japan



I have been concerning the conservation matters about cranes for 20 years, and from 1991 I have been working on the research projects on tracking the migration of cranes by means of satellite. For these projects I traveled to Yakutia, north-east China, Nepal, India and South Korea, and learnt various questions on crane conservation at different sites along the migratory route. I believe a good system is an important factor to the long term conservation of cranes.

I succeeded Mr Noritaka Ichida as the Working Group Chair of the North East Asia Crane Site Network last year. I am very grateful to the support of the members of the Working Group. I feel I have a heavy responsibility, and I would work my best to serve the Crane Network.

As we have started the implementation of the Action Plan of the Crane Network, our conservation activities have entered a new phase. Not only crane species, we also have to concern the conservation matters of the Oriental Stork. To identify important sites, to avoid over-conservation of cranes, to empower conservation stakeholders, to improve communication of crane researchers are just some of our works to be done.

The above tasks are of course not easy, and cannot be handled just by the Chair of the Working Group and the Flyway Officer. I hope people from different countries would join us to develop the Crane Network. We will of course do our best, but your support is essential.

Report from the Crane Working Group

The Working Group of the North East Asian Crane Site Network was formed in 1997. Some members have changed and added in 2002. The full list of Working Group member as of January 2003 is:

National Representatives:

Vladimir A. ANDRONOV	Russian Federation
Natsagdorjiyn TSEVEENMYADAG	Mongolia
WANG Wei	People's Republic of China
PAK U-il	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
KIM Jin-han	Republic of Korea
Yutaka KANAI	Japan

Crane and Stork Specialists

Nikolai I. GERMOGENOV (Russia)	Crane Specialist from the breeding grounds
QIAN Fawen (China)	Crane Specialist from the wintering grounds
Jim HARRIS (ICF)	IUCN Crane Specialist
Yuri DARMAN (WWF-Russia)	Stork Specialist

At the Working Group Meeting in Korea (2000), it was suggested and subsequently approved that conservation activities of storks in North East Asia, particularly those concerning the globally threatened Oriental Stork, should also be covered under the North East Asian Crane Site Network because of the overlapping in sites and conservation personnel, and establishing a separate Stork Network in North East Asia was not on the agenda of any organizations. This has been written into the Action Plan of the Crane Network but a Working Group member had not been nominated until 2002.

This new Working Group member who represents stork experts in North East Asia is Dr. Yuri Darman, Chairman of the Russian Stork Working Group.

Mr. Noritaka Ichida, formerly the Chairman and Japanese national representative to the Working Group, resigned from the Working Group in 2001. The Ministry of the Environment, Japan nominated Mr. Yutaka Kanai, Director of the Conservation Division of the Wild Bird Society of Japan, as the successor of Mr. Ichida to represent Japan at the Working Group. At the Working Group meeting on 27 February 2002, members of the Working Group agreed Mr. Kanai should also succeed Mr. Ichida as the Chair of the Crane Working Group.

Two Working Group meetings were held in 2001 and 2002:

1. 15 March 2001. Dongying City (Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve), China

The most important topic of discussion at this meeting was the education and ecotourism workshop held at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, and the preparation of the follow-up workshop in Kushiro, early 2002. Other issues discussed included:

- The International Children Art Exhibition on Cranes: The exhibition was started in Suncheon, Republic of Korea, March 2000. It was then held in Naha (Japan) in October 2000 and in Mongolia 2000 – 2001 (Please refer to the Crane Net News No.2). The paintings had been brought to China by Mr. Tsevenmyadag and an exhibition in China was planned as part of the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the 'Love Bird Week' in April and May 2001.
- Discussion of potential new sites to the Crane Network (see also the report of the Working Group Meeting held in 2002.)
- Discussion on improving communication between Crane Network Sites. Members agreed to encourage Network Sites to train and keep at least one person that can understand and write simple English for communication.
- Report on the successful breeding of Oriental Storks using artificial nesting platform in North East China, and the progress of drafting a conservation strategy for the Oriental Stork.

2. 27 and 28 February 2002. Kushiro, Japan.

At this meeting new members joined the Working Group. Mr. Kanai was nominated and accepted by all members to be the new Chair of the Working Group. The other main topic was the follow-up activity of the Kushiro Workshop: a training course in Mongolia was proposed and discussed at this meeting.

Other topics of discussion included:

- The Siberian Crane GEF Program: Progress of the GEF application and discussion on how to coordinate the activities. It was agreed that the work on the eastern flyway of the Siberian Crane should be under the umbrella of the Crane Network. A small Siberian Crane subgroup would be formed to include some Working Group members and the Flyway Officer. This subgroup would focus on matters relevant to the Siberian Crane GEF Program (please refer to a separate report in this issue)
- Report on the progress of drafting the Oriental Stork Action Plan.
- Discussion on adding new sites to the Crane Network: Russia had 2 – 3 potential sites to be added to the Network. China intended to add 6 more sites in the year 2002 (see a separate report in this issue). Mongolia had identified one potential site. At the Kushiro Workshop, representatives from Gumi City

of RO Korea pledged to add the migratory stop-over site at Gumi to the Crane Network. New sites in Japan were also under consideration.

