

Conservation Plan for the Western Population of Siberian Cranes

Introduction

The Western Population of Siberian cranes breeds in a wilderness area of Tyumen District, Russian Federation. The breeding area may extend into Khanty Mansiysk District that borders northern areas of Tyumen District. Collaboration between authorities from both districts is needed to conserve the entire wetland complex where Siberian cranes breed. This area is so extensive and the numbers of cranes so low, that the local people are not familiar with Siberian cranes. The migration route extends from the breeding area in a southwest direction to the northern shore of the Caspian Sea. The cranes rest on migration at the Naurzum wetlands in Kazakhstan and the Astrakhan Nature Reserve in Russia by the mouth of the Volga River at the northwest corner of the Caspian Sea. Their migration continues south along the west side of the Caspian over Dagestan, Chechnya and Azerbaijan, then east along the south side of the Caspian to flooded rice fields used for duck trapping near the villages of Fereidoonkenar and Esbaran in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They usually arrive on the wintering grounds in October and remain until late February or early March.

Satellite telemetry units (i.e. Platform Terminal Transmitters: PTTs) placed on birds on both the wintering and breeding grounds have identified a route that overlaps significantly with the northern portion of the route of the Central Population. This suggests that genetic mixing between the two populations occurs. Unmated birds from one population (i.e. juveniles, divorced birds, or birds that lose a mate) might pair with birds from the other population during migration or on summering areas of juveniles and non-breeding birds. In North American cranes, males return to breed in natal areas. Females follow a male to these regions, which might be a great distance from the area where the female was raised. If this pattern occurs in Siberian cranes, a female from one population might follow a male from the other population to his natal area, leading to genetic mixing of the two populations. Juvenile Siberian Cranes do not return to natal areas for several years until they reach sexual maturity. PTTs should be placed on a juvenile Siberian crane on the wintering grounds to help identify the unknown juvenile summering areas.

Evidence continues to suggest the presence of alternative wintering grounds in Iran or possibly Azerbaijan. The annual variation in the number of adult birds observed in Iran is indicative of replenishment of the flock from an unknown source. Counts of the Western Population of Siberian cranes at Fereidoonkenar and Esbaran in Iran have ranged between 6 and 11 individuals during the past decade. In November 1998, up to 14 Siberian cranes were reported at the waterfowl trapping station (damgah) near Fereidoonkenar. Subsequently, three pairs were observed at that location. Although in 1996 and 1997 Russian researchers colour-marked *five* Siberian cranes from this population, only *one* colour-banded crane was among the three pairs observed at Fereidoonkenar. Two pairs with colour-marked individuals were observed on the breeding grounds, and these two pairs plus an additional unbanded pair had been observed on the Volga Delta during autumn migration in 1998. One of the pairs with a banded member was observed in December 1998 at Fereidoonkenar. However, the other pair with a banded member was not observed. An additional unbanded pair was present at the duck trapping station, and the duck trappers reported a pair with a juvenile. Combining these data, a minimum of 11 cranes was accounted for among the 14 observed in November 1998.

Each of the three pairs resident at Fereidoonkenar during the winter of 1998-1999 was territorial and drove other cranes away from their feeding areas on flooded rice fields. Presumably, the duck trapping area is capable of supporting only three territorial pairs. The other cranes, including the majority of the color-marked cranes, apparently are wintering elsewhere. Identifying these other locations and protecting the cranes and the wetlands in which they forage, is of top priority for the restoration of the Western Population.

In 2000-2001, the cranes at Fereidoonkenar were thought to number between 6 and 9 birds: one pair (including a banded female) and a single (year-old) banded sub-adult were confirmed. A second pair accompanied by either a juvenile or a separate adult bird was also confirmed, for a total of six birds. It is uncertain as to whether possibly another (third) pair was observed with a third member or whether this was the same pair; if the former were true, there could have been as many as 9 birds at Fereidoonkenar in 2000-2001. Intriguingly, a Siberian crane male banded in Iran in 1996 and female banded in Uvat in 1997 were subsequently observed as a pair both in Fereidoonkenar and in Uvat, as late as August 1998. However, the male from this pair was observed in Astrakhan in October 1998 with a new mate, again suggesting that some replenishment of the flock is occurring.

