

Lending a Helping Hand

By FRED G. BARD



Whooping Crane

Few survey appeals have had the response shown by the people as the survey to conserve the rare Whooping Cranes.

From my earliest days in the Museum I had only known this great white bird as being very rare and that it once frequented the prairies. Few exist even in Museum bird collections. It was not until twenty-five years later that I was fortunate enough to see them alive. On a day late in October on Last Mountain Lake, where the Sandhills gather, I was fortunate enough to see my first. On this occasion three birds were seen. They were very wary and uttered no sounds, just silently flew into the protected "fingers" of the lake. They looked more like a spirit than a living bird.

The first person really concerned over the future of the Whooping Crane was Saskatchewan's first Museum Director, Mr. Fred Bradshaw. He is the one who discovered the nesting site along with the 2nd (30 air miles apart) discovered by Neil Gilmore back in 1922. Years later Mr. Bradshaw and I travelled to a place called Lucky Lake, in May 1928, to check the reports of birds having been seen there. We were not fortunate enough to find any evidence. The residents told us they had been there a week earlier and had gone on. When Mr. Bradshaw came to the



Museum in 1928 as Director he drafted a circular which was sent out as a general questionnaire throughout Canada asking those interested to compile information concerning these rare birds. Mr. Bradshaw devoted a great deal of time to establish some known facts which would contribute to the welfare of these birds.

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Whooping Crane's Nest and Eggs
(Photo taken in 1922)

Much of this material was reviewed by Mr. Robert Allan for his book "The Whooping Crane."

The plight of the 27 Whooping Cranes were at an all time low when the Audubon Society commenced a series of surveys in an effort to locate the nesting grounds of this fast disappearing species.

There are mixed feelings in attitude for the conservation of forms of life which are slowly being wiped out. Some have said — "why all the fuss over the Whooping Crane? — "what good are they? etc. The plight of the Whooping Crane reflects changing conditions and complexities of our age which are threatening not only wildlife, resources etc but our civilization as well. These are responsibilities we must accept and work towards a solution. Naturally we will experience bitter disappointments and in all probability loose the Whooping Cranes. However, it's our duty as citizens to accept these challenges and work on their behalf and do all we can to keep them with us for as long as possible. Each generation is confronted with these problems and accepts them. The Whooping Crane story illustrates the plight that threatens so many species of birds, animals and plants. We must concern ourselves about these creatures which cannot adapt themselves to our changing conditions. Is this any reason why we should not or-



SECRET UNCOVERED:

Wildlife experts say there are only 24 whooping cranes in the world and for years they have tried to find the rare bird's northern summer nesting ground. Now officials of the Canadian wildlife service have discovered the birds in Wood Buffalo National Park, astride the boundary of northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories. But the officials won't say where in the park's 17,300-square mile area the birds are nesting for fear they will be disturbed. It is known that the cranes winter in the Aransas waterfowl refuge in Texas.

From Regina Leader Post

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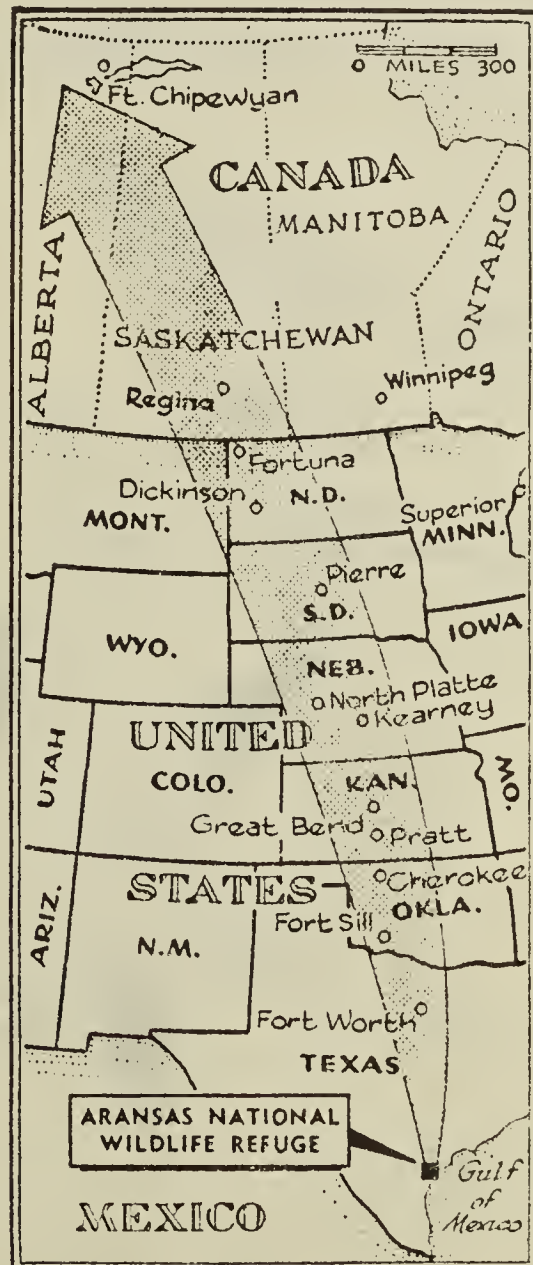
Whooping Crane's Birthday

