

Final Progress Report

*Crane conservation and hunter education activities
implemented through support from the
Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund*



International Crane Foundation
August 2012

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Background

The critically endangered Siberian Crane is considered to be the most threatened of the world's 15 species of cranes. A few scattered birds remain in west Asia with wintering grounds in Iran. Approximately 3,500 cranes winter in China on a single wetland complex at Poyang Lake, a wetland ecosystem now threatened by a proposal to maintain high water levels year-round to assist navigation, that will inundate and damage the mudflats critical to these tuber feeding birds. This eastern population is also losing critical migratory stopover sites.

Siberian Cranes are highly wetland dependent. The shallow water in which they dig in the mud for plants and animals also provide habitat for a plethora of other aquatic species including shorebirds, ducks, geese, swans, storks, herons, and spoonbills. Over 30 threatened migratory waterbird species benefit from protection of their sites.

The Siberian Crane is a highly effective flagship species. It is a strong symbol in diverse cultures representing long life and fidelity, and it serves as a spirit guide. Known for its long and arduous migrations, the Siberian Crane is an effective ambassador for wetlands.

The wetlands used by the Siberian Crane have global significance for biodiversity according to both the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The Siberian Crane, other crane species, and 27 threatened waterbird species use these wetlands during seasonal migrations. A *Western/Central Asian Site Network for Siberian Cranes and Other Waterbirds (WCASN)* has been established under the Convention of Migratory Species. Twelve sites have been officially designated in 6 countries, and proposals are under preparation for an additional 14 sites. The Naurzum Lake System in north-west Kazakhstan has recently been designated as a World Heritage Site.

Five countries (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russia, and Uzbekistan) involved in the implementation of this project are located along the Siberian Crane's Central Flyway. Critical wetlands are now legally protected in these five countries including designation as key wetlands under the WCASN. The level of protection has been strengthened and the size of nature reserves significantly increased.

Protection of the complex of wetlands along the Central Flyway is critical to support all stages of the life cycle of the Siberian Crane. This is especially important in Central Asia due to trends of drought and climate change.

Based on issues with Siberian Cranes nesting in Russian Federation and Siberian, Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes migrating through Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) administered a grant provided by the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund. Funds were provided to each of the countries through governmental and non-governmental organizations; additional grant funds supported coordination and administration of these projects. The work under the grant started in April 2011 and was completed in July 2012. This final report provides information on the outcomes achieved in each of the five countries based on activities completed toward the goals of the MBZ grant.

Although significant progress has been made to protect and manage Siberian Cranes, hunting is believed to be the primary cause for the decline of Siberian Cranes in west Asia. Although there are laws prohibiting hunting in all five countries involved in this project, illegal hunting is still reported. Enforcement is difficult in these remote regions used by the cranes. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on education promoting voluntary concern and support from hunters.

The primary objective of the project was to promote widespread public education, especially to hunters, in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan along the former route of a population of Siberian Cranes that migrated from Russia to India. The last birds were seen in India in winter 2001/2002. However, some cranes survive and have been sighted in Kazakhstan and

Uzbekistan. Cranes in many areas are wintering in more northern latitudes, perhaps as a consequence of climate change.

Russian scientists are working on a project to lead a flock of captive-reared Siberian Cranes behind ultra-light aircraft, from the known nesting area of Siberian Cranes in northwest Siberia, across Russia and Kazakhstan to the Jeiran Ecological Research Center in Uzbekistan. Here the cranes will be protected in a semi-wild state until their independent migration the following spring. It is possible that released birds will migrate to India in the company of large flocks of Eurasian Cranes (*Grus grus*) and Demoiselle Cranes (*Anthropoides virgo*) the following autumn. Consequently, education programs with hunters must also be applied in Afghanistan and Pakistan where hunting is rampant. Involving hunters in the conservation of Siberian Cranes is paramount if the population is to be restored.

Activities supported by the MBZ Species Conservation Fund focused on key Siberian Crane sites which have been recognized for their international importance through nomination to the West/Central Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds.

Education programs for hunters included production and distribution of locally adapted brochures, posters, and films on Siberian Crane conservation, adapted for local languages and local hunting practices. Meetings were held with hunters, border guards, hunting and fishing societies, and local communities at key wetlands used by Siberian Cranes and other waterbirds.

Through our work with hunters, our aim was to promote the following outcomes: 1. Relationships will be fostered with hunters, hunting agencies, and hunter associations; 2. Hunters will learn about and be inspired by the beauty and plight of the Siberian Crane; 3. Hunters will be able to correctly identify Siberian Cranes and tell them apart from closely related species; 4. Hunters will choose to avoid hunting cranes; and 5. Hunters will be motivated to report sightings and know where to send reports.

All countries successfully completed implementation of the project and presented results. This report provides a summary for each of the five countries on the national situation, objectives, activities, challenges, and highlights key accomplishments. The conclusions at the end of the report review the overall achievements and the anticipated conservation impacts. This project is seen as the initial phase of an ongoing effort, and directions for future activities are proposed.

"In the end we conserve only what we love, we love only what we understand, and we understand only what we are taught" --- Baba Dioum

Afghanistan



Photo by George Archibald

Prepared by Mr. Qais Agah & Mr. Ghulam Malikyar

Save Environment of Afghanistan (SEA)

Background

Siberian Cranes have migrated through the Central Flyway in Afghanistan with a few important migratory stopover sites. The last confirmed sighting was in March 1977, when Ron Sauey, ICF co-founder, observed 56 cranes at Ab-i-Estada. Dasht-e-Nawar is also considered important as a stopover site for resting and feeding by migratory waterbirds. There are no confirmed sightings of this species in the country during the last 30 to 40 years, although birds continued to arrive in India until 2002. Observations in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan indicate that Siberian Cranes were often sighted in flocks of Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes. This might have made Siberian Cranes vulnerable to and victims of crane hunting, which has been a popular sport in Afghanistan and Pakistan for centuries. Hunting was probably the major cause for rapidly decreasing numbers of the Siberian Crane along the central flyway. Although Afghanistan's hunting regulations has been drafted and are under review, a pending presidential decree to ban hunting is an essential tool being addressed under the project activities.