Required Conservation Measures

Conservation of this population depends on reducing mortality during migration and on the wintering grounds, and enhancing the numbers and genetic diversity. Releases of parent-reared and costume-reared Siberian cranes and a hand-reared sub-adult Siberian crane on wintering areas in India and Iran have not been successful. The cranes did not join the wild cranes and did not migrate. An experiment involving the release of juvenile, parent-reared, captive-produced cranes with wild Siberian cranes in early winter to allow longer social bonding time has not been tested. However, winter release experiments with Sandhill cranes and results to date with Siberian cranes have led to the consensus that release efforts are best focussed on staging or breeding grounds. Efforts to bolster this population will focus on releases of costume-reared cranes on staging areas at Tyumen and Astrakhan. Human led migrations (i.e. using ultralight planes and trucks) with Sandhill and Whooping cranes in North America have resulted in over 50% of the birds that were led south returning to their release area the following spring. Consequently, Russian scientists have been meeting with North American researchers to explore possible application of the techniques to Siberian crane releases. This research is more feasible along the entire migration route of the Western Population, whereas it has been difficult to conduct such research using the Central Population due to the situation in Afghanistan in recent years.

There is a possibility that Siberian cranes, parent-reared by Eurasian cranes on the breeding ground of the Central Population of Siberian cranes, may spend the winter along the Iran-Afghanistan border. In addition, costume-reared Siberian cranes released at Armizon in Tyumen District might join flocks of Eurasian cranes and winter in Iran. Because Siberian crane chicks probably require supplemental feeding during migration, it is important to monitor the released cranes to determine if they can survive without supplemental feeding from the adults.

The known sites that are used by Siberian cranes along the Western flyway migration route are subject to varying levels of threat from human activities. The breeding grounds in West Siberia are relatively remote and human pressures are generally low, mainly consisting of hunting, fishing and forest product collection. However, oil and gas exploration activities are beginning in the Uvat area, and the resulting human disturbance and potential impacts on habitats in the longer term are a significant threat. Exploration activities were conducted at Kunovat in the past, and there is no immediate threat of oil and gas development although this is a possibility in the longer term. Oil pollution on the River Ob is a chronic problem. Forestry activities have caused damage and disturbance at Kunovat in the past, and although they are now better controlled, future vigilance is required.

Around the staging areas in Armizon (Russian Federation) and northern Kazakhstan, agricultural development was significant in the past. However, this has declined and there

is a current window of opportunity to secure areas for conservation. Privatization of farmland in Armizon has resulted in increasing waterbird-crop damage conflicts. Disturbance from agricultural (eg. grass burning), hunting and fishing activities are the main issues at these sites at present. Many pressures affect the Volga Delta, including significant hydrological effects of the Volgograd Dam, industrial pollution, oil pollution, intensive agriculture, as well as sport hunting and fishing activities. Changes in Caspian Sea level have had a profound impact on the delta and its birdlife. Overall, it can be concluded that current pressures on wetland habitats in the staging areas are relatively light, with the exception of the Volga delta. The main threats to Siberian cranes arise from hunting and other forms of human disturbance.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the conservation of the cranes at the main wintering site (Fereidoonkenar) is a highly sensitive issue with local communities who use the area for commercial duck trapping. The support of these communities is essential for the future security of this flock, requiring close cooperation with government authorities. The Department of Environment is in the process of increasing support for control of shooting in this area and is consulting with local communities on conservation measures. Much of the Caspian lowlands is under pressure from urban development, including both natural wetlands and ricefield areas. It is planned that site conservation activities will be undertaken to address threats at a selection of these sites through the planned GEF project¹.