The only known photo of a young Whooping Crane, taken in 1922

ganize ourselves to teach and preach conservation and fight to save these creatures from an earlier extinction? From 1939-1953 fifty seven young were hatched, in this same period fifty three have been lost. This effort from six breeding pairs clearly illustrates the bird is putting up a good fight and more deserving than "just our blessings."

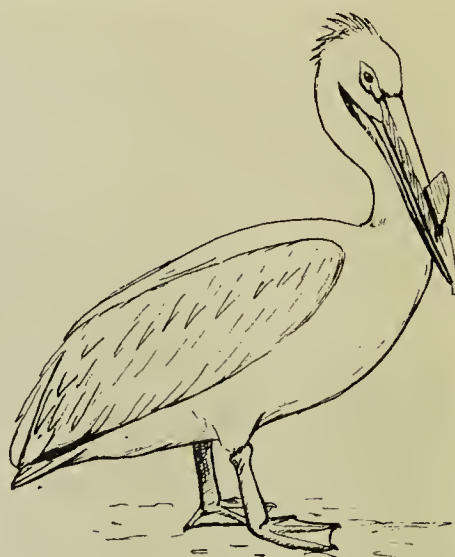
The accompanying map prepared by the New York Times illustrates the approximate migration route of the Whooping Cranes. In this area we have the following established workers and agencies who will do all in their power to safely escort the Cranes through their corridor:— Mr. Julian Howard, Manager, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, Austwell, Texas. Mr. J. Vessels, Asst. Director, Publications, Game & Fish Commission, Austin, Texas, Miss Bess Smith, Secretary, Oklahoma Outdoor Council Inc., 716 West Grand, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Mr. H. B. Guyer, Deputy Conservation Officer, Game, Forestation & Parks Commission, Lexington, Nebraska. Through these we hope to distribute material and publicize the Whooping Crane story before migration, and emphasize what the sportsmen can do to assist them in a safe passage. This corridor is very narrow and special efforts can be made to work with the sportsmen in these areas so that

(Continued on back cover)



From The New York Times

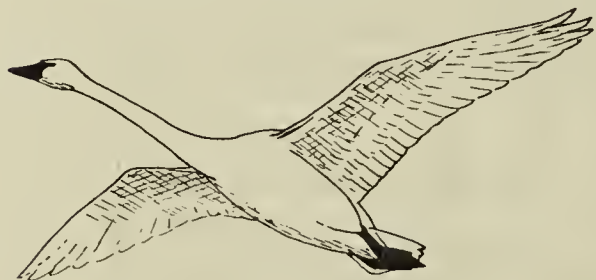
Do Not Mistake These For Whooping Cranes



WHISTLING SWAN

Average weight 18 lbs., length 51",
(length of bird — when specimen is
measured from tip of bill to end of
tail feathers.)