- On the International Crane Day. The idea of having an International Crane Day on 7 March (the anniversary of the launch of the Crane Network) had been discussed since the Working Group meeting in February 2000. However, the Russian delegates said early March would be too early for the cranes to arrive in Russia so it would not be easy to organize public activities when cranes are not seen in the field. They suggested different countries should have different dates. No decision was made and this will be discussed at the next meeting.
- On the joint survey on breeding Red-crowned Crane, White-naped Crane and Oriental Stork in 2004 as written in the Action Plan (2001-2005) of the Crane Network. Some research fund might be available when the Siberian Crane GEF Program is approved. Other Working Group members also suggested potential funding sources. Details of this survey are to be discussed at the next Working Group meeting.

Report on the overall activities of the Crane Network

Simba CHAN
Flyway Officer
North East Asian Crane Site Network

2001 and 2002 are the first two years for the implementation of the Action Plan 2001-2005.

From January 2001 to the first half of 2002, the North East Asian Crane Site Network (NEACSN) has organized two major events, plus other less expensive but nonetheless important routine works.

The major events are:

- a. The two workshops on education and ecotourism management at the crane sites:
First workshop: 14-19 March 2001, Dongying City (Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve), China.
Second Workshop: 27 February – 2 March 2002, Kushiro City, Japan
- b. Meetings on preparation of dispersal of over-concentrated cranes from Izumi, Japan
First Meeting: 12 March 2001, Beijing City, China
Second Meeting: 25 March 2002, Incheon City, Republic of Korea

More details are available in this issue.

Other activities conducted by the Flyway Officer to promote the Crane Network and conservation of cranes and storks in North East Asia include:

- Discussion on the possibility of nomination of new sites to the Crane Network.
- Assisting mutual understanding between reserve workers of Crane Network sites in different countries. The cross-visit of the workshops held at the Yellow River Delta (2001) and Kushiro (2002) served this purpose well.
- Planning for a training course to be taken place in Mongolia.
- Assisting the IUCN to collecting information to draft the Action Plan for the Oriental Stork.
- Editing and drafting a handbook on education and ecotourism..
- Assisting distribution of the handbook on crane research (output of the Muraviovka Workshop, 1998 – please refer to the Crane Net News No.1).
- Arranging official Crane Network certificated signed by the Chair of the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee (MWCC) and the Chairs of the Crane Working Group to be presented to the participants of the International Crane Workshop, Beijing, 8-9 August 2002. (Please refer to a separate report on the Workshop in this issue)
- Fundraising: Funding was secured for the two education workshops in China (March 2001) and Japan (February – March 2002), and the meetings on crane dispersal in China (March 2001) and Republic of Korea (March 2002). Funding application in progress for the training course in Mongolia, August – September 2003.

- Routinely promoting the Crane Network at national and international meetings, such as the Asian Wetland Symposium 2001 (August 2001, Penang, Malaysia), Symposium on conservation of cranes in North East Asia (March 2002, Kushiro, Japan), International Crane Workshop (August 2002, Beijing, China) and the Side-event on Asian-Pacific Flyway, the 8th Meeting of Contacting Parties, Ramsar Convention (November 2002, Valencia, Spain).

Reports on major activities of the Crane Network

1. Workshops on public education

This was the first of the two workshops on public education at the Crane Network sites funded by the Danone Corporate Group (France) and the French Global Environment Facility.

The objectives were:

- To strengthen the communication between sites in the North East Asian Crane Site Network (henceforth the Crane Network) on sharing of experience on public education and visitor management.
- To assist Crane Network sites to develop guidelines and plans on public education and visitor management.
- To produce a handbook on visitor management and public education (including designing visitor centers) for wetland conservation.

Two workshops were organized to bring officers and managers from Crane Network sites in Russia, Mongolia, China, South Korea, and Japan together for discussion on improvement of education and ecotourism management at these sites. The workshops were held in March 2001 and February/March 2002, in Dongying City, China and Kushiro, Japan respectively.

At the first workshop, participants from different countries were divided into three groups to discuss the design and production of simple education material they agreed would be useful for the education program at their nature reserves. They were asked to do their best to communicate and cooperate with other team members from March 2001 to February 2002 to produce the assigned product.

The first workshop was held at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve (located in Dongying City), because there was no education program or facilities at this reserve. There was nothing to influence the thinking and discussion of the participants. The second workshop was to finalize and report the group projects. Kushiro was chosen to hold this conclusive workshop because of its good facilities and experience (the best for crane sites in North East Asia). The idea was, after the participants had experienced designing their own education program, that they would be taken to see some good existing examples. This would help inspire the participants to further develop their education programs.

The first workshop was convened at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, Dongying City, Shandong Province, China. 14-19 March 2001.

45 participants from 7 countries (Russia, Mongolia, China, RO Korea, Japan, France and Belgium) participated the workshop. The participants were warmly welcomed by the Dongying City upon their arrival on 14 March.