¹ Development of a Wetland Site and Flyway Network for Conservation of the Siberian Crane and Other Migratory Waterbirds in Asia, Phase I

Programme	Activity	Range State / Organization	Collaborator	Progress / Results (1997-2000)	Further Specific Activities (2001-2003)	Priority
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Objective 1: Reduce mortality						
1) Increase public awareness	1) Broadcast and distribute the ICF/CMS video over the current and former winter range of Siberian cranes and monitor its use.	All Range States-WP	ICF CMS	<p>IR: copy received in Aug 1998; dubbing work (into Farsi) completed and film aired on national television</p> <p>AZ: Video material on Siberian cranes shown on popular state TV programme in 1999</p> <p>KZ: video broadcast in Kostanay oblast 4 times, Atyrau city twice, national TV twice.</p> <p>RU: copied and distributed video in areas near nesting grounds and along migration route to KZ border. Video shown before spring/fall migration each year, with good feedback (1999-2000). 40 minute video produced by Sterkh Foundation and shown ~ 20 times on local TV (very popular)</p> <p>ICF: materials received/archived from Russia, China, Iran (1998) and Kazakhstan (2001)</p>	<p>RU: Distribute the Sterkh Foundation video along the flyway; continue to use the ICF/CMS video in schools; Sterkh Foundation to prepare booklet in 2001 based on photo and text contributions from all Range States (each RS to be responsible for printing)</p> <p>AZ/KZ: Obtain another copy of ICF/CMS video and Sterkh Foundation video for distribution;</p> <p>KZ: In collaboration with ICF, create/distribute booklet in Kazakh, Russian and English</p> <p>IR: New actions to be defined</p> <p>ICF: Continue to maintain central archive of all video material received from Range States and others; send copies of ICF video to Azerbaijan</p>	1
				<p>RU: Crane information packet (booklet, slides, audio cassette) distributed to 50 schools; Salekhardt seminar for dozens of schools (1997-2000); Siberian crane photo exhibit in Salekhardt</p>	<p>All Range States - WP: Continue educational activities to promote awareness</p> <p>RU: Provide supplementary materials for schools; revision of booklet to be completed in Summer 2001.</p> <p>KZ: Mobile team to organise visits to schools and key stakeholders; prepare and distribute special materials (booklets/brochures) in key wetland regions (Kostanay, northern Kazakhstan and Atyrau oblasts)</p>	2
2) Conduct education programmes for schools and hunters along the migration route.	All Range States-WP					2

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1) Increase public awareness	3) Publicize Siberian crane conservation efforts <i>in mass media</i> , distribute questionnaires, and organize special events.	All Range States-WP	CMS	<p>IR: published pictures, interviews in newspapers (1997-1998)</p> <p>KZ: questionnaire distributed in Kostanay, northern Kazakhstan, Atyrau oblasts to hunters, fishermen, university students</p> <p>AZ: article on Siberian cranes, migration published in Faryad newspaper in March 1999</p> <p>RU: published 10 articles in nesting areas, along migration routes</p>	<p>AZ: Draft/distribute a questionnaire about Siberian cranes based on RU and KZ models</p> <p>IR: New actions to be defined</p> <p>KZ: Questionnaire to be updated, wetland training seminars to be conducted</p> <p>RU: Extend range of questionnaire distribution to west of Urals, possibly in 2001;</p> <p>RU: Prepare events for International Crane Day (7 March 2002). Sterkh Foundation preparing magazine and will distribute 10 publications in newspapers, two in Moscow</p> <p>All Range States - WP: Participate in plans to present a signed Bateman print to Heads of Government on the occasion of International Crane Day in March 2002</p>	2 2 1 2 1
	4) Educate local people to protect cranes and their wetland habitats in areas where cranes are located.	All Range States-WP	ICF-WP Russia-WP	<p>IR: spots on local radio station and news broadcasts; general brochure (1997-1998) Some educational materials prepared by DoE, Mazandaran Office – distributed to schools, mosques during Ramadhan (Nov/Dec 2000); GEF stakeholders meeting in March 2001</p> <p>KZ: started education work in Naurzum region in 1998</p> <p>RU: regular TV programmes and films and broadcasts; lectures, excursions at Oka; "Sterkh" centre in Yamalo-Nenetsky admin. Region (1997-2000)</p>	<p>AZ: Show TV programme before spring/autumn migration</p> <p>KZ: Distribute special information material among hunters at time of licence issuance; information on Siberian cranes be included in national newspaper</p> <p>IR: Within framework of the GEF project, priority will be given to establishing an education, research and guard complex near Fereidoonkenar damgah.</p> <p>RU/IR: Proposal, subject to discussion/consent of the Iranian authorities: in 2002 imprint juvenile cranes to an ultralight aircraft at Oka, then transport them to Iran for use in an education campaign (e.g. fly the ultralight from Fereidoonkenar to Gilan)</p> <p>RU: Multipurpose education campaign to be conducted at strategic sites along river Ob (August 2001)</p> <p>All other Range States - WP: Continue educational activities to promote awareness</p>	2 2 1 3 1 2