Recently in accordance with Article 47 of the environment law, the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) has initiated the establishment of the Afghanistan Wild Species Executive Committee (AWEC) in cooperation with national and international entities including Save Environment of Afghanistan (SEA), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and professors from Kabul University, National Academy of Science and other government agencies. The committee has assessed 98 species of mammals, birds and plants which are proposed for the category of conservable exploitable. Based on AWEC analysis, the Siberian cranes are categorized under critically endangered. Therefore, NEPA and the relevant government agencies will protect the evaluated endangered species.

In 2001 Eurasian Crane wintering grounds were discovered in the territories of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, primarily along the border of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan in the Shortepa District of Balkh Province. These newly discovered wintering grounds encouraged the investigation of the adjacent area in Afghanistan along the Siberian Crane migration route.

Project Implementation

Based on issues with Siberian, Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes migrating through Afghanistan, the International Crane Foundation (ICF) is administering \$3,000 of the grant provided by the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund through the non-governmental organization, SEA. The work under the grant started in April 2011. The present report is an output of the SEA activities that have been conducted based on our proposed plan for the MBZ grant.

Project objectives:

1. Establish of volunteer committees among hunters in Kapisa and Parwan Provinces, and in Shortepa District, Balkh Province;
2. Train the hunters to increase their awareness in order to promote crane conservation;
3. Meetings with local governmental officials, community elders and students of schools;
4. Public awareness in target areas.

Implemented activities:

1. Identify hunting hotspot along crane migration corridor in Afghanistan

Crane stopovers have been identified. On 15 and 16 May 2011, SEA conducted surveys in Kapisa and Parwan Provinces to identify two main crane stopover sites in central Afghanistan. Due to security concerns, the survey could not be conducted in the Shortepa District of Balkh Province, which is located near the border with Uzbekistan.

2. Site Visits from 19th-20th February 2012 to Kapisa and Parwan Provinces

On 19 February the NGO Save the Environment Afghanistan (SEA) assigned a conservation team to visit Kapisa and Parwan provinces in order to establish Hunters' Committees and train the hunters to understand and promote behaviors that support crane conservation. Sayad, Kohistan and Kohedaman villages were visited and, with support of the community elders, local hunters were invited to the meeting. The team trained 15 hunters from Kapisa. After the training the hunters agreed to share the conservation messages regarding the endangered Siberian Crane to other hunters. An experienced hunter, Amir Mohammad, said: "I am 60 years old, and I have been hunting for almost 40 years, and thousands of birds, including white cranes, were hunted by myself and my sons. I was never aware about the decline and vulnerability of these birds before and I thought that our hunting will never decrease the number of birds, but now I understood that Siberian Cranes have been disappearing, and I am very upset about it. I will never hunt the cranes anymore and I will make sure that my relatives do the same."

On 20 February the team visited wetlands in another, adjacent Parwan Province where cranes roost for a short time during migration. With support of local leaders, a group of hunters was established. The group includes 10 hunters who have received training in crane research and conservation. In addition, the committee will also report to SEA about any sightings of the Siberian Crane and other crane species in the area.

3. Site visit in Shortepa District, Balkh Province

On 4 January 2012, for the first time in Afghanistan with the help from local elders, a group of hunters were motivated to have a meeting in the Joi Wakil village of Shortepa District, Balkh Province, at which they established a Hunters' Committee to address crane conservation issues. The committee includes seven members selected from five villages of the district.

On 21 and 22 March 2012, a group of experts from SEA visited Shortepa District and met with the District Governor and the Chief of the Frontier Police in charge of security of the borders with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The team explained the purpose of their visit and shared their concerns about hunting and shooting of cranes. The government officials were requested to support the protection of cranes and undertake measures to stop crane hunting. The Chief of the Frontier Police stated that their field stations and border guards are completely aware of the situation and they warned all the hunters to stop hunting. He added that during the last two months four hunters, who tried to transfer five cranes to Mazar-e-Sharif City, were arrested, imprisoned for a week, and released after pledging never to commit illegal hunting again. The District Governor also declared that all community and village leaders will be asked to disseminate crane protection messages among the people.

On 23 March 2012, the team started searching the wetlands where cranes are roosting, with support from the established Hunters' Committee and the Frontier Police. Our team took a risk and travelled in an unsteady, locally made boat across the river to a target wetland on the border with Uzbekistan. Still, they made it to the site where cranes roosted the night before; they left for a remote marshland near Uzbekistan border in early morning. Using binoculars, they observed two

separate Demoiselle Crane flocks of around 120 individuals each from afar. The area is under close control of the Frontier Police and civilians are not allowed.

The next day, on 24 March 2012, our team visited wetlands near Buzariq village and observed a flock of 30 Eurasian Cranes.

Based on local reports, thousands of Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes were roosting in the state border areas inside existing wetlands earlier this spring, but most of them had left by the time of our visit. Cranes spent the night near the Afghanistan border and stayed close to Uzbekistan wetlands during the day. As reported earlier by SEA in 2010, local people used poisonous drugs to trap cranes, but recent evidence and information obtained from local people indicated that trapping by poisonous drugs has been greatly reduced in the last two years due to growing conservation awareness and SEA's work with local and frontier police. This issue illustrates fundamental and significant impacts of the conservation efforts in the area.

Education activities

Following the objective of the project, continuation of the education program was a key element. On 25-26 March 2012, with support from the Frontier Police, the team visited villages of Tokhai, Sorpta, Jairatan, Joi-Walik and Buzariq in Shortepa District, which are located on the bank of Amudaria River. The team disseminated conservation education booklets at the meetings with the community; we explained the significance of cranes and their ecosystem and their critical status in the world and in this area. In addition, community elders and religious scholars also explained to the gathered people the values of birds and the need to protect them through the verses from the Holy Quran. During these awareness activities hundreds of local people became aware of or refreshed their knowledge about the critical status of the Siberian Cranes, as well as the decline of the Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes in the area. Almost all participants had committed to protection of cranes, but further efforts are needed to ensure efficient conservation.