Workshop at Dongying, Yellow River Delta. March 2001 (Photo: Simba Chan)

On 15 March, presentations on public education and visitor management of some reserves were given as examples. These included Poyang Hu National Nature Reserve (by Mr. Ji Weitao), Kushiro Marshes (by Ms Masako Inoue) and Mai Po Marches Nature Reserve (by the Flyway Officer). Mr. Willem Van den Bossche of BirdLife Belgium gave an evening talk on the study of migration of European White Storks.

In the subsequent days the participants were divided into three groups of mixed nationalities. Each group was requested to discuss and produce a product that the members agreed would be useful to the education program of their reserves.



Workshop participants at the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve. March 2001 (Photo: Simba Chan)

The second workshop was convened in Kushiro, Japan. 27 February – 2 March 2002.

40 participants from 8 countries (Russia, Mongolia, China, RO Korea, Japan, Bhutan, France and USA) participated in this workshop.

The workshop summarized results of the discussion since the previous workshop. Materials were collected for a handbook on education and visitor management. This will be published in 2003.



Participants at the Akan International Crane Center. February 2002 (Photo: Simba Chan)

The study tour to visitor centers of Kushiro inspired all overseas visitors. The Koreans and Chinese told the Flyway Officer that they would like to design study centers and promote education programs following the Kushiro experience. Participants were especially impressed by the local community involvement at Kiritappu Wetland Center, the education program such as the crane call sound cards at Tsurui-Ito Tancho Sanctuary the remote monitoring camera of Akkeshi Waterbird Observation Center, and other lively exhibitions at Toro-ko Center and Akan International Crane Center. Some overseas delegates said they would like to send more nature reserve workers to visit these sites again.



Chinese participants presenting education material from their reserves at the Workshop.
(From left to right): Ji Weitao (Poyang Hu), Wang Hui (Yancheng),
Ning Changlin (Xianghai), Li Changyou (Zhalong) (Photo: Simba Chan)



Workshop at Kushiro. March 2002. (Photo: Simba Chan)

Acknowledgement:

The workshops have been principally funded by the Société des Eaux Minérales d'Evian of the Danone Corporate Group (France) and the French Global Environment Facility through the Bureau of the Convention of Wetlands. The Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (BirdLife International partner in France) assisted as coordinator of this program.

Some local expenditure in China and Japan were covered by the State Forestry Administration (China), Ministry of the Environment (Japan), Dongying City Government (China), Kushiro City Government (Japan), and Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve (China)

The following people have assisted the Flyway Officer in logistic matters of the workshops: Qian Fawen (National Bird Banding Center, China), Lu Juanzhang, Zhao Yanmao (both from the Yellow River Delta National Nature Reserve, China), Shinsho K. Hisashi, Yamauchi Masashi (both from the International Wetland Center, Kushiro City, Japan), Inoue Masako (Kushiro Zoo), and Furukawa Setsu (Wild Bird Society of Japan).

The following people from the Hokkaido visitor centers have given good explanation on the work of the centers to the workshop participants on 28 February and 1 March 2002: Arai Hisakazu (Akkeshi Waterfowl Observation Center), Ito Toshikazu Kiritappu Wetland Trust, Satoh Mitsunori (Lake Toro Eco-museum Center), Harada Osamu (Tsurui-Ito Tancho Sanctuary), Dr. Koga Kimiya (Akan International Crane Center), Takashima Kenji (Kushiro City Tancho Nature Park), Fujimoto Tetsuo (Kushiro Shitsugen Wildlife Center). Mrs. Kurosawa Yuko helped in Japanese – English interpretation.

Wim Van Den Bossche (BNVR - BirdLife Belgium) gave a wonderful presentation on White Stork conservation and management in Europe at the first workshop. Jigme Tobgay (Royal Society for Protection of Nature, Bhutan) gave a presentation on education work in Bhutan at the second workshop.

Last but not least, Alison Duncan of the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, and Christophe Lefebvre, Conservatoire de L'Espace Littoral et des Rivages Lacustres, were extremely helpful in coordinating with the donor to this programme.

The workshops would not be successful without the help from all named above.



2. Wintering Crane Dispersal Project

The cranes in North East Asia suffered a decline to the brink of extinction in the first half of the 20th century. Since the 1950s, because of better protection measures and a higher public awareness in the range countries, some crane populations gradually recovered.

One of the best examples of such recovery is the increase of wintering cranes at the plain of Izumi, Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, where wintering cranes (mainly Hooded Cranes and White-naped Cranes) increased from about 300 birds in the late 1940s to over 10,000 birds in the late 1990s.

This increase should be welcomed, as it shows with support from both government and local communities, we can save threatened species from extinction. However, as the number of cranes at Izumi increases, a new problem arises. The feeding and roosting area at Izumi is only about 60 hectares. The high concentration of cranes makes them vulnerable to infectious disease and other natural disasters. It is a potential threat not only to the wintering population at Izumi but to the whole species because the wintering Hooded Cranes at Izumi accounts for about 80% of the world population, and White-naped Cranes about half of the world population.

In recent years many conservationists proposed identifying new wintering grounds for dispersing part of the wintering cranes at Izumi. After the unfortunate incidents when 10,000 Baikal Teals (a globally vulnerable species) died of Avian Cholera in RO Korea in late 2000, and more than 70 Black-faced Spoonbills (a globally endangered species) died of botulism in southern Taiwan in December 2002, the need for finding alternative wintering grounds and establish some more wintering population of cranes becomes obvious.