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1) Increase public awareness	5) Provide rewards and incentives for contributions of local people.	All Range States-WP	ICF	<p>AZ/KZ: not operational (1997-2000)</p> <p>RU: modest items (books, clothes, compass, Siberian crane photos) (1997-1998); not continued in 1999-2000 for lack of funds</p>	<p>All Range States - WP: Initiate/continue reward and incentive schemes, as far as possible and appropriate</p> <p>KZ: Need to build up education/awareness before introducing incentives schemes</p> <p>RU: Continue existing reward/incentive schemes for local people through Sterkh Foundation</p>	2 2
	6) Develop conservation incentive programmes for waterfowl hunters ... and provide awards to local people for contributions to conservation.	Iran		<p>Reduced hunting fees, small gifts (boots, jackets) given in exchange for useful information (1997-1998)</p> <p>DoE encourages/supports NGO applications from local communities, Islamic Councils, farmers' cooperatives, duck trappers</p> <p>Well-attended consultative meeting organized at Fereidoonkenar, March 2001</p>	<p>IR: At least four local meetings/festivals are planned yearly for Fereidoonkenar through the GEF Project</p>	
2) Study cranes along the migration route.	1) Visit the sites in west Caspian area where PTT data show birds stop over. On the day spring migration begins, contact colleagues in Azerbaijan	Iran	Azerbaijan	<p>AZ: 7 April 1998 visited site where PTT data showed one bird stopped in 1996; carried out education and conservation work;</p> <p>AZ: 1999-2000 site visits conducted at (1) Alazan where 4 Siberian cranes had been observed for 2-3 days from 11 Sept 1999; (2) Aghgol preserve, where 4 Siberian cranes were observed 23-26 Oct 2000</p> <p>IR: spring migration announced to ICF in Feb 2001 (in absence of e-mail address for Azerbaijan)</p>	<p>IR: Provide information (by e-mail to Flyway Officer, for transmission to Azerbaijan) about start of spring migration in order to facilitate planning for monitoring movements</p> <p>AZ: Coordinate activities in relation to Spring migration with IR and Flyway Officer</p>	1 1
	2) Notify colleagues in Russia and Kazakhstan immediately on the day migrating Siberian cranes leave Azerbaijan.	Azerbaijan	Russia-WP, KZ-WP	<p>RU and KZ did not receive information about this report (1997-1998)</p>	<p>AZ/RU/KZ: Communicate information immediately via Flyway Officer</p>	1

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2) Study cranes along the migration route.	3) Seek assistance from local experts along western Caspian to search for Siberian cranes and evaluate threats to them.	Russia-WP		Dr. Rusanov is involved and works actively in Siberian crane project. Dr. Pishvanov is not closely involved due to difficult political problems in Dagestan (1997-1998)	RU: Continue to involve Dagestan specialists to assist with Siberian crane monitoring	2
	4) Investigate all reported sightings, and share information secured from <i>known</i> sites	All Range States-WP		KZ: investigated report at Naurzum, but not north Caspian (1997-1998) RU: investigated Astrakhan report (1997-1998)	All Range States-WP: Investigate all reported sightings of Siberian cranes as soon as possible, and communicate results (location, habitat type, climatic conditions etc) to other Range States through the Flyway Officer	2
					KZ: Try to organise systematic investigation of areas other than those from which information is normally provided (set up network, subject to availability of resources)	1
	5) Search for <i>possible</i> stopover sites for Siberian cranes in Azerbaijan and northwest Kazakhstan	Azerbaijan Kazakhstan -WP	Russia-WP TM-WP	Search was started in April 1998 in Naurzum region (1997-1998) KZ: changing ecological situation at stopover sites makes it difficult to assess their status	AZ, RU: Secure resources to search for possible stopover sites in Azerbaijan: Alazan area, Aghgol preserve, and Shirvan reserve (Y. Markin to assist in site visits)	1
KZ: Search for wetlands northeast of the Caspian Sea in KZ, RU and TM in order to evaluate possibility for a future flyway to Iranian coast of Caspian Sea (regular monitoring of waterfowl habitat sites is conducted with oil company support)					2	
6) Identify alternate wintering places along the southern Caspian lowlands (eg undiscovered locations in Gilan)	Iran			IR: Visit and study alternate wintering areas before northward migration, carry out additional PTT research and verification of data through site visits (DoE to continuously check staging areas in October and March, and possible alternative wintering sites from October to March.)	1	