The team encouraged local religious leaders and Mullahs to continue public statements and speeches at mosques during and after prayer times, reinforcing them with verses from the Holy Quran.

The team arranged individual and group meetings with hunters in the area, training them about the values of cranes and disseminating conservation booklets.

In addition, the booklets were distributed among the principal, teachers and students of Joi-e-Wakil high school in Shortepa District. The principal and teachers were requested to refresh their students on crane protection.

Key Outputs

1. Trapping by poisonous food and drugs has been reduced considerably in the area.
2. Three hunters' committees were established in the Shortepa District of Balkh Province, Kapisa and Parwan Provinces.
3. 80 hunters received first-hand training.
4. 200 local people received first-hand training.
5. Hundreds of booklets were disseminated to create public awareness.
6. Thousands of people are being reached indirectly with the crane conservation message through local hunters, who received training in the course of this project, Mullahs, community elders, and booklets.
7. Local authorities were motivated and are now committed to stop crane hunting in their areas.

8. Hunters were encouraged to record and report all sightings of Siberian Cranes.

Challenges

- Security concern which is usually a threat for the surveys and conservation activities.
- Despite reports for identification of cranes wintering site in northern Afghanistan there are still lack of financial resources to protect the areas.
- Degradation of the watershed in the river basin by medicinal plant dealers which places negative impacts on cranes habitat.
- Continued reed cutting which is a major threat to cranes.

Recommendations

- The project, despite being short was highly supportive, thus it is recommended to continue such support.



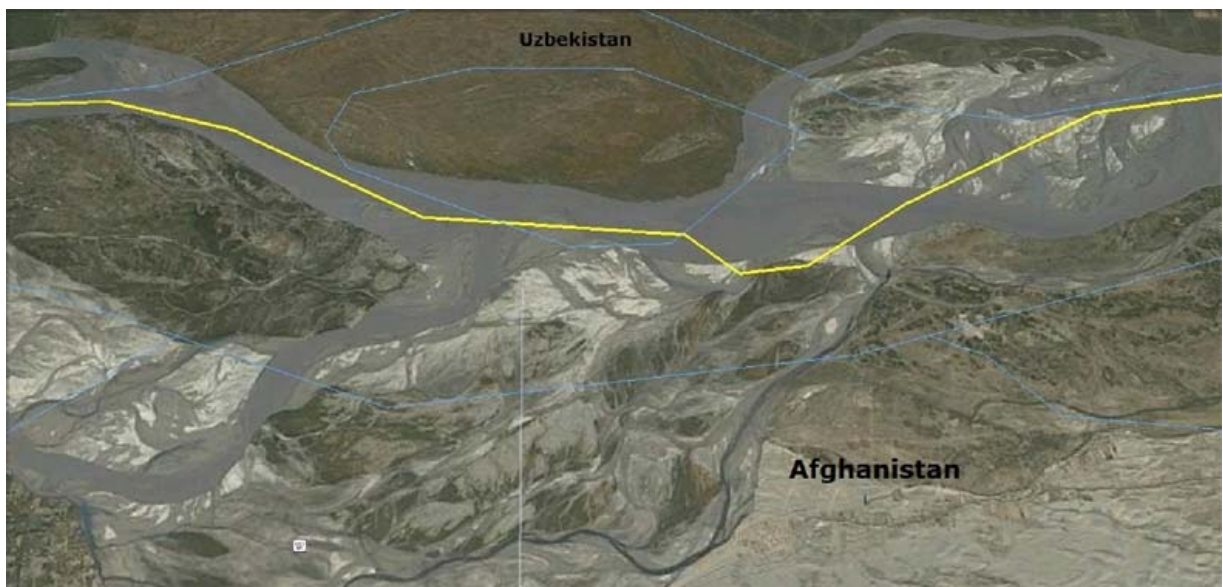
Meeting with local people and hunters on 15 May 2011 in Kapisa Province. Photo by Qais Agah



Decoys for cranes in Kapisa Province on 15 May 2011. Photo by Qais Agah



Decoys for cranes in hunting site in Parwan Province on 16 May 2011. Photo by Qais Agah



Eurasian Cranes wintering site on the border between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Photo by Qais Agah



Eurasian cranes wintering ground in Amudaria River Valley in Shortepa District. Photo by Qais Agah



Eurasian Cranes wintering ground near the border with Uzbekistan. Photo by Qais Agah



Group of hunters, who signed up for the Hunter Committee and training in Sayad, Kapisa Province, on 19 February 2012. Photo by Qais Agah



Education and awareness activities on crane conservation in Shortepa District. Photo by Qais Agah



Dissemination of cranes education materials in Shortepa District. Photo by Qais Agah



One of individual meetings with hunters near crane wintering grounds in Amudaria Valley in Shortepa District. Photo by Qais Agah



Burning of shrubs and reeds in wetlands of Amudaria River in Shortepa District. Photo by Qais Agah



Reed cutting is the main threat for cranes wintering in Amudaria River in Shortepa District in Afghanistan. Photo by Qais Agah

پیام کلنگ سایبریایی!