The meeting held in Beijing and Dongying, March 2001 was the first attempt to discuss the feasibility of the dispersal. Thirteen crane specialists from China, Japan and South Korea were invited to discuss favorable factors of wintering cranes and identify potential sites. They identified important factors for the choice of alternative sites, and some suitable sites were suggested.



Workshop in Beijing. March 2001 (Photo: Simba Chan)

In March 2002, a meeting was held in Inchoen, Republic of Korea to discuss possibilities of establishing new wintering sites on the Korean peninsula. Site surveys had been conducted by scientists from Japan and Korea to collect baseline information of potential sites.

Study of potential wintering sites in Japan is also underway.

The meeting in Beijing was funded by the BirdLife International Asia Council and the Japan Fund for Global Environment. The meeting in Inchoen was part of the Japan-Korea Cooperation Program funded by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan. The survey of potential sites in Japan is a Wild Bird Society of Japan project funded by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Japan.

Profile of Network Sites: Kiritappu

Shigeo NAGAOKA
Kiritappu Wetland Center

The Kiritappu-shitsugen (shitsugen means marsh in Japanese) is a peat bog of about 3,000 hectares on the Pacific coast of eastern Hokkaido. The area is designated as a Prefecture Nature Park with the nearby Akkeshi Bay and Akkeshi Lake.

Between the coastal marsh and the interior farmlands is a forest of about three kilometers wide. Its function is to protect the farmlands from sea fog and maintain the water source for the wetland.

In Kiritappu, the dominant wetland vegetation is Sphagnaceae moss. About 800 hectares of such habitat was designated as a Natural Monument in 1922. In 1993, it is designated as a Ramsar Site combining neighboring lakes of Hichirippu and Mochirippu.

In 2002, there are 11 pairs of Red-crowned Cranes breeding at Kiritappu. Biwase Bay at the Pacific side is the migration staging area of more than 100 Black Scoters in February and March every year. Biwase Bay has joined the North East Asian Anatidae Site Network.

The islands of Kenbokki-jima and Ko-jima are breeding grounds of Leach's Storm Petrels (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*), Japanese Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax filamentosus*) and Slaty-backed Gulls (*Larus schistisagus*). Ko-jima Island is one of the few breeding grounds of Tufted Puffins (*Lunda cirrhata*) in Japan.

The Kiritappu-shitsugen Center was built by the Hamanaka Town Government at a location that overlooks the marsh below. The Center is the central facility not only for sightseeing but also for education. Each year many students and children, both from nearby districts and far away places, including those living outside Hokkaido, come and use the facilities of the Center. Since 2002, use of the observation trails increases because of the education programs.

For creating a more comfortable and friendly atmosphere to the visitors, the Center was jointly managed by the Town Government and the 'Friends of the Wetland Center', which is an organization founded by the residents of the town. 'Friends of the Wetland Center' is also promoting ecotourism to the area.

Fortunately, Kiritappu is not facing the same threats such as encroachment of agriculture nor becoming dry as many other wetland sites. The biggest problem is the private land ownership of the area. About 30% of the land inside the Ramsar Site is privately owned. Protection of the area

is secured because of the cooperation of the land owners. However, as the land owners are aging and some have since moved out of the district, to place the area under public protection is more desirable. In April 2000, the Kiritappu-shitsugen Fan Club, an organization formed for the long-term conservation of the wetland habitat, became the Kiritappu Wetland Trust, a registered Non-profit Organization. It is now actively working on purchasing the privately owned land inside the Kiritappu wetland.



Kiritappu wetland (Photo: Shigeo Nagaoka)



Mr Toshikazu Ito of the Kiritappu Wetland Trust greeting visitors from other Crane Network sites at the Kiritappu Wetland Center (Photo: Simba Chan)

New sites to the North East Asian Crane Site Network:

China officially submitted application of six sites to the NEACSN and these sites have been officially listed to the Crane Network by the Migratory Waterbird Conservation Committee in June 2002:

1. Zhalong National Nature Reserve (210,000 ha), Heilongjiang Province.
Important breeding site of Red-crowned Cranes (about 16% of global population) and White-naped Cranes (breeding and migrating birds exceeds 1% of global population), and important stop-over site of Hooded Cranes (about 4% of global population) and Siberian Cranes (10-20% global population). **Ramsar Site.**
2. Sanjiang National Nature Reserve (198,100 ha), Heilongjiang Province.
Important breeding and staging site of Red-crowned Cranes (a few pairs), White-naped Cranes (about 3% of global population) and Oriental Storks (exceeds 1% of global population). **Ramsar Site.**
3. Xianghai National Nature Reserve (105,467 ha), Jilin Province.
Important breeding site of Red-crowned Cranes (2-3% of the global population) and White-naped Cranes, and stop-over site for Hooded Cranes and Siberian Cranes (believed to be more than 1% of the global population). **Ramsar Site.**
4. Shuangtai Hekou National Nature Reserve (80,000 ha), Liaoning Province.
Important breeding site of Red-crowned Cranes (2 – 3% of the global population), and stop-over site for Hooded Cranes, Siberian Cranes (10-20% of the global population) and Oriental Storks (12-16% of global population).
5. Shengjin Hu National Nature Reserve (33,333 ha), Anhui Province.
Important wintering site of Oriental Stork (about 8% of the global population), Hooded Cranes (about 4% of the global population), and White-naped Crane (about 7% of the global population), and stop-over site of Siberian Cranes.
6. Cao Hai National Nature Reserve (12,000 ha), Guizhou Province
Important wintering ground for Black-necked Cranes (about 6% of the global population) and the eastern population of Eurasian Cranes (about 10% of the East Asian population).