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3) Establish a safer wintering area while promoting excellent relations with the waterfowl trappers at Fereidoonkenar. (Perhaps initiate in 1998.)	1) Obtain long-term leases in winter of a large section of rice fields with suitable crane habitat (i.e. with low pesticide levels) within their winter range, and cover the fields with shallow water from October - March. Possibly use Dept. of Environment forested land and adjacent fields near Fereidoonkenar.	Iran		IR: Not yet done (1997-2000)	IR: Work towards the objective of obtaining long-term leases of suitable crane habitat (<i>Action carried over from previous CP</i>)	1
	2) Release captive-reared cranes into the area near Fereidoonkenar in order to decoy wild birds, including two birds released in 1996 (if they have not joined the wild cranes) or release 1-2 parent-reared birds from Oka Reserve.	Iran	Russia-WP TM-WP ICF	IR/RU: Not yet done. Of the two birds released in 1996, one disappeared, and the other remains at Pardisan Park: although not releasable, it could be used as a decoy. (1997-1998)	IR/RU: Lake Alagol (shallow 900 ha freshwater lake, important for waterfowl) east of the Caspian Sea is suggested as a suitable location for releasing 1-2 pairs of Siberian cranes to establish a wild, non-migrating flock with a view to luring wild birds	3
	3) Hire guards to keep intruders away from the crane area.	Iran		IR: Some agreements made with local societies and NGOs such as Fereidoonkenar Islamic Council, duck trappers and local farmers	IR: Within framework of GEF Project's participatory site management, DoE proposes to hire some local farmers/trappers (official/unofficial staff) as part of new guard system	1
	4) Establish a non-shooting area covering the damgahs at Fereidoonkenar and Esbaran, including a 1 km buffer zone (2001)	Iran		IR: Preparatory activities have led to the securing of a 2 ha block of land from the Office of Natural Resources (degraded forest, adjacent to the area used by Siberian cranes (2001)	IR: Facilitate the establishment of a monitoring/guard station at Fereidoonkenar under the GEF Project	1

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	5) Build an education centre in the forest beside the field and with view of field. Invite local people to visit the education centre.	Iran		IR: Not yet done (1997-2000)	IR: Study possible construction of an observation tower at Fereidoonkenar in collaboration with NGOs and Finnish sponsors; study desirability of extending it to include an education centre (<i>Action carried over from previous CP</i>) – foreseen also in GEF Project	1
4) Locate and protect the region in which sub-adult cranes spend the summer.	1) Attach a PTT to one juvenile crane on the wintering ground and on a parent-reared bird (released in Iran) if the latter bonds with wild cranes and shows promise of migrating.	Iran	Russia-WP, [WBSJ-WP/ICF-WP]	IR/RU: Not yet achieved (1997-2000); in early 2001, northward migration began sooner than usual. However, a possible important stopover area was identified near Ardibil airport (400km NW of Fereidoonkenar) in March 2000; site was visited in March 2001 (Siberian crane observations reported by a local hunter)	IR/RU: Attach a PTT to a wild chick in Iran (with assistance of Y. Markin: no later than Jan/Feb 2002) – use one of two available US-made transmitters, if they have not been deployed in Russia in Summer 2001; make necessary logistical arrangements well in advance. Re-evaluate in 2002 the need for any additional PTT work in Iran. ICF: Provide US-made PTT to Russian colleagues; set up data retrieval and distribution system	1 1
	2) Conduct aerial surveys over the region revealed by PTT data to be the probable summering area.	Russia-WP		Not done (PTTs were not fitted to any juvenile Siberian cranes from 1997-2000)	RU: Carry out aerial surveys in future when PTT data become available	1
	3) Assess the threats to Siberian cranes and then act to protect crane habitats.	Russia-WP		Summering areas not yet identified (see above)		
	4) Educate local people about Siberian cranes and ask them to protect the birds.	Russia-WP		Summering areas not yet identified (see above)	RU: Distribute educational materials, including postcards, in summering areas for sub-adult cranes once they have been identified	2
	5) If PTT monitoring of a juvenile is not successful in 2002, re-examine feasibility	Russia-WP				

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6) Assess hunting pressure and other mortality factors along the migration route.	1) Determine hunting seasons and practices in areas used by Siberian cranes.	All Range States-WP		RU, KZ, IR: Study completed in framework of GEF project (2000)	<p>Flyway Officer: Compile and distribute a table of annual waterfowl hunting seasons, with a view to identifying possible threats to cranes (eg. shooting, disturbance)</p> <p>All Range States - WP: Consider modifying hunting seasons in local areas to minimize these threats to Siberian cranes</p> <p>KZ: Established and expand non-shooting zones at hunting sites; most important sites will be included in specially protected areas</p>	2 2 2
	2) Determine and monitor threats to Siberian cranes at each wetland area they use (where they are known).	All Range States-WP		Under GEF project, detailed threat analysis was conducted for key sites in RU, KZ and IR (2000)	AZ: Identify first the key stopover sites for Siberian cranes	1
	3) Develop programmes to enlist hunters to support crane conservation.	All Range States-WP		<p>All Range States - WP: Work in progress (1997-1998)</p> <p>RU/KZ: Crane Working Group restored, with hunters to be enlisted as members (2000)</p>	All Range States - WP: Encourage hunters to join or establish conservation NGOs (especially in IR); provide printed information (e.g. postcards) about Siberian cranes to hunters where licences are sold, before the beginning of each hunting season	2

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Objective 2: Increase numbers and genetic diversity						
1) Release costume-reared and parent-reared cranes with wild Siberian Cranes on breeding grounds after staff and facilities are available (in 1998 or 1999).	1) Transport costume-reared and parent-reared young Siberian crane chicks from the captive breeding centres to the breeding grounds of the western population for release with wild pairs.	Russia-WP	ICF-WP	<p>RU: Constructed camp for future releases at Uvat. (1997-1998)</p> <p>In 1998, release was not possible in Uvat on account of late spring/ absence of breeding</p> <p>1999: no releases at Uvat (not enough eggs/chicks), but 4 released at Tyumen (see also Central Population activity)</p> <p>2000: no releases at Uvat (not enough eggs/chicks); but 4 released at Tyumen (see also Central Population activity)</p>	RU: Carry out releases of young Siberian crane chicks into the western/central population at Tyumen and at Astrakhan in 2001(a total of up to 10 cross-fostered and costume-reared birds, depending on conditions); continue this programme in successive years	1
	2) Complete costume/parent-rearing of Siberian crane chicks and place a PTT, mortality sensor and, if feasible, standard radio on each pre-fledged bird.	Russia-WP	[WBSJ-WP] ICF-WP	See above	<p>RU/ICF: Costume/parent-rearing work is planned for 2001 and beyond (see above); mortality sensor still not available in Russia</p> <p>ICF: Conduct study in US on Whooping Cranes to see if cranes can safely carry both a PTT and standard radio with mortality sensor</p>	1 1
	3) Monitor migration of costume-reared and parent-reared Siberian cranes released on breeding grounds, and visit resting areas and final winter destination. Promptly communicate PTT data to all western population Range States during the migration.	Russia-WP	All Range States-WP [WBSJ-WP] ICF-WP	See above	<p>All Range States - WP: Use services of Flyway Officer to communicate PTT data from the autumn migrations of Siberian cranes released into the Western Population</p> <p>ICF: Receive data and set up daily transmission to Flyway Officer and key colleagues along flyway</p> <p>Flyway Officer: Transmit data and monitor follow-up by Range States</p>	1 1 1

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2) Use Eurasian cranes to rear Siberian cranes in order to produce future "guide birds".	1) Bring eggs from Oka, ICF, and western European centres, to cross-foster in nests of wild Eurasian cranes on the western breeding ground.	Russia-WP	ICF-WP	In 1997: 3 Siberian crane eggs from ICF and Oka were put in 3 nests of Eurasian cranes; In 1998: 4 Siberian crane eggs were put in 4 nests of Eurasian cranes (no information on survival available) 1999: 3 Siberian crane eggs from ICF and Oka were put in Eurasian crane nests in Uvat (no birds were located thereafter) 2000: one egg from Oka was placed in Eurasian crane nest (no bird located thereafter)	RU/CBCC/ICF: Co-operate in ongoing programme to place eggs into nests of wild Eurasian cranes for cross-fostering, attach PTTs, monitor/communicate data from migration, and visit key sites. (In 2001, no eggs will be placed at Uvat, due to insufficient numbers of eggs; from 2002, eggs from CBCC and ICF may also be used, subject to securing of CITES authorization.)	1
	2) Place PTTs on all pre-fledged Siberian cranes cross-fostered by wild Eurasian cranes on the western breeding grounds and on several pre-fledged Eurasian crane juveniles and moulting adults; and monitor the migration.	Russia-WP	[WBSJ-WP] ICF-WP	No PTTs were fitted since foster-reared wild Siberian crane chicks were not located. (1997-1998) In 1998: a PTT was placed on a Eurasian crane chick, but the PTT failed. Chick was marked with color leg band. RU: 1999-2000: no PTTs were placed	RU: Continue placing PTTs on cross-fostered Siberian cranes, according to plan in 2001 and beyond (but only two PTTs were available as of May 2001)	1
	3) As PTT data from released cranes are received and communicated to the relevant Range State focal points, promptly visit the migration resting areas and wintering grounds that have been identified.	All Range States-WP		RU visited south Tyumen Oblast in 1997; KZ visited Caspian coast in the north (April/May 1997 - no Siberian cranes were observed). (1997-1998) In 1998: RU extended visit to Astrakhan Reserve and KZ to Naurzum RU: 1999-2000 (no PTTs were placed)	All Range States - WP: Use services of Flyway Officer for communication of information on migration, and visit nesting areas and wintering grounds promptly	1

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3) Use Siberian cranes released in Iran in 1996 to augment the wild flock	1) If the free-ranging bird does not return to Fereidoonkenar, locate and capture it and release it with the wild cranes.	Iran	Russia-WP	Not done (bird disappeared)	No further action to be taken	
	2) Health check the captive Siberian crane at Pardisan Park and release it with wild Siberian cranes.	Iran	Russia-WP ICF	Health checks carried out by Pardisan vet 4 times a year (1997-1998); veterinary assistance offered by ICF Plan to release bird at Miankaleh discontinued after site evaluation		
	3) Retrieve PTTs from both of the above birds (released in 1996) and send to WBSJ for refurbishing.	Iran	Russia-WP, WBSJ-WP	RU: WBSJ PTT was retrieved in nesting territory in 1998	No further action to be taken	

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Objective 3: Enhance international cooperation						
1) Improve exchange of information and technical expertise.	1) Designate national coordinators with responsibility for liaising with counterparts in other countries and with co-operating organizations.	All Range States-WP		Generally done, but some names to be added (see separate list compiled by CMS) (1997-1998)	CMS: Include list of national focal points and technical advisors as annex to report of the May 2001 meeting in Baraboo, USA	2
	2) Establish/fund the post of Flyway Officer in 2001 to facilitate communication and coordination	ICF CMS			(Terms of reference of the post will include establishing a network of experts; preparing a periodic newsletter, setting up a website; communicating all information received about spring/autumn migration; coordinating the celebration of International Crane Day and other educational/awareness activities)	1
	3) Provide central co-ordination of information exchange, subject to a strict protocol on use and publication of data.	ICF-WP	CMS	ICF: in progress (1997-2000) CMS: compiled 1997-1999 Conservation Plan, circulated to all Range States in August 1997 (attempted to secure Russian translation, but was not successful)	All Range States - WP: Regularly forward current information on Siberian crane activities to Flyway Officer without delay, for communication to others (by e-mail)	1
	4) Submit an annual report on implementation of the Siberian crane Memorandum of Understanding to the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, for forwarding to all participating Range States and co-operating organizations.	All Range States-WP Co-operating Organizations	CMS	RU: 1997 report submitted, circulated to all Range States; all other Range States tabled reports at 1998 Ramsar meeting For May 2001 Baraboo meeting, new format prepared and written reports received from: RU, KZ, AZ, IR	All Range States – WP: Prepare reports according to format to be provided by CMS (structured according to the MoU activities) CMS: Annex all available texts of country reports to 2001 Baraboo meeting report CMS: Remind Range States in January of each year of the new deadline set for receipt of reports: 31 March (next reports due in March 2002)	2 2 2

Programme	Activity	Range State / Organization	Collaborator	Progress / Results (1997-2000)	Further Specific Activities (2001-2003)	Priority
1) Improve exchange of information and technical expertise.	5) Organize regular meetings of Siberian crane Range States; seek allocation for funding in the core CMS budget.	CMS		Organized meeting in Ramsar, Islamic Republic of Iran (main activities June-Dec 1998) with core CMS/UNEP funding;	CMS: Compile/distribute revised Conservation Plan and meeting report (Summer 2001)	2
				Co-organized, with ICF, meeting in Baraboo, Wisconsin (main activities March-May 2001) with core CMS funding;	CMS: Organize fifth Range State meeting in early spring 2003 (Kazakhstan has been suggested as possible venue; CMS to solicit formal offers in 2002); explore possibilities of linking with GEF Steering Committee meeting	1
2) Raise funds for a comprehensive conservation programme.	1) Develop comprehensive project proposal(s) for submission to appropriate agencies for possible funding support.	ICF	CMS	ICF/CMS/UNEP: GEF-PDF-B grant approved for Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Iran; 3 Steering Committee meetings held (1998-2000)	ICF: Submit GEF project brief for review at December 2001 GEF Council meeting	1
	2) Seek/provide funding, to the extent possible, on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis for small-scale projects and tasks	ICF	CMS CBCC	CMS: Financed Siberian crane video produced/distributed by ICF in 1998 CBCC: Funding provided for support of Oka Rare Crane Breeding Center	All Range States - WP: Develop small scale project proposals and submit to CMS and ICF for their consideration; appeal also to governments for funding of programmes ICF: Facilitate organization of a fund-raising committee to improve effectiveness of fund-raising efforts	1 1

Programme	Activity	Range State / Organization	Collaborator	Progress / Results (1997-2000)	Further Specific Activities (2001-2003)	Priority
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Objective 4: Protect and manage habitats critical for Siberian cranes						
Conserve key flyway sites & potential wintering areas	1) Activities to mirror the main GEF site outputs: Legal protection Management plans Buffer zone management Targeted research Alternative livelihoods Capacity building Education and public awareness	IR, KZ, RU	FO		Implement GEF project at selected sites in: IR (Fereidoonkenar damgah; Bujagh and Amirkelayeh); KZ (Naurzum, Kulagol, Sankebay, Urkash-Zharsor, Kulykol, Tontegir-Zhanshura); RU (Konda-Alymka Rivers Basin(Uvat), Kurgan-Tyumen Transboundary Wetlands (Armizon)	1
	2) Management of other flyway sites through other projects	RU, KZ, AZ			Manage flyway sites in: RU (Volga delta GEF); KZ (Ural delta), Naurzum (WWF), Northwest Kazakstan wetlands (WWF);	1
	3) Conservation of other flyway sites through regional GEF activities and national protected area systems	IR			IR : Undertake conservation of Ardabil airport site	1