من پرنده صلح هستم و پیام صلح را از یکجا به جای دیگر و از یک کشور به کشور دیگر انتقال میدهم. من هرگز نخواسته ام که برای شما مشکل خلق کنم بلکه با دیدن شما بینهایت خورسند میگردم و میخواهم که وقتی شما مصروف کار خود باشید من هم نزدیک شما باشم و آزادانه به هرسو رفته بتوانم، اما هروقتیکه شما مرا میبینید به شکلی از اشکال مزاحمت میکنید یا هم مرا بخاطر یکمقدار گوشت از بین میبرید. آیا نمی توانم بدون تهدید زندگی نمایم؟



Cover of the crane conservation booklet printed for distribution among local people in Afghan language

Kazakhstan



Siberian Crane in Naurzum
Nature Reserve.
Photo Eugeny Bragin

Prepared by Dr. Eugeny Bragin

Naurzum State Nature Reserve

Background

Kazakhstan is located on the flyways of three crane species – Demoiselle, Eurasian and Siberian Cranes. The most important area for migrating waterbirds is the Kostanai Region located in the north of Kazakhstan. In this area the most important wetlands which are used as migration stopovers by cranes and other waterbirds are the Naurzum, Zharsor, Tyuntyugur-Zhanshura, Kulakol-Taldykol lake systems as well as some others. In addition to Eurasian Cranes, the critically endangered Siberian Crane uses these wetlands during autumn and spring migrations. They are used by Siberian Cranes of both the Western and Central Asian flocks. After long-term rest in Kazakhstan wetlands, some cranes fly along the Central Flyway through Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan to India, while others fly along the Western Flyway through Russia, Azerbaijan to Iran along the Caspian Sea coast.

Crane hunting is prohibited in Kazakhstan. All three species are listed in the Red Data Book of Kazakhstan: the Siberian Crane as endangered, Eurasian Crane as a rare species with limited range which is vulnerable to unfavorable weather change, and Demoiselle Crane as a self-restored species which should be monitored.

There are no traditions in north Kazakhstan for cranes hunting, as their meat is considered dry and tasteless. The species mainly hunted are geese and ducks. Crane shootings are occasional, during times when no any other game birds available.

Currently the penalty for shooting a Siberian Crane is five thousand US dollars and for Eurasian Crane shooting near 1,500 US dollars. The same punishment is used for destroying crane nests and killing chicks. In 2010, a hunter who shot a Eurasian Crane was penalized 240,000 Kazakh Tenge.

Hunting can also cause disturbance for cranes during their critical resting and feeding periods at migration stopover sites. There are two hunting seasons in Kostanai Region in northwestern Kazakhstan in the spring and autumn.

There are some differences between spring and autumn hunting seasons regarding MBZ Species Conservation Fund project implementation.

Spring hunting

- a) Spring migration goes fast and birds usually fly through the Kostanai Region without long stopovers;
- b) Usually cranes and geese stop for a short rest in fields which are less accessible in spring time;
- c) Spring hunting is not popular among hunters as the period is very short (7-10 days, usually the last week of April or first week of May depending on year) and it is allowed only with decoy ducks.

Autumn hunting

- a) Autumn hunting is quite prolonged – up to two months from the last Saturday of August through the first Saturday of September;
- b) Autumn hunting is allowed in different bird habitats including crane feeding and resting sites, on lake banks and on migration routes;
- c) Cranes and geese have long-term stopovers for intensive feeding in agricultural fields and lakes;
- d) Autumn hunting in the Kostanai Region is very popular, including a lot of hunters from various Kazakhstan regions as well as from adjacent regions of Russia;

For these reasons, it was decided to implement the MBZ Species Conservation Fund project before the **autumn** hunting seasons. This period is more dangerous for cranes, as most cases of crane poaching occur in autumn, while spring hunting is not considered a significant threat for cranes in Kazakhstan.

Project Implementation

Based on issues with Siberian and Eurasian Cranes migrating through Kazakhstan, ICF provided part of the MBZ grant (\$3,000) to Eugeni Bragin, the project coordinator in Kazakhstan, for project implementation. The work under the grant started in April 2011.

1. Training for hunter education

A training workshop with participation of 46 representatives of regional and local public hunting societies, private hunting agencies, and inspectors from state hunting management departments was held on 1 September 2011 in Kostanai Town, northwest Kazakhstan, where Siberian and Eurasian Crane migration stopovers are located. The training was organized before the opening of the fall hunting season. The main goal of the training was to reach an agreement with hunting societies and private hunting agencies on strengthening crane conservation during the migration season and providing information about Siberian Crane sightings by hunters. The main tasks of the meeting were to:

- a. Inform hunters about the current status of the Siberian Crane and its conservation and about the importance of Kostanai Region for cranes;
- b. Inform hunters about efforts for crane conservation and especially for Siberian Crane restoration and the role of Kostanai Region in these processes;
- c. Show the importance of information about Siberian Crane sightings and large congregations of Eurasian Cranes for conservation efforts;
- d. Obtain information from hunters about cases of crane poaching in the Kostanai Region as well as about conflicts between farmers and cranes due to crop damage by Eurasian crane flocks.

2. Preparation of education and information materials

The following materials were prepared and distributed among the meeting participants:

- a. Brochure on cranes of the Kostanai Region, northwestern Kazakhstan, in Russian and Kazakh languages;
- b. Brochure about the Siberian Crane and its status and conservation in Kostanai Region in Russian and Kazakh languages;
- c. Questionnaire cards for hunters to use to report Siberian Crane sightings using the card prepared by Russian colleagues as a template;
- d. Three versions of pocket calendars with images of Eurasian, Demoiselle and Siberian Cranes;
- e. Desk loose-leaf calendar with crane images;
- f. Four display boards with images of migrating cranes; logos of International Crane Foundation, Convention of Migratory Species and Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds; and with inscription "This area is of international importance for cranes and other waterbirds in Central Asia". These display boards were set up near Naurzum, Kulykol, Zharsor-Urkash and Tyuntyugur Lakes.

Project Outputs

The following main outputs were achieved during project implementation.

1. During meeting the scales of crane poaching and crop damage by cranes in north part of the region were estimated.
2. It was agreed to strengthen crane protection at migration stopovers during autumn migration
3. Understanding by hunters of the importance to collect and share data about Siberian Crane sightings, Eurasian Crane congregations, and cases of conflicts between cranes and farmers

New information about sightings of Siberian Cranes in 2007, 2009 and 2010 in Kostanai Region were obtained. Thus, six Siberian Cranes were sighted in Zhurun Lake in Karabalykskiy (former Komsomolsky) district in the beginning of May 2007; a pair was registered in Bidkuduk Lake in Karasusky District in the beginning of May 2009; three adult Siberian Cranes were observed in a flock of Eurasian Cranes in the east bank of Kushmurun Lake in the period of 20 – 25 September 2010.