Photos of two new Crane Network sites:



Cao Hai National Nature Reserve, Guizhou Province (Photo: Li Fengshan)



Education activity at Xianghai National Nature Reserve, Jilin Province
(Photo: Li Lianshan)

International Crane Workshop in Beijing, August 2002

The International Crane Workshop was convened on 9 and 10 August, at the ancient temple of Wofosi in the northwest of Beijing, China. It was held just before the International Ornithological Congress, which was also convened in Beijing.

More than 80 crane experts from all over the world attended this workshop. More than 30 papers were presented and there was a good discussion on various issues such as regional crane research and conservation, captive and breeding biology, cranes and the environment, crane banding and migration, and the future of crane research and conservation. Mr. Wang Wei, the Vice-chair of the Working Group of the Crane Network, presented the flyway certificates to representatives of Network Sites at the Opening Ceremony. The Flyway Officer of the North East Asian Crane Site Network made a presentation on the view of crane conservation in the 21st century., and introduced the contents of the Action Plan of the Crane Network.



Mr Wang Wei presenting certificates to Crane Network Sites in China (Photo: Simba Chan)

In addition to the presentations and discussions, the workshop has reacted to a recent ecological disaster in Mongolia: the misuse of rodenticide resulted in the massive death of Demoiselle Cranes, raptors and carnivores. After discussion, the workshop drafted an open letter to the Mongolian Government to urge the careful use of pesticides and steppe management. It also recommended an international workshop on steppe ecological management should be held in Mongolia, and assisted in application of funds from the Bonn Convention.

The crane and waterbird group of the Chinese Ornithological Society also took the opportunity to organize a meeting of Chinese experts on the future development of crane and waterbird research and conservation in China.

After the workshop, a small meeting on the Siberian Crane GEF Project was held at the same

venue on 11th August.

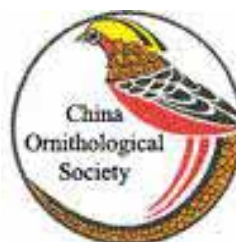


Meeting of the representatives from Crane Network Sites in China (Photo: Simba Chan)



Workshop participants at Wofosi (Photo: Simba Chan)

The workshop was organized jointly by the International Crane Foundation and the Chinese Ornithological Society.



UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project Update

Following several years of preparation, the UNEP/GEF Siberian Crane Wetlands Project has finally been approved and is now starting up. The project will have a duration of six years, and involves the governments of the People's Republic of China, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation as well as ICF, which is responsible for overall project management and execution of regional activities. A Regional Coordination Unit office is being established in Beijing at the National Bird Banding Center – co-located with the project's China National Coordination Unit. The first project steering committee meeting is scheduled for 23-26 April 2003 in NE China, close to Xianghai National Nature Reserve – one of the critical wetland sites included in the project. The Steering Committee Meeting will confirm the project personnel, project management systems and annual workplans for 2003.

The project will be coordinated with other flyway conservation initiatives through a Siberian Crane Flyway Coordinator, Mrs Elena Ilyashenko, based in Moscow. Elena will coordinate flyway level activities of the project in Western and Central Asia, while Simba Chan will be the focal point for coordination of activities in NE Asia. In order to ensure good coordination between the project and the NE Asia Crane Site Network, a subgroup of the Crane Working Group will be established on the Siberian Crane. Meetings of the respective flyway groups will be attended by both Elena Ilyashenko and Simba Chan, thus ensuring good overall coordination.



Claire Mirande, Project Director of the Siberian Crane Wetland Project at the Meeting

(Photo: Simba Chan)

The wider framework for migratory waterbird conservation across the range of the Siberian Crane

includes the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Action Plan, Africa-Eurasia Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) GEF project (in PDF B phase now), Central Asia – India Flyway project (Wetlands International project with Netherlands Government support) as well as Arctic and national level projects.

The project will contribute significantly to the development of the NE Asia Crane Site Network through a wide range of activities at regional, national and site levels. Specifically, it will finance management activities at four existing network sites – Xianghai, Zhalong and Poyang Lake Basin (China) and Kytalyk Resource Reservation in the Yakutian Republic of the Russian Federation. These sites include the main breeding grounds, wintering area and known staging areas for the eastern population of the Siberian Crane. At a regional level, there will be cooperation on training, awareness and information exchange, amongst other subjects.

