

## RESOLUTION OF THE 4th CONFERENCE OF THE CRANE WORKING GROUP OF THE USSR

The IVth conference of the Crane Working Group (CWG) took place 25th—27th September 1984 at Matsalu State Reserve (Estonian SSR). Fifty representatives of the following institutes and organisations took part: All-Union Ornithological Society, Zoological Institute and Ringing Centre of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Biological Institute of Sport Hunting of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of Biology of the Academy of Sciences of the Latvian SSR, Institute of Zoology and Parasitology of the Academy of Sciences of the Lithuanian SSR, Institute of Zoology and Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR, Scientific Research Institute of Forestry and Nature Conservation of the Estonian SSR, All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Nature Conservation and State Reserves of the Ministry of Agriculture of the USSR, Ministry of Forestry and Nature Conservation of the Estonian SSR, Central Scientific Research Laboratory of the Central Board of Hunting and State Reserves of the Soviet of Ministers of the RSFSR, the State Reserves of Matsalu, Oka, Khingan, the Breeding Centre for Endangered Cranes, the Universities of Moscow, Voronyozh, Odessa, Ural, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk and Kazan, the Crimean Museum of Regional Studies, Moscow and Tallinn Zoos, Editorial Board of the Zoological Journal and Estonian Nature, Working Group for Nature Conservation of Moscow University and the Estonian Board of Civil Aviation.

The conference heard 25 reports and communications covering the most up-to-date problems related to research carried out in the USSR on cranes, the organisation for their conservation and the restoration of their numbers, and discussed the immediate task of expanding and extending research already done, developing new studies and standardising methods of collecting, processing and forming data. A prominent place was given to the locating and study of autumn concentrations of *Grus grus*, counts of this species, the tracking of migration and methods of gathering, storing and utilising the extensive data. The experiment at catching and colour-marking *Grus japonensis* and *G. grus* was examined especially critically. Reports were heard on the present status of *Anthropoides virgo* in the Crimea, of *G. japonensis* and of both populations of *Grus leucogeranus*, and also of the work of the Breeding Centre of Endangered Cranes. In the report from the Bureau of the CWG great attention was given to organisational questions, in particular to the curators' duties and to publications.

In order to familiarise participants at the meeting with the methods used in Estonia, a simultaneous count of *G. grus* at its gathering sites in Matsalu Bay and an excursion to the Radar Station at Tallinn Airport which tracks migration were organised. At intervals between sessions visits were organised to Matsalu State Reserve, the Ringing Centre there and to the Puhtu Ornithological Station of the Institute

of Zoology and Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR. Recent films on cranes were also shown.

Despite the extremely full programme, the work of the conference was very productive, thanks to its efficient organisation and the well thought-out selection of participants.

The IVth Conference of the CWG confirmed definite progress in the study of cranes of the Soviet Union, which covered an increasingly wide range of problems and which was executed at a higher standard, as a result of introducing modern methods of research in a number of regions. The monitoring of the Matsalu concentration of *G. grus* is carried out using original methods of objective monitoring of its numbers. In the Lower Ob and in Okski State Reserve the first experiments in replacing the eggs in *G. grus* nests with those of *G. leucogeranus* were carried out successfully. For the first time in the USSR young were hatched of *Grus monacha* and *G. japonensis* (Breeding Centre of Endangered Cranes), *Grus vipio* and Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone?*) (Moscow Zoo) and for the first time in the world of *G. leucogeranus* (at the International Crane Foundation, USA, from birds reared from eggs sent from Yakutia in 1977). Research, based at the Breeding Centre of Endangered Cranes and in the wild, was begun on determining different ages of birds in groups, moulting, post-embryonic ontogenesis and behaviour of cranes. Morphofunctional research into land locomotion of cranes has been carried out. A programme of research into the cranes of the USSR, methods of aerial counting of endangered species and land counts in sites of concentrations, collection and transportation of the data for the zoos have been prepared. "Cranes of Eastern Asia" and "Cranes in the USSR" have been published, "Research into Cranes of the USSR" is in print.

The Conferences acknowledged as substantial achievements in the field of crane conservation: the organisation of the republican zakazniks Khanka (breeding of *G. japonensis* and *G. vipio*) and "Chaigurgino" (breeding of part of the Yakutia population of *G. leucogeranus*); the increase in the territory of Khingan State Reserve and the establishment there of conservation of the crane breeding sites; the gaining of the status of republican reserve by Kunovatski Zakaznik (breeding of the Ob population of *G. leucogeranus*). In Moscow Oblast the Working Group for Nature Conservation of Moscow University is successfully continuing its research on the status of *G. grus*. With its participation a plan was drafted for a republican zakaznik "Podmoskovny", including the already established regional zakaznik "Zhuravlinaya Rodina" ("Crane Homeland"). *A. virgo* has been included in the Red Book of the USSR (2nd edition) and of the RSFSR. An important part in the activity of the CWG is the popularising of knowledge of cranes via central and regional television, radio and press. The number of films on cranes, made to a high scientific and artistic standard is increasing.

The Conference noted with satisfaction the increased international links and authority of the CWG of the USSR. Its members were the organisers and active participants of a symposium and round-table discussion on cranes at the XVIIIth International Ornithological Congress (Moscow, 1982); we represented our country at the International Crane Conference (India, 1983), the IUCN Board Meeting (Spain, 1984); we took part in meetings with Japanese ornithologists (Japan, 1983 and Moscow—Khabarovsk, 1984); in 1984 we held the first international count (USSR, Japan, People's Republic of China) of *G. japonensis*.

