

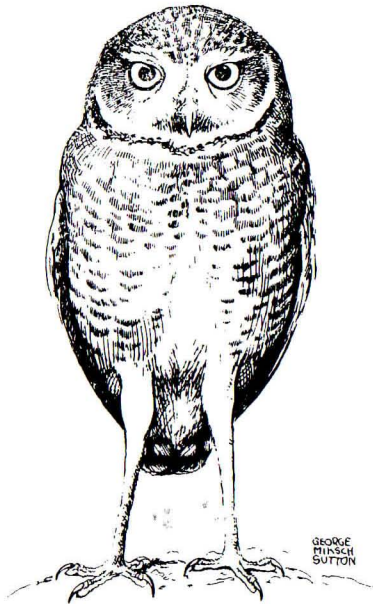
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All manuscripts for publication, and all changes in address, should be sent to the Editor, R.G. Cortelyou, 5109 Underwood Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska 68132.

Other officers are: President, Mrs. Ruth C. Green, 506 W. 31st Avenue, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005; Vice President, Gary Lingle, 2550 N. Diers Avenue, Suite H, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801; and Secretary, Mrs. C.E. Johnson, 604 S. 22nd St., Apt. 406, Omaha, Nebraska 68102.

RECORD COUNT FOR WHOOPING CRANES ON THE PLATTE RIVER

Since 1942, there have been eight confirmed Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) sightings on the Platte River (Whooping Crane Recovery Team. 1983. List of confirmed whooping crane migration sightings of the Wood Buffalo — Arkansas population. U.S. Fish and Wildl. Serv., Washington, D.C. 18 pp.). The largest number of birds on the Platte was five although seven were seen flying along the Platte near Kearney in April 1980. On 27 October 1983, five adult Whooping Cranes were reported feeding in an idle cornfield 3.5 mi. NE of Denman in Hall County and later, these 5 individuals were observed landing in the Platte to roost for the night. Personnel from the Platte River Whooping Crane Trust and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service arranged to confirm this report the following morning.

At 0720 CDT on 28 October 1983 the presence of five Whooping Cranes roosting on the Platte River was confirmed. They departed from the roost at 0754 and eventually landed in a grazed corn stubble field 1.5 mi SE of the roost at 0804 where they were observed probing the soil. At 0903 these five individuals were joined by a family group of three, making a total of eight Whooping Cranes. The group remained in the field until 0959, then they departed SE and were last seen flying south at 1010. They presumably continued their southeast migration.

I observed another adult Whooping Crane migrating with about 150 Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) at 1109 about 8 mi SE of Norman. The group of eight Whooping Cranes represents the largest group confirmed in the Platte Valley at least since 1942. The roost site was located in an area that was mechanically cleared of woody vegetation over the past 20 years, leaving no doubt that Whooping Crane roost sites can be restored and maintained as long as adequate water remains flowing in the Platte. For a detailed description of the roost site see Lingle, G.R., P.J. Currier, and K.L. Lingle, in press. Physical characteristics of a whooping crane roost site on the Platte River, Nebraska. Submitted to The Prairie Naturalist.

— Gary R. Lingle, The Platte River Whooping Crane Trust,
2550 N. Diers Avenue, Suite H, Grand Island, Nebraska 68801

In addition to the above three incidents involving nine Cranes, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pierre, S.D., reported the following confirmed sightings: 7-11 October, 2 in Custer Co., 7 mi. south and 8 mi. west of Callaway; 27 October to 8 November, 3 in Nuckolls Co., 6.5 mi. west and 1.5 mi. north of Superior; 27 October, 1 in Howard Co., 2 mi. east of St. Paul, on the South Loup; 2 in Harlan Co., 2.5 mi. south and 1.25 mi. east of Stamford; and 21-22 November, 3 in Harlan Co. 4 mi. south and 1.5 mi. east of Alma, on the Harlan Co. Reservoir. There was also a probable sighting 6 November in Blaine Co., .75 east of Brewster. Other birds, either singly or with others, could be traced over Nebraska by radio tagging or color marking: 11-12 October in Corson Co., S.D. and 12-13 October on Wilson Reservoir, Russell Co., Kansas; 8-9 November Stanley Co., S.D. and 9-10 November west of Enid, Oklahoma 50 to 75 miles (exact site unknown); 26-27 October, Stanley Co., S.D. and 28-29 October, Ford Co., Kansas (location 27-28 October not reported).

LOCATION AND HABITAT SIZE OF LAKES IN THE NEBRASKA SANDHILLS UTILIZED BY TRUMPETER SWANS

Scattered among the vast grassland expanse of the Nebraska Sandhills are numerous lakes and marshes that are breeding habitat for an interesting diversity of nesting waterbirds, including the Trumpeter Swan, the largest of the North American waterfowl.

Before the turn of the century this swan was reported as a breeding bird on Watt's Lake, southwest of Valentine in Cherry Co. (Bates 1900), and was considered to have probably once bred at many lakes throughout the Sandhills region (Bruner 1904).

Trumpeter Swans as nesting birds were eventually extirpated from the lakes and marshes, due to indiscriminate shooting and disturbance, as the Sandhills were settled. Reintroduction efforts undertaken during the 1960's were required to return breeding Swans to Nebraska. Birds released at LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota eventually became established and a portion of this growing population entered the state to once again nest (Monnie 1966).