Meeting with hunters in Kostanai Province. Photo by Elena Averina



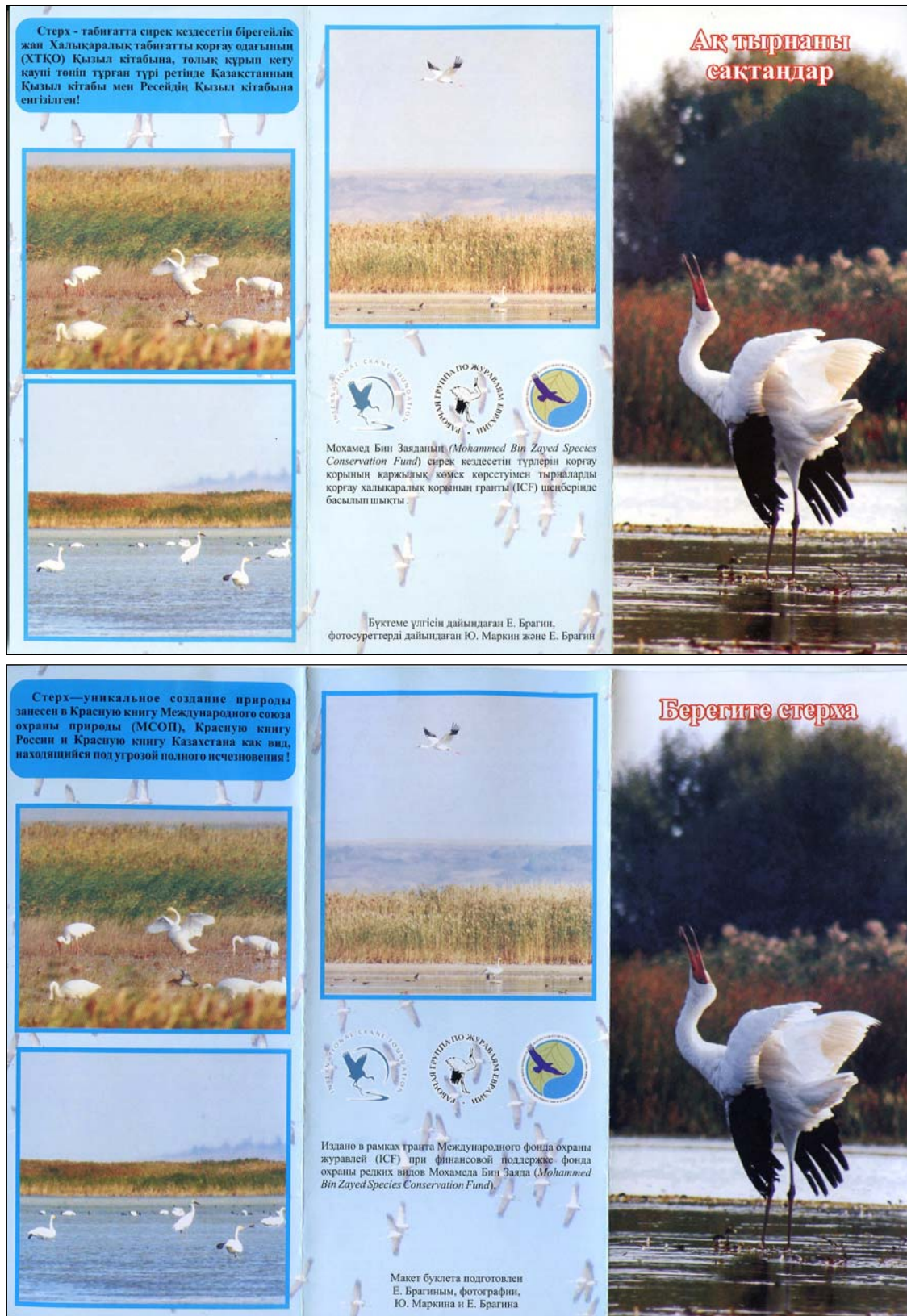
Head of Wildlife Conservation of the Department of Forestry and Hunting of Kostanai Province. Photo by Elena Averina



Head of Fishing and Hunting Society of Kostanai Province. Photo by Elena Averina



Game keeper of Karasu-Ozen Game Management Unit (Tyuntyugur-Koibagar Lake System)(in the center); Sergey Yerokhov, coordinator of Kazakhstan Wetland Project. Photo by Elena Averina



The brochure on the Siberian Crane, in Russian and Kazakh languages. Same kind of brochures were published for Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes in Russian and Kazakh languages for the Kostanai Region, northwestern Kazakhstan

Знаете ли Вы места постоянных скоплений журавлей, если да опишите их, если известно несколько, опишите их все:

Местонахождение:
район _____
озеро, урочище _____
ближайший поселок _____

Порядок численности:
☐ десятки; ☐ сотни; ☐ тысячи.

Если возможно укажите численность более точно
длительность пребывания журавлей в данном месте:
☐ дни; ☐ недели; ☐ около месяца.

Ф.И.О. _____
Почтовый адрес _____
Телефон _____
Электронный адрес _____

Заполненную анкету передайте в Областное общество охотников и рыболовов лично или через районных представителей.
Телефоны общества: 53-53-63, 53-56-17.

ПОМОГИТЕ СОХРАНИТЬ СТЕРХА !

