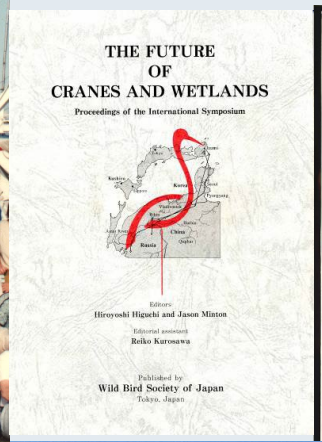
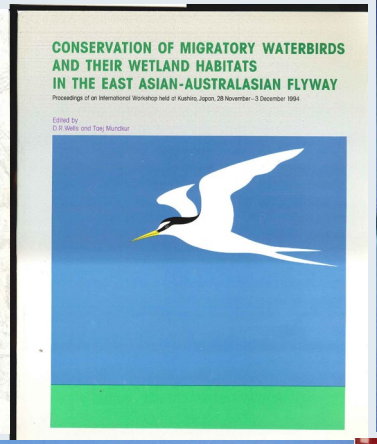
Report of the Crane Working Group
EAAFP MOP 11, 12-17 March, Brisbane



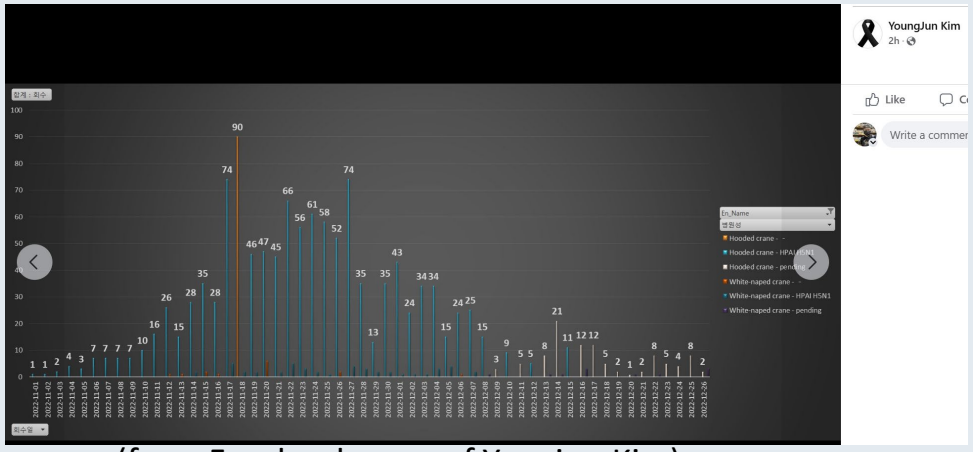


ELEVENTH MEETING OF PARTNERS TO THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EAST ASIAN – AUSTRALASIAN FLYWAY
Meeanjin/Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, 12-17 March 2023

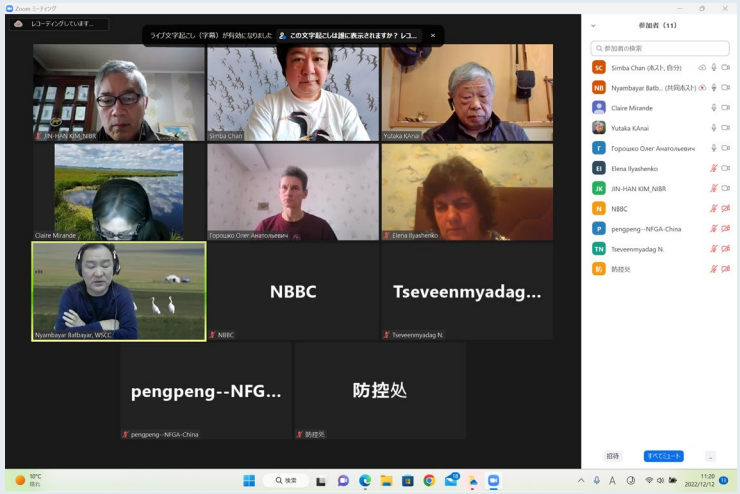
EAAFP

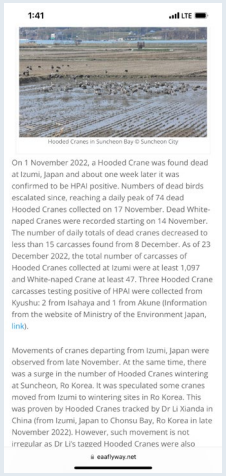
Avian influenza outbreaks in Japan/Korea

- **Stayed alert since the Hula Incident in Israel in 2021**
- **Crane Working Group meeting on 12 December 2022 for the Japan/Korea outbreak. Decision draft and news sent to EAAFP**
- **Side-event on 17 March 2023**
- **Follow-up not just on avian disease but also site and wildlife management.**