In addition, exchange of staff between sites, twinning of sites and other links will be established to strengthen the regional site networks. This will include the development of a site network in Western / Central Asia based on the experience of the NE Asia Crane Site Network and within the larger framework of the Asia Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Action Plan.

Further details are available on the project's homepage on the ICF Website: www.savingcranes.org/gefpublic/gefpublic.htm

As well as the project's flyway coordination homepage: www.savingcranes.org/scfc/index.htm

Project Contacts:

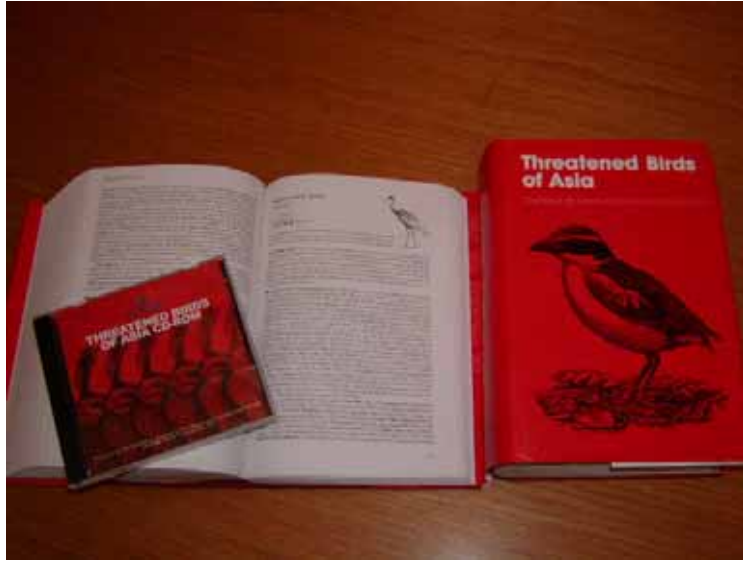
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Accounts of cranes and storks on the Asian Red Data Book



The Red Data Book of Threatened Birds of Asia was published by the BirdLife International in 2001. This 3,000-page publication covers very detailed information on distribution, population, ecology, threats, measures taken and measures proposed for 323 globally threatened bird species found in Asia.

Cranes and storks are relatively well-studied birds so the species accounts are quite long. The species covered under the North East Asian Crane Site Network are listed below with the numbers of pages of the accounts and their IUCN global conservation status (identical to the status listed on the Red Data Book):



The Chinese National RDB Workshop in Hohhot, July 1996 (Photo: Simba Chan)

Siberian Crane (<i>Grus leucogeranus</i> , 18 pages)	Critically endangered
Red-crowned Crane (<i>Grus japonensis</i> , 28 pages)	Endangered
White-naped Crane (<i>Grus vipio</i> , 23 pages)	Vulnerable
Hooded Crane (<i>Grus monacha</i> , 24 pages)	Vulnerable
Black-necked Crane (<i>Grus nigricollis</i> , 28 pages)	Vulnerable
Oriental Stork (<i>Ciconia boyciana</i> , 29 pages)	Endangered

Account files of the Red Data Book species can be downloaded at the website below:

<http://www.rdb.or.id/home.html>

BirdLife International has also launched an interactive website for updating information on Red Data Book species.

The Red Data Book of Threatened Birds of Asia is primarily funded by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan. Wild Bird Society of Japan is the main coordinator of this project on behalf of BirdLife International



Travel report: Cranes in France

Simba Chan
Flyway Officer
North East Asian Crane Site Network

When Alison Duncan and Christophe Lefebre came to China and Japan for the workshops (see separate reports in this issue), they made presentations on the management of cranes in France. They had also suggested that I should go to France and see their cranes. Well, France is quite far from this side of the world. So it was not until I had the chance of attending the Ramsar Convention Conference, in Valencia, Spain in November 2002 that I could make a stop-over in France for a week.

Only one species of crane occurs in France: the Eurasian Crane *Grus grus* that breeds in northern Europe and winters in France and Spain. France has both passage migrant and wintering cranes. The migratory route is a northeast – southwest diagonal passage across France. In recent years more and more cranes winter in France. The main reason is probably not due to changes in climate but the intensification of agriculture made possible by the European Union agriculture policy and subsidies which results in providing more food for cranes in France.

Two areas were visited in November and December:

Champagne-Ardenne, which is about 100km east of Paris, easily reached by train or car in about 2 hours from Paris. The area where you can find cranes is about 2,800 sq. km (radius of about 30 km from the main roost of Lac du Der-Chantecoq). Two sites were visited:



La Ferme aux Grues. November 2002 (Photo: Simba Chan)

- a. La Ferme aux Grues (Farm for the cranes): managed by the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux (LPO, BirdLife partner in France). It has a two-story birding hide for watching cranes. Simple interpretation available. The maize fields are cultivated for the cranes, from January maize is put out for the cranes.
- b. Lac de Der-Chantecoq (Der-Chantecoq Lake): A reservoir of a maximum area of 4,800 ha. The biggest concentration of cranes in the area. Water level slowly drops from July, creating large area of shallow water for cranes and other waterbirds (geese, ducks, shorebirds etc.)

The maximum count in late 2002 was 63,000 cranes during migration. On 24 November 2002 43,000 cranes were still at the area.

The area used to be a migratory stop-over of cranes. In the 1970s less than 100 cranes wintered. Number of wintering birds increased since the late 1980s. Since 1988 more than 1,000 cranes wintered in this area annually.

Two explanations have been suggested on the increase of wintering cranes in this area:

There is a general increase of the number of Eurasian Cranes in France. The total number of cranes migrating through France in the 1970s was about 50,000 birds, the number is now about 140,000 birds. The increase of number of cranes in France is probably due to changes of migratory route of cranes. The population used to migrate through eastern Europe (Balkan) seemed to have diverted to the western route to France and Spain.

Increase in availability of food. In the 1960s and 1970s the area was mainly grassland for grazing. In the 1990s about 30% had turned into maize fields. A nationally and European compensation fund is available for farmers willing to leave their maize fields unplowed during the winter. This leaves more food for the cranes. There are also artificial feeding of the cranes in January and February. On the other hand, there are more conflicts between farmers and cranes and some of the wintering grounds were drying up in Spain.

The agri-environmental measures, since 1993, available for compensation consist of 75 Euros per ha for farmers willing to leave maize fields unplowed until 15 December (Total about 800 ha) and 150 Euro per ha for land unplowed until 15 March (Total about 500 ha).

However, there will be a change of rules in compensation from 2003. The new measure aims at spreading out the conservation measure to a wider area but the total budget is reduced. The crane conservationists in France are skeptical whether it will be as effective as the present measure.

After Champagne-Ardenne, I traveled to the other side of France: Bordeaux in the southwest, about 500 km south-west of Paris. It takes about 4 hours to travel via TGV express train from Paris.

A very big rural area and maize field with a military zone in the middle. The cranes mostly roost inside the military ground in an old flooded sandpit due to the lack of disturbance. The majority of the area is covered in pine plantations dating from the middle of 19th century. Previously heath was the dominant habitat. It is said that cranes used to breed here until the draining and planting of pines profoundly changed the habitat in mid 19th century. In the 1950's some areas were converted to maize fields and cranes began to winter in the area. LPO has built a birdwatching hide in a good site for watching cranes.

This is the major wintering ground of cranes in France. In recent years 25,000 – 50,000 cranes winter in the area annually. The change of number is related to the change in water level of the lakes. When the area was visited on 27 November 2002, at least 2,500 cranes were counted in one single maize field. There are about 10 roosts of cranes in the area, the biggest two are found inside the military zone.



Wintering cranes in Bordeaux. December 2002 (Photo: Simba Chan)

Cranes started to winter from the 1950s and numbers started to increase from the mid 1970s. Local researchers think the increase was the result of a higher breeding success of cranes in northern Germany and Sweden.

No agri-environmental measure are available in this region, but it seems the crane were not

harassed. This is a bit surprising as hunters have a higher political influence in southwestern France and are having conflicts with conservationists. With the change in price supports for maize within the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union some of the maize fields are now being converted into fields for lily bulbs (for the flower market) and grass (for lawns). The effect to cranes is still not known.

The European Crane Working Group has an interesting homepage on migration of cranes in western Europe. The website is maintained and updated by the LPO office in Champagne – Ardenne. This is an interesting website on crane migration. Check it out and see the numbers and photos of these sites at:

<http://perso.club-internet.fr/lpochamp/index.htm>

Finally I would like to thank Emmanuel Le Roy and Cecile Cabon-Le Roy of the LPO Champagne – Ardenne. They showed me the sites in Champagne-Ardenne and explained the program of crane conservation in the area. Laurent Couzy of LPO Aquitaine took me around in the Bordeaux area. Needless to say I must thank Alison Duncan of LPO, and Christophe Lefebvre of the Conservatoire de L'Espace Littoral et des Rivages Lacustres, France, for their suggestion of visiting beautiful France, and for their hospitality during my stay in their country.



LPO Champagne – Ardenne (Photo: Simba Chan)

New books and publications:

1. *The Birds of Heaven* by Peter Matthiessen. (2001, North Point Press. ISBN 0-374-19944-2). Peter Matthiessen is a world famous nature writer. This book is his personal account on his travels related to cranes. The book opens its episode from the International Workshop: Cranes and Storks of the Amur River in 1992, then leads us to the steppes of Mongolia, the jheels in India, the highlands in China and Bhutan, the freezing winter of Japan and Korea to the hot outback in Australia and savanna of Africa, and to a country you normally would not associated with wild cranes: England. Finally he took us back to the USA.
2. *The All of Tancho* by Prof. Hiroyuki Masatomi (2000, Hokkaido Shinbunsha. ISBN 4894531208) This is the summary of a 30 years' study on the Red-crowned Crane by Prof. Masatomi, a leading expert on Red-crowned Cranes. It attractively describes the life history of the crane in four seasons, population and distribution, what the threats are and recommendations on conservation. The book is written in Japanese.
3. *The Cranes, Rails and Bustards of China* by Prof. Wang Qishan and Prof. Yen Chung-wei (2002, National Feng Wang Ku Bird Park, ISBN: 975-01-1440-1). This book covers all species of Grudifromes: Cranes, rails and bustards in China. Distribution, ecology and other information of 9 species of cranes. 19 species of rails, and 3 species of bustards in China are given in detailed species accounts. The book is written in Chinese.
4. *Research on the Red-crowned Crane* by Prof. Ma Yiqing and Li Xiaomin (2002, Shanghai Science and Technology Education Press, ISBN:7-5428-2802-9) This book covers the physiology, ecology, molecular biology, captive breeding and conservation of Red-crowned Cranes in China. The book is written in Chinese.
5. *Cranes of Eurasia* by the Crane Working Group of Eurasia (2002, Crane Working Group Eurasia): A collection of papers of the Crane Working Group of Eurasia in the late 1980s to present. The papers covering information on population, distribution, biology, morphology, captive breeding and reintroduction. Written in Russian with English abstracts.

Rolex Awards for Enterprise

In 2002, one of the laureates of the Rolex Awards for Enterprise was a crane conservationist: Lindy Rodwell from South Africa.

The ceremony took place at Hotel Okura, Tokyo on 23 October 2002. Before the ceremony, each of the five laureates gave a mini-symposium at the Marunouchi Building in Tokyo on 21 October.

The Flyway Officer assisted in the organizing of the mini-symposium at the request of the Rolex Award ceremony organizer. At the mini-symposium the Flyway Officer also made a brief presentation on activities of the North East Asian Crane Site Network.

The Chair of the Crane Working Group and the Flyway Officer were invited to attend the ceremony. Afterwards they had a good discussion with Ms Rodwell, George Archibald, and Kunikazu and Yuria Momose. Ms Rodwell was pleased to learn we have a similar network on crane conservation in North East Asia.



George Archibald, Lindy Rodwell and Simba Chan. October 2002

To know more about the Award and work of Ms Rodwell, please access the following website:

<http://www.rolexawards.com/laureates/laureate2.jsp?id=70>

From the editor

While I was compiling this newsletter I got a copy of Peter Matthiessen's new book on cranes (see page 32 of this newsletter). It brings back many good memories of the Amur Workshop (International Workshop: Cranes and Storks of the Amur River) in 1992. This fantastic workshop brought people from all different countries together. I would also like to write something about it when I have time (perhaps 20 years later).

I met Peter in Hong Kong again in the winter of 1993, after his trip to Poyang (also noted in his book). When I met him at the YMCA in Tsim Sha Tsui, at the waterfront of the Victoria Harbor. He told me how things had changed in Hong Kong that he could not recognize the same harbor he had been some 20 years before.

Yes, things do change, and in eastern Asia it can change beyond recognition within one generation. Anyone who had visited Beijing, Shanghai, or other Asian cities just 10 years ago would have the same feeling.

That is exactly the reason why we have to work hard to conserve what we still have.

Between the last newsletter (2000) and this (2003), there have been lots development to the North East Asian Crane Site Network. It is obvious that we should publish the newsletter more frequently.

This issue should have been published much earlier, I am very sorry for the delay.

I would like to thank all who have contributed to this issue: Director Wang Wei of State Forestry Administration (SFA, China), Mr Yutaka Kanai of Wild Bird Society of Japan, Mr Shigeo Nagaoka of Kiritappu Wetland Center (Japan), and Crawford Prentice of International Crane Foundation (ICF). Dr. Li Fengshan (ICF), Mr Li Lianshan and Mr Qiao Ainan of Xianghai National Nature Reserve have sent me photos of the new network sites. Mr Zhang Dehui of SFA (China), Ms Alison Duncan of LPO (France), Mrs Setsu Furukawa and Mrs Masae Narusue of Wild Bird Society of Japan have all helped me in compiling this newsletter. I thank them all for the support.

The next issue should be published before the end of 2004. Give me a push, or better, give me a hand if it isn't.

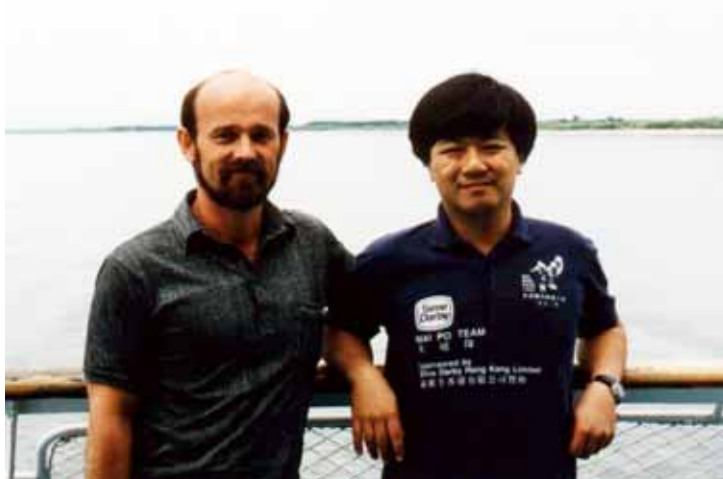


Photo: Yuri Darman and Simba Chan. (At the Amur Workshop, July 1992)