The experience in organising the CWG, the principles and methods of its functioning and also the results achieved in the study and conservation of the cranes of

the Soviet Union are included in a course of lectures given at Moscow University to students and members of the Faculty of Improvement of Professional Skills.

In addition the Conference noted that there is still not enough coordination and planning of the scientific and practical work of the CWG; there is a lack of precise direction in crane research carried out in Eastern Siberia and in the north of the Far East; research into *A. virgo* and *G. monacha* is not carried out actively enough. Because of the lack of special conservation measures for the breeding grounds of *A. virgo* in the field, its last concentrations in the Crimea and southern Ukraine are under threat of extinction.

The activity of the CWG has been adversely affected by the delay in the publication of "Research into Cranes of the USSR" which is devoted mainly to questions of methods, and also of the programme of crane research. Through the fault of the curators and some members of the Bureau of the CWG did not give the necessary data in time, the appearance of the next edition of "Information Bulletin" is very late. Among the papers passed on by the authors to be included in the book on cranes there are many which have been done at a not very high scientific and methodical level, poor in content, repetitive of data already well known and stylistically and technically carelessly put together. There are still cases of publication of papers on cranes in non-specialist, departmental or regional publications, which leads to the dispersion of data, including those already rejected by reviewers and the editorial board of the CWG.

The IVth Conference of the CWG considered it necessary:

1. To continue the study of the status of all crane species in the USSR in their natural conditions and, to a differing degree, in their disturbed natural conditions and also of the periodic occurrence of their annual cycle and behaviour. To pay particular attention to:

- a) the intensification of work on determining the distribution and numbers of *G. monacha* in Yakutia and *G. vipio* in the Transbaikal;
- b) the monitoring of the dynamics of known concentrations of *G. grus* and the discovery of new sites of concentrations of this species;
- c) the study of the breeding biology of *A. virgo* on Kerchen Peninsula;
- d) the complex study of the habitat and tropics of cranes.

2. To use *G. grus* in Estonia as a model for the devising and for the practical verification of new methods. To establish a data bank on *G. grus* at the Institute of Zoology and Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR, having first specified the fundamental interests of the CWG in a computer programme.

3. With the objective assessment of the possibilities of the questionnaire method in view, to carry out, with the aid of this method, the count of *G. grus* in Estonia, which has exact data on the numbers of this species available.

4. In order to obtain reliable comparative data, to recommend that members of the CWG use: the method suggested by the Institute of Zoology and Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR when studying concentrations of *G. grus*; the methods perfected by the All-Union Scientific Research Institute of Nature Conservation of the Ministry of Agriculture of the USSR for *G. leucogeranus* when carrying out aerial counts and those of the Biological Institute of the DVNTs of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in conjunction with Moscow University for *G. japonesis*.

5. To continue morpho-functional research into different systems of crane organs. In order to provide these studies with data, to drawn once again to the atten-

tion of CWG members, especially workers in the zoos, the importance of keeping all dead birds and of passing them on to the appropriate curator.

6. To support the plan of the Spanish Group for Crane Research aimed at devising scientifically based measures for saving the relic population of *A. virgo* in Morocco and to request the WW Brehm Fund for International Bird Conservation (Walsrode, FRG) to provide the necessary means for implementing this.

7. To introduce more widely into the practical work of the CWG commissioned studies on specific themes which will be carried out by specialists or students recruited for this purpose.

8. To publish the data presented at the IVth Conference of the CWG in the form of 2 volumes of collected papers—in Leningrad (Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR) and Tartu (Baltic Commission on Research into Bird Migration).

9. To be more active in issuing in the provinces popular and popular-scientific books and brochures on cranes and also posters, albums and postcards with pictures of these birds.

10. To make particular mention of the great organisational work carried out between IIIrd and IVth Conference of the CWG by *A. N. Bochkaryev* (Khingan State Reserve), *Yu. E. Keskaik* (Institute of Zoology and Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR), *I. A. Neifeldt* (Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR) and *V. G. Panchenko* (Zoo for Endangered Cranes at Okski State Reserve).

11. To approve the activities of the Bureau of the CWG and to confirm them for a new term with the following staff: Chairman — *V. Ye. Flint*; Secretary-in-Chief — *S. M. Smirenski*; members — *Yu. E. Keskaik*, *I. A. Neifeldt*, *V. G. Panchenko*, *S. G. Priklonski*, *A. G. Sorokin*, *Yu. V. Shibayev*.

12. To express deep thanks to the staff of Matsalu State Reserve and the Institute of Zoology and Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR for the excellent organisation of the conference and also for the opportunity it has provided to meet the largest *G. grus* concentration in Europe.

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### **A Szovjetunió Daruvédelmi Munkacsoportja Negyedik Konferenciájának határozata**

Az Észt Szovjet Szocialista Köztársaság Matsalu Állami Rezervátumában 1984. szeptember 25. és 27. között tartott tanácskozáson 25 intézet, szervezet és társaság képviselői voltak jelen és számoltak be munkájukról. Sikerekről tudósítottak a veszélyeztetett darufajok fogságban történő szaporításáról, daruvédelmi területek kijelöléséről és több, a darvak biológiájával foglalkozó publikáció megjelenéséről, illetve előkészületeiről. A konferencia határozatban foglalta össze a legfontosabb tudományos, szervezeti és természetvédelmi teendőket.