(from Facebook page of Yongjun Kim)





(from Facebook page of Lee Myeong-jeong)

EAAFP

Monitoring of cranes and supporting updating conservation status review

Estimation as of August 2020
Cranes:
Siberian Crane
(eastern population): 3,600 – 4,000. Stable/increasing. Census based
White-naped Crane
Western population (wintering in China): less than 1,000. Stable. Expert opinion
Eastern population (wintering in Korea and Japan): 4,500 – 6,500. Stable. Census based
Sarus Crane
Lower Mekong population: 250. Declining. Expert opinion
China/Myanmar population: 300 – 400. Declining. Expert opinion
Demoiselle Crane
East Asia breeding population: 65,000 – 98,000. Stable. Best guess.
Red-crowned Crane
Western mainland population (wintering in China): 580. Declining. Expert opinion.
Eastern mainland population (wintering in Korea): 1,251. Increasing. Census based.
Island population (Hokkaido and nearby islands): 1,600. Stable. Census based.
Eurasian Crane
(all Eurasian Cranes found in EAAF are regarded as Grus grus lilfordi)
South and Central China non-breeding population: 12,000. Decreasing. Expert opinion.
Hooded Crane
Western wintering population (those wintering in China): 1,000 – 1,500. Stable. Expert opinion.
Eastern wintering population (Korea and Japan): 15,700. Increasing. Census based.
Oriental Stork
Mainland population: 7,000. Increasing. Expert opinion
Japanese reintroduced population: 200. Increasing. Census based.
Black Stork
East Asian wintering population: 250. Stable. Expert opinion.


8:38

Translate Full Text ›

我国为白鹤、丹顶鹤等六种鹤类重要越冬分布区

国家林业和草原局 2023-02-12 19:08

日前，2021—2022年度中国鹤类研究与保护研讨会、中国野生动物保护协会鹤类联合保护委员会（以下简称“中动协鹤联会”）年度工作会议暨第八届黑颈鹤保护网络年会在贵州威宁草海国家级自然保护区召开。会议公布的2022年度全国越冬鹤类同步调查结果表明，黑颈鹤、白鹤、丹顶鹤、白枕鹤、白头鹤、灰鹤是我国主要的越冬鹤类，蓑羽鹤在我国冬季有零星个体分布。据悉，全世界现存15种鹤，我国有9种，是拥有鹤种类最多的国家。

贵州草海国家级自然保护区是国家一级保护动物黑颈鹤的主要越冬地之一，最新调查结果显示，在草海越冬的黑颈鹤已超过2500只 [redacted]/光明图片

EAAFP

International cooperation

Mongolian crane project

NEWSLETTER

Dec 22, 2023 / Vol 3

This gracious looking White-naped crane can be a symbol of wetland conservation in Mongolia, and perhaps in East Asia as well. They are highly dependent on healthy wetland habitats across its breeding and wintering range. For the past 10 years, we have been working very hard to ensure that the species continue thriving in its native lands across northeast Mongolia.
It is such a joy to see them coming back in spring and start raising their chicks during short summer season in Mongolia, and then returning to the south for winter.

A historic day for cranes and people in Khurkh and Khuiten River Valleys

The Government of Mongolia designated the Khurkh-Khuiten River Valleys (KKRV) a a National Nature Reserve in May 2020. The Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve, which i a 193,590-hectare area, supports a mix of grasslands, croplands, forests, an wetlands that provide a haven for the world's most important breedin concentration of Vulnerable White-naped Cranes. Up to 70 pairs of White-nape cranes nest in the area.

In October 2022, the Department of the Special Protected Areas Management at th Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the Governor of Khentii Province, togethe with leaders of the four counties surrounding the nature reserve signed a agreement with the Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia t coordinate management of the reserve. This was a landmark deal to transfer th management responsibility of the newly established Khurkh and Khuiten Natur Reserve (KKNR) to our team. We will be collaborating with local herders an authorities to manage this import reserve with rich habitats, cranes and other wildlife

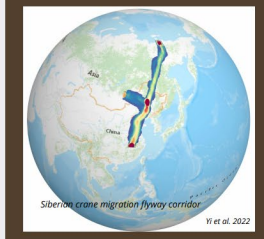
ICF will continue supporting crane conservation in Mongolia

In early August 2022, ICF's the President Dr. Rich Beilfuss, Vice president of the international – Asia Dr. Spike Millington, and Director of conservation networking Dr. Claire Mirande met with Minister Mr. Bat-Erdene Bat-Ulzii and State Secretary Mr. Battulga Erkhembayar of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia. Parties discussed about ICF's contribution to crane and wetland conservation and capacity building in Mongolia since 1990s and agreed to continue the collaboration focusing on conservation and management of key sites, carry out long term studies, and capacity building.