Уважаемый охотник, заполнив эту анкету, Вы можете внести свой вклад в дело спасения одной из самых редких птиц мира - белого журавля или стерха. В Западно-Сибирской популяции их осталось всего несколько пар. Стерхи часто летят вместе с серыми журавлями, кроме того, в России проводятся работы по выращиванию белых журавлей в питомнике и последующему их выпуску к стаям серых журавлей. Выпуск производится в Курганской области, а дальше они летят через Казахстан. Поэтому знание сроков и путей пролета, и мест скоплений серых журавлей поможет проследить судьбу этих журавлей, и организовать охрану на путях миграций.

ПОМОГИТЕ СОХРАНИТЬ СТЕРХА !

Записан в Красную книгу Международного союза охраны природы (МСОП), Красную книгу России и Красную книгу Казахстана

Стерх (белый журавль) ① — крупная птица высотой 1,5 м. с размахом крыльев около 2 м, длинными шеей, клювом и ногами. Оперение взрослых чисто белое, концы крыльев черные (видны обычно только в полете). «Лицо», клюв, ноги — красные. Молодые птицы — буровато-рыжие, с просветами белого оперения.

Отличия стерха от других птиц:

от серого журавля ② — ярко белым оперением, черными концами крыльев, красными «лицом», клювом и ногами;

от лебедей ③ — длинными ногами, черными концами крыльев;

от цапель ④ — вытянутой (несложенной) в полете шеей.

Если Вы видели стерха или слышали о встречах с ним, пожалуйста, ответьте на вопросы:

Место встречи
(область, район, расстояние до ближайших населенных пунктов)

Описание места встречи (болото, лес, берег реки, озера и т.д.)

Сколько птиц Вы видели?

Что они делали (пролетали, кормились, находились у гнезда, гуляли с птенцами и т.д.)

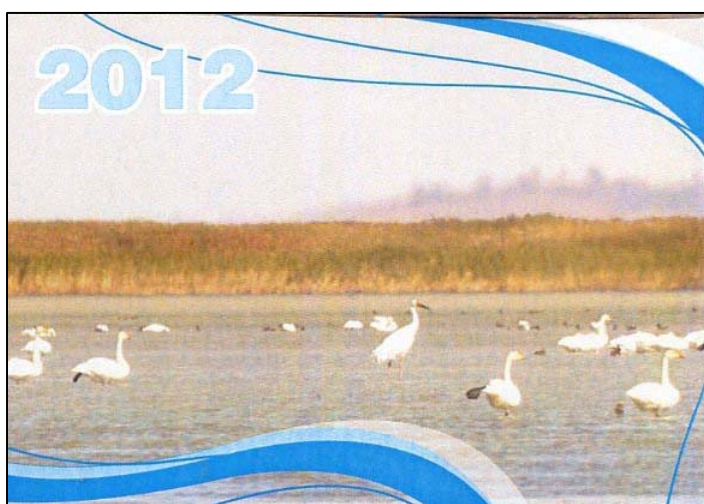
Дата встречи (можно приблизительно)

Другие, важные на Ваш взгляд, детали встречи

Questionnaire cards for hunters to use to report Siberian Crane sightings. This card was developed using the card prepared by the Russian colleagues as a template



Pocket calendars on Siberian, Eurasian, and Demoiselle Cranes



Pakistan



Demoiselle Cranes in captivity.
Photo Ahmad Khan

Prepared by Dr. Ahmad Khan

Pakistan Wetlands Programme WWF Pakistan

Background

Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes migrate through Pakistan in large numbers. Their migration routes, though preliminarily identified, are not yet fully explored. The cranes are being captured and hunted along their routes in the country. There are a few sites, such as Qamar Din Karez and Wasta Lake, where cranes are relatively safer. This is due to the prevalent social system, lead by tribal chiefs. Ahmad Khan explored the area as a significant route of cranes as part of his Master of Science research at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, sponsored by ICF. There is a concern that road development to the area will be provided, increasing access to crane hunters from Bannu and Lakki. Therefore, there is a need for conservation efforts in Wasta Lake and Qamar Din Karez areas. Under the project, the Principal Investigator prepared a brief movie about cranes of the Wasta Lake, and met with the youth in the area about the issue and how they can play their role in conserving cranes.

The other sites recently explored as hubs of crane hunting and trapping are Gul Kach and Zarmilana in South Waziristan. When the Pakistan Wetlands Programme concentrated efforts in Balochistan by teaming up with the Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department to stop crane hunters, they diverted their attention to the tribal belt. The hunting reported from those areas is significant in the past migration season and therefore needs attention. Ahmad Khan, as part of crane conservation efforts, met Mr. Ihsan Wazir, who wanted to work on bird conservation in South Waziristan. After meetings aimed to increase awareness and motivation, Mr. Ihsan Wazir formed the "Waziristan Nature Conservation Organization" with the primary mandate to conserve cranes in the South Waziristan. The facilitation to Mr. Ihsan Wazir was provided under ICF's MBZ project. He succeeded in registering his organization, conducting an assessment of the crane hunting in Zarmelana and Gul Katch and launching a campaign against crane trapping in those areas.

The Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Wildlife Department had previously established the "Lakki Crane Centre" that has the potential to become a hub of crane conservation in the Lakki and Bannu districts. There is however lack of literature and resources about cranes that can be displayed in the centre for general information and for information targeting crane hunters in particular. Under the MBZ project, guidelines previously written by Bryant Tarr of ICF on breeding of captive cranes were translated into Pashto and published in booklet form for use of crane hunters of Pakistan.

To prepare an HD documentary on cranes of Wasta Lake for telecasting on a television channel, a senior producer of the Geo News, a leading television channel in Pakistan has started work and the film will be completed in spring of 2012. This documentary will provide an opportunity to promote Wasta Lake and its importance to cranes migration.

Project implementation

Based on issues with Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes migrating through Pakistan, \$3,000 of the MBZ grant was provided to Ahmad Khan to coordinate implementation. The work under the grant started in April 2011. It is on a slow pace, as most of the work is remote and through telephone communication. It has, however, achieved the following so far:

1. Formation of Waziristan Nature Conservation Organization

Through this grant, the principal investigator contacted Mr. Ihsan Wazir, who is a local journalist and has written and worked out of his love for birds and nature conservation. However, he had no target and no exposure to issues around him in the South Waziristan. The principal investigator, after discussing with him the crane conservation issues in his area, motivated him to establish an organization that can look into nature conservation in general and crane conservation in particular. This resulted in registration of Waziristan Nature Conservation Organization (WHCO).