WHITE PELICAN

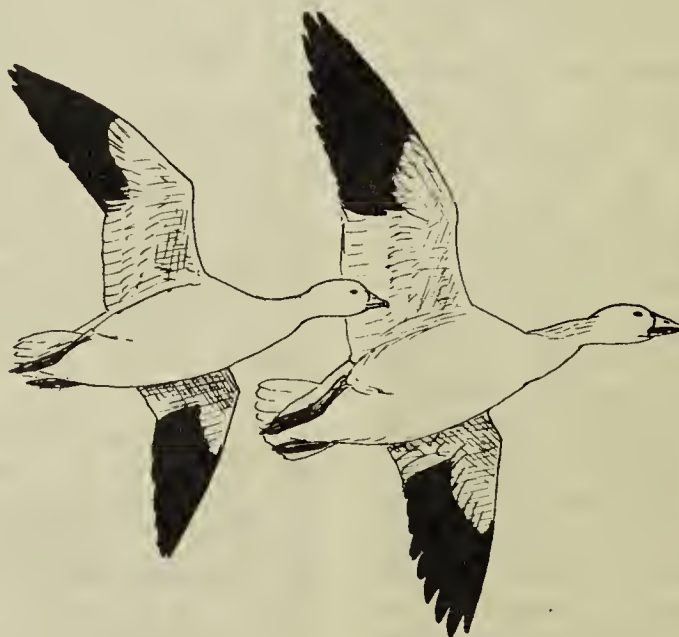


WHISTLING SWAN

Average weight 18 lbs., length 51".

WHITE PELICAN

(Males) length 61", weight 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.



Left to right: ROSS'S GOOSE — LESSER SNOW
GOOSE. Ross's Goose, Length 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", weight 3 lbs.
Lesser Snow Goose, Length 28", weight 6 lbs. 2 oz.

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every hunter will be familiar with this bird. As a personal obligation he will then prevail upon his hunting friends to be on the alert for these birds and report their appearance. He should discuss the plight of the Whoopers and be willing to refrain from shooting any white bird. In some areas this will need special attention, for it is legal to shoot the Snow Goose in season, but in some areas we also have the very rare Ross's Goose — of which not more than fifteen hundred exist and they will be travelling with the other Snows. Who will think of the difference in the excitement of Goose hunting? It would be a small sacrifice to give up shooting Snow Geese in this very local area and a great contribution towards the survival of these noble creatures.

At the moment we do not have co-operators in the Conservation and Game departments of North Dakota, South Dakota and Kansas. We hope we will, in the next edition, be able to announce further workers.

Stone Hammer

By Marion Nixon, Wauchope

A stone hammer, found on this farm many years ago, has the same shape as one illustrated in Blue Jay, Page 29. i.e. the groove does not extend completely around the circumference, though more nearly at the centre than on the one shown. One third of the stone, approximately, has a deposit over it of what looks like a lime and mud coating. This is particularly noticeable where the deposit is about 1/16 inch thick in the groove it crosses. (about two inches wide, heavy, and a further inch of light deposit, within the groove.) This layer of deposit has been chipped away from the original stone in several places.

We often remark on this heavily pebbled limey incrustation on the field stone, for it is as often on the under side of the stones as on top, where they lie imbedded in the earth. This must indicate that the lime deposit was on them before they were moved by glacial ice to their present scattered positions over our fields.

Recently we learned of an area on the Alberta Northeast Territories border where Whooping Cranes with young have been seen. The general location as it appeared in the press is reprinted here. This area is established as a Wood Buffalo National Park and affords reasonable security on both ends of the migration routes; our job will be to give them every assistance while migrating.

We would appreciate having full information concerning observations. Send them to your nearest conservation department. To sportsmen we suggest you tell your friends about this rare bird. Refrain from shooting any white bird unless you are absolutely sure it is a game bird that can be legally taken. No doubt the most of the fifty-three young have died as a result of gun shot. Let's see what can be done in the next ten years. It's up to us from here on.

Co-operative Bird Migration Study

By FRED BARD, Regina
(Too late for classification)

April 16th — Canada Goose
March 20 — Marsh Hawk
April 9th — Killdeer
April 24th — Mourning Dove
May 28th — Nighthawk
Ruby-throated Hummingbird
April 16th — Yellow-shafted Flicker
May 18th — Eastern Kingbird
Eastern Phoebe
May 11th — Barn Swallow
June 1st — Purple Martin
March 21st — American Crow
May 19th — House Wren
May 18th — Catbird
May 15th — Brown Thrasher
Red-eyed Vireo
Black & White Warbler
May 15th — Yellow Warbler
April 25th — Myrtle Warbler
Ovenbird
May 27th — Redstart
April 12th — Red-winged Blackbird
May 18th — Baltimore Oriole
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
May 25th — Goldfinch
April 5th — Slate-coloured Junco
May 9th — Chipping Sparrow
May 2nd — White-crowned Sparrow
May 2nd — White-throated Sparrow