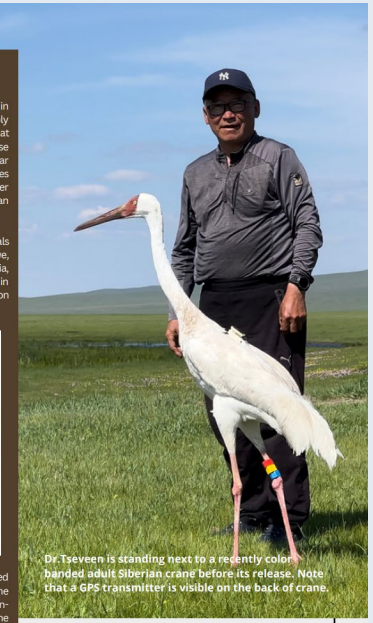
Yes, Siberian cranes love this area!

We captured and marked our first Siberian crane in July 2015. At that time, we thought we were simply lucky to catch one individual happen to be there at that moment. But apparently we were wrong. Because every year, we are recording this species on a regular basis in KKRV. For the past 5-10 years, Siberian cranes are arriving on record number in KKRV during summer time. Last summer, there were totally 29 Siberian cranes in KKRV.

Also we have managed to capture six more individuals and deploy GPS transmitters since then. In 2022, we, together with the colleagues from China and Russia, published our first paper about identifying gaps in knowledge and conservation of this species based on GPS tracking data from Mongolia.



The tracking data based on GPS tagged cranes showed that 77% of the breeding areas in Russia, 55% of the staging areas in China and Russia, 99% of the non-breeding summering area in Mongolia, and 50% of the wintering areas in Poyang Lake in China lay outside the current protected area network. It clearly suggested that the current protected areas network along the Siberian crane flyway is inadequate for this species.



Dr. Tseveen is standing next to a recently color-banded adult Siberian crane before its release. Note that a GPS transmitter is visible on the back of crane.

"It has become quite common to see Siberian cranes during the summer period in KKRV."

Khurkh-Khuiten Nature Reserve

In mid 1980s, Mongolian researchers Dr. Bold Ayurzana and Tseveenmyadag Natsagdorj discovered an area with huge ornithological importance in northeast Mongolia. Soon the importance of its conservation significance has become evident as the site supports one of the largest crane and waterbird congregations in the northeast. Since then the KKRV has become a well-known place internationally receiving various key designations such as North East Asian Crane Network Site (1999), Ramsar Site (2004), Important Bird Area (2007), and East Asian Flyway Site (2011).
In general, KKNR supports over 70 nesting pairs of WNCs, which is the highest nesting density of this globally threatened species in Asia. It's also an important breeding area for Demoiselle and Eurasian crane and the critically endangered Eastern subspecies of the Great Bustard, and a summering area for non-breeding Siberian and Hooded cranes.. Mongolian researchers call it the crane capital of Mongolia.

The White-naped Crane is a threatened species (IUCN Vulnerable) with about 7,000-7,800 individuals remaining in the wild globally (Mirande et al 2019). They are only found in East Asia, and primarily nest in wetlands of the grassland steppe and forest steppe zones in northeast Mongolia, southeastern Russia, and northeast China. Most White-naped Cranes in Mongolia and western parts of the breeding range winter at Poyang Lake in East China. This western flyway population has declined by a startling 50% to 1,500 birds in the last decade (Li et al 2012). Thus protecting key breeding sites such as Khurkh and Khuiten River Valleys will be critical for the survival of the western population.

USFS provides social science training

We have organized another round of the "Social science for conservation and natural resources management" training sessions in August 2022 in collaboration with the USFS, ICF, and MET. This session was a follow-up to another training that was organized in March 2022. This time we focused more on data analysis and reporting techniques. In total 42 people from six different agencies and organizations participated. Over 48% of the participants were specialists from special protected areas, 8% from provincial environmental protection agencies, 24% from the water basin management authorities, 12% from MET departments, 4% from universities, and 4% from WSCC.

We are grateful for USFS specialists, Emily Huff and Kristin Floress, who presented two highly motivational talks during this training, and Marija Spirovska Kono for her wonderful support to make this training happen.

Crane and bird watching tourisms through Mongolian Birding Trails Program

Community-based ecotourism has become a popular alternative for biodiversity conservation in many countries. It is based on the principle that biodiversity must pay for itself by generating economic benefits for local people. WSCC initiated a Mongolia Birding Trails (MBT) program, which is a community-based ecotourism project that employs birdwatching tourism. The program is sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation with input and co-sponsorship from ICF.

Birdwatching tourism generates certain income for local communities and finances the operations and management of special protected areas and other key biodiversity areas. KKRV was selected as one of the trial sites of the MBT program. We hope that the community groups in the reserve will be the main beneficiaries and the local service providers, ensuring a successful and sustainable partnership with the new reserve administration.