The WNCO is registered by Mr. Ehsan and has started interacting with local hunters, crane keepers and conservationists. The organization, with technical support from the Principal Investigator

succeeded in securing a small grant from WWF Pakistan's Scientific Committee Small Grants Programme. This grant will be used on assessment of natural resources of the Tribal area, including Chilghoza Forests, Suleman Markhor, Migratory Birds including cranes, and the threats to these resources. It is expected that the WNCO will present a comprehensive recommendation for conserving key natural resources of South Waziristan.

2. Preparation of education and information materials

a. Captive cranes breeding guidelines in Pashto

South Waziristan is one of the crane hunting and trapping areas, where hunters from the local community and from Bannu and Lakki districts hunt and live trap wild cranes. The local hunters have kept captive cranes, of which only a small number breed in captivity. The community is mostly literate, and reads and writes in the local language "Pashto." For their use, Mr. Ihsan Wazir translated the "Captive Cranes Breeding Guidelines," prepared with ICF, to Pashto.

The guidelines are published in Pashto, and have been disseminated to the Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Wildlife Department for distribution among the crane hunters of Bannu and Lakki, and to the WNCO for distribution among crane hunters/keepers of South Waziristan. The WNCO held a gathering of the crane hunters at Gomal Zam Dam and distributed the booklet to them. This was attended by about 200 people. This ceremony was first of its kind in South Waziristan and was highly appreciated by local people.

b. Brochure on cranes of Pakistan

The brochure is printed and distributed to various crane hunters and keepers.

c. Poster on cranes of Pakistan (Urdu)

The Pakistan Wetlands Programme had developed a poster on "Cranes of Pakistan." The poster has gained popularity across the country, but is only printed in English which is not widely understood in the remote crane migration sites. To make it understandable and to meet the needs of the communities in crane areas, it was re-printed with Urdu text. Under the MBZ project grant, 1200 posters have been printed and distributed to various local organizations including Lakki Crane Center, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, Balochistan Forest and Wildlife Department, SEED Zhou, Lakki Crane Centre and others.

d. Sign boards and material

Two boards are prepared for display in South Waziristan by WNCO. The boards, with paintings of cranes, carry conservation messages for crane hunters. Two other sign boards for display in Zhob are being prepared in collaboration with SEED Zhob. The pana-flexes are being discussed and are undergoing graphic design.

The boards in South Waziristan are installed and are highly appreciated by the local community and administration. This is a landmark contribution towards nature conservation in the South Waziristan.

e. Urdu version of Siberian Crane video

The video on Siberian Crane conservation previously produced under the CMS MoU is in U-matic tape format could not be converted to DVD format that is now the medium in common use. The U-matic technology is out-dated and not available. There are a few sources that we are trying. Otherwise, the documentary on Wasta Lake will be edited by hiring a professional editor to prepare a documentary on that crane retreat area.

3. Preparation of Wasta Lake Documentary

MBZ funding enabled project staff in Pakistan to plan a documentary on Wasta Lake as an important wetland for cranes and other waterbirds during migration. The goal of the documentary is to attract the attention of local people and government officials to conservation of this unique wetland, which now suffers because of drought and human activities. MBZ project activities involved developing messaging including the issue of hunting, identifying images needed, and developing a proposal that was subsequently funded by WWF Pakistan – Pakistan Wetlands Program (PWP). Field work on a documentary film has now been conducted by Geo Television and in cooperation with WWF Pakistan – Pakistan Wetlands Program, and the film is being edited. A copy will be shared with MBZ.

In January 2012, ICF had requested to use the unspent MBZ funds of \$1,137 for this film. Soon after, Ahmad Khan, the MBZ project coordinator for Pakistan, was able to leverage co-financing for the film through WWF Pakistan in the hopes that the unspent funds could be used to support other MBZ project needs. (Please see ICF's financial report for a new proposed use of the unspent funds.)

Project Outputs

South Waziristan, which is a tribal agency and not accessible under ordinary approach, hosts one of the key migration routes of Demoiselle and Eurasian Cranes. This agency attracts a number of crane hunters and keepers from outside in addition to those of its own. They trap cranes, and keep cranes as pets and lawn birds. There is no law extended to the agency, and the only work that can succeed is through building partnership with the local communities. Through this project, the principal investigator supported a bird lover from the South Waziristan to organize the "Waziristan Nature Conservation Organization" and work for conservation of natural resource of the agency in general and cranes in particular. It is expected that this organization will play a key role for conservation of cranes in the area. Its launch, outreach, and influence among local community are effective.

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the WNCO, and SEED Zhob, I am indebted to the Mohammed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund for provision of the grant to carry forward the crane conservation work in Pakistan. I am thankful to George Archibald and Claire Mirande for of the International Crane Foundation their interest in conserving cranes in Pakistan. I would also like to acknowledge the active and effective coordination from Elena Ilyashenko of ICF.



Gathering of crane hunters at Gomal Zam Dam for distribution of booklet. Photo by Ahmad Khan



Distribution of crane breeding guideline booklet among hunters in South Waziristan. Photo by Ahmad Khan



A board installed at Sambaza check post in Zhob. Photo by Ahmad Khan



A board installed by SEED in Zhob. Photo by Ahmad Khan



A board installed in South Waziristan. Photo by Ahmad Khan



A board installed at Dana Sar in Zhob. Photo by Ahmad Khan

Russian Federation



Prepared by Dr. Alexander Sorokin & Mrs. Anastasia Shilina

All-Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection

Background

The Siberian Crane that nests only in the north of Western Siberia and Yakutia is one of the most threatened species of birds of World Fauna. It is in the Red Data Book of Russia and Red Data Books of many Regions of the Russian Federation, and on lists of specially protected species in more than 10 countries.

In the second half of last century, the Siberian Crane population in Western Siberia was dramatically reduced and reached dangerous levels. The population now numbers around 20 individuals and there is a real threat of its total disappearance.

One important area of work on Siberian Crane conservation and restoration in Western Siberia is conducting educational work among local people, especially hunters.

In Russia, similar to Kazakhstan, there are two seasons of hunting, and the autumn period is more long-term than spring. Therefore, after preliminary consultations with the Department of Hunting in the Ministry for Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, it was decided that during the first phase (February - July) a printed version of the Siberian Crane Questionnaire Form would be prepared and preliminary workshops conducted in the regions. During the second phase the revised version of the Siberian Crane Questionnaire will be distributed during the autumn hunting season and results will be assessed.

Project Implementation

The ICF based on issues with Siberian Cranes nesting in Russian Federation and migrating through its territory, provided part of the MBZ Species Conservation Fund grant (\$3,000) for project implementation to Alexander Sorokin, Siberian Crane programs coordinator in Russian Federation. The work under the grant started in April 2011.

1. Training for hunter education

Under the MBZ SCF grant the following activities were conducted:

a) A workshop on problems of spring waterbird hunting was held in Salekhard, Yamalo-Nenetski Autonomous Region (YaNAR) **on 19 April 2011**. V.V. Tibajkin, the Head of the Department of the Protection and Rational Using of Hunting Resources of the YaNAR and heads of all regional hunting inspections, representatives of the Game and Fish Societies, and also representatives of communities of the local people of the North and Siberia participated in the meeting.

Dr. Sorokin described the status of the Siberian Crane population in the region and measures necessary for protection.

b) An interactive, one-hour roundtable discussion devoted to YaNAR Red Data Book was aired on the TV Centre of YaNAR (Salekhard) **on 21 April, 2011**. Participants included V.V. Vladimirov, the Vice-governor of YaNAR; V.V. Tibajkin, the head of Department of Protection and Rational Use of Hunting Resources of YaNAR; his Deputy Head Y.P. Klimov; A.M. Ermakov, the Executive Director of "STERKH" Fund and the Deputy of YaNAR Parliament; and heads of the nature protection and scientific agencies.

Special attention has been given to Siberian Crane protection measures in connection with a forthcoming season of spring hunting. Dr. Sorokin answered questions from TV viewers concerning responsibility for Siberian Cranes and illegal taking. He urged viewers to send any information on the Siberian Crane.

c) **On 15 June 2011**, a meeting concerning wildlife management in connection with development and petro and gas mining was held in the Uvat Settlement (Tyumen Region). M.I. Martynchuk, the Head of the Tyumen Department of the Federal Service of the Nature Control Using (Rosprirodnadzor); heads of administrations of oil-extracting areas, representatives of the oil companies, regional hunting inspections, the nature protection agencies and Region Mass Media took part in meeting. In addition to challenges of prevention of pollution by petroleum extraction, the meeting drew attention to the struggle against poaching and protection of rare species of animals.

Dr. Alexander Sorokin, Dr. Yuri Markin and Anastasia Shilina gave presentations about Siberian Crane conservation problems. Questions of distribution of the Siberian Crane information and education of hunters, local population, workers petro and gas mining were discussed. Under the present grant a meeting was planned prior to the beginning of autumn hunting involving the Tyumen Department of the Federal Service of the Nature Management Inspectors with participation of representatives YaNAR and KMhMAR.

d) **In September 2011** the meeting with hunters was held in Uvat Village and Tobolsk Town, the center of West Siberia. These settlements are located in the breeding grounds of Western Flyway flock of the Siberian Crane. A presentation was given about Siberian Crane status in West Siberia, especially the meeting. Important new information about Siberian Crane sightings in 2009 and 2010 was obtained from local people.

e) Following the meeting held on 15 June 2011, the next meeting with Tyumen Branch of Rosprirodnadzor staff was held **in September 2011**. Thanks to help of M. Martynchuk, the Head of Rosprirodnadzor, representatives of oil and gas companies working in the region participated in the meeting. Preliminary agreements about financial support for monitoring and education activities as well as about Siberian Crane restoration in the region were concluded.

f) **In September 2011** a meeting was held with hunters and game keepers at the Belozersky Wildlife Refuge, in the south of West Siberia. This place is located on the flyway of Western/Central population the Siberian Crane. A presentation was given about Siberian Crane status in West Siberia especially the meeting location (Armizon District of Tyumen Region). Information about Siberian Crane sighting in August 2011 was received from hunters.

Schemes for questionnaire distribution among hunters and other task groups of local people (pilots of local aviation companies, workers of oil and gas deposits and so on) were discussed.

2. Preparation of education and information materials

A Siberian Crane Questionnaire is designed to provide information and educational materials for hunters and local people. The questionnaire contains illustrative, information, and polling components. Accurate images of the Siberian Crane in adult and juvenile plumage are presented as well as images of other birds visually similar to Siberian Cranes with clear instructions to enable accurate identification. The information component contains a brief Siberian Crane description, information on its status, and measures for its protection. The polling component of the questionnaire is in the form of a post card that the respondent can fill in and send by mail to the All-Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection (ARRINP) at any time they obtain information.

To promote return from a wide network of respondents, the following principles were used in designing the questionnaire:

1. The quantity of questions was limited to no more than 5;
2. Questions encouraged short, concrete answers;
3. Special terminology (jargon) was avoided;
4. Ecological education was included.

The questionnaire is enabling researchers and managers to gather important new data about the status, migratory routes, and conservation and restoration activities for the Siberian Crane. Data received is helping to provide an estimate on the number of Siberian Cranes in Western Siberia and measures needed to strengthen protection.

Detail description of the questionnaire

On the left side of the first page of the questionnaire the image of adult and juvenile birds are placed plus the logo of the ARRINP which is lead agency on program of