

Season Starts to Count Whooping Cranes

By GAYLORD P. GODWIN
United Press International
WASHINGTON (UPI)—The season for adding up the few whooping cranes left in the world's last flock is now at hand.

The annual migration of the big, graceful birds to winter quarters at the Aransas Wildlife refuge on the Texas Gulf coast is due to start next week.

The birds will come to the refuge from Wood Buffalo National park near Canada's Great Slave lake. They are expected to follow a 2,500-mile aerial path over parts of the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and across the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas to the 47,000-acre refuge on Blackjack peninsula.

Interest in Number

Primary interest in the whoopers will be the number remaining. Almost as important will be the number of young the world's last flock brings from the summer nesting grounds in Canada.

Last spring 28 whoopers lifted their brilliant white bodies with red-crowned heads and seven-foot black-tipped wing-spreads into the air for the long trek north. This was four less than the number which made the southward migration in the fall of 1962 and 10 fewer than the 38-43 adults and five young—which started north in the spring of 1962.

The whoopers, whose trumpet-like calls can be heard at great distances, began to get scarce around the middle of the 19th Century.

Never very numerous, they began showing up with greater infrequency on their range on the Arctic coast to central Mexico and from Utah to South Carolina. Settlement of the country, expansion of agriculture, and related activities, including drainage of wetlands and coastal marshes, reduced their range.

Population Diminishes

As the range shrank and some of the birds were shot, the population diminished until by the early 1920's, when the last observed nest was reported in Saskatchewan, fewer than 50 birds were left to find their way to remote spots on the wintering grounds.

People became concerned. What they once had in profusion was dribbling away. So, in 1937 the government spent \$463,532 to buy the land which became the Aransas Wildlife refuge, a home which also is a sanctuary for the snowy egret, long-billed curlew, wild turkey, Canada goose, and pintail, widgeon, and gadwall duck. White-tailed deer, peccaries, armadillos, rabbits,

opossums, raccoons, and squirrels also inhabit the area. In 1938 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service made its first count of the cranes. There were 14, of which four were young. The next year 22 cranes made

the long flight from Canada. A year later there were 26. But in the fall of 1941, the total dropped to 15. The number fluctuated until in 1962 a peak of 38 was reached. Then 10 disappeared. Where, no

one knows. In 25 years, when the count began, the flock grew only from 14 to 28, hardly a safe margin for a species fighting for survival. The government apparently has spent relatively little on the

cranes. The cost of the wildlife refuge was considerable, but it is home for many species other than the cranes. In the winter of 1962-63, the cost of aerial surveys to count the birds and the cost of grain scattered through the refuge was about \$2,000. The normal upkeep of the refuge itself also is a cost item, but it's difficult to allocate a specific cost item to a crane.

Behavior Unpredictable
Officials of the Fish and Wildlife service describe the behavior of the cranes during the winter as erratic and unpredictable. Over the years it has been their habit to spend most of their time on the east shore flats of the refuge and in similar habitat on Matagorda and St. Joseph Islands, near the Blackjack peninsula.

Blue crabs and other marine life comprise the major portion of the whooper diet. These foods usually are plentiful in the shore areas. Sometimes, though, the cranes wander and have been known to frequent wheat fields about 25 miles from the normal feeding area.

In addition to the flock of wild cranes, there are seven in captivity—six at the Audubon Park zoo in New Orleans, and one in the San Antonio, Tex. zoo. The most noted pair of cranes is Josephine and Crip in the Audubon Park zoo. Josephine is the sole survivor of non-migratory groups which formerly occupied coastal marshes in Southern Louisiana. She was shot in 1940 and brought to the zoo.

Josephine's First Mate
Josephine's first mate was Pete. Pete had been injured on the Platte river near Gothenburg, Neb., in 1936. Josephine and Pete got together in 1948. After a single nesting effort yielding two eggs which did not hatch, Pete died during the autumn of 1949.

Another crane, Crip, wing-injured and unable to migrate, took Pete's place. He was accepted by Josephine to the extent that more than 30 eggs were laid. Nine cranes hatched, of which four survived.

The Fish and Wildlife Service constantly appeals to people to spare the whoopers in every way possible. Its latest appeal reads: "Wanted: Safe Passage for the Whooping Cranes, America's Largest and Rarest Birds."



WATCHES OFFSPRING—World-famed Whooping Crane Josephine flaps a wing as she witnesses her offspring's emergence from its shell in this picture taken in 1962. Naturalists this year will watch the small flock as it migrates to its winter grounds in Texas. (UPI)

University Head Speaks Out For Student Fees in Athletics

EUGENE (UPI)—University of Oregon President Arthur Flemming has spoken out against a move by members of his faculty to keep compulsory student fees from being used to support intercollegiate athletics.

In a strong defense of athletics at a meeting of the Eugene Chamber of Commerce's University Relations Committee, Dr. Flemming said, "I have given and will continue to give all the support I can" to the Oregon athletic program.

Oregon residents attending the university now pay \$110 tuition per term, of which \$6.50 goes to the athletic department.

The Faculty Senate has recommended that support be abolished. After a lively debate, the faculty referred the motion to a committee which would investigate the whole issue of compulsory fees.

However, the preamble to the motion of referral put the faculty on record as believing "the collection of compulsory fees for intercollegiate athletics is improper."

"I do not agree with that reference," Flemming said Thursday.

"Some faculty members who supported the statement... are opposed to our present program of intercollegiate athletics. I am sure that this is true of some faculty members over every institution of higher learning in the country. I can respect such views, but I cannot agree with them."

However, Flemming said he was "delighted" that the faculty committee was going to study the entire issue of compulsory fees.

The committee will be appointed by Flemming and will report to the faculty by its December meeting.

Controversy Old
The present controversy is not the first time the issue of compulsory support of athletics at Oregon has come up.

In 1934-35, the late Richard Neuberger, then an Oregon student and later a U.S. Senator, refused to pay his fees and succeeded in referring to the voters a law which allowed the State System of Higher Education to collect the money. Oregon voters killed the bill.

However, in 1945, the legislature again passed an act enabling the State System to prescribe fees "necessary for the cultural and physical development of the students."

That was interpreted to mean such things as the health service, Student Union activities, gym suit supplies, and athletics.

It is this area the faculty committee now proposes to study. In his defense of intercollegiate sports, Flemming said:

"I believe that we should maintain the same standards in this field that prevail in major universities on the West Coast." "At the same time, constant scrutiny is needed to make certain that it strengthens rather than weakens the ability of the university to perform its primary mission."

Deputies Return Man After Portland Arrest

The Jackson county sheriff's office Thursday returned Raymond Taverni Meadows, 40, from Portland where he had been arrested on a Jackson county warrant charging burglary not in a dwelling. Meadows has admitted the burglary of a cafe near Rogue River Sept. 1, and the attempted burglary of a market in the same area.

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Rogue River Will Observe Week

ROGUE RIVER — Parents in the Rogue River school district are invited to eat lunch in the school cafeteria during National School Lunch week, Mrs. Dorothy Green, head cook, announced Friday.

The invitation is being extended to parents to sample the lunch menu to give them an opportunity to observe in action the program to which the public gives support.

There will be arts and crafts projects and "good health through good food" posters on display throughout the week, Oct. 14-18.

In order to help parents decide which day to eat lunch at school the menus for the week have been released by Mrs. Lillian Hargitt and Mrs. Beatrice Fuller.

Monday's main dish will be spaghetti with meat; Tuesday's pork casserole; Wednesday's hamburgers; Thursday's chili with meat, and Friday's noodle and tuna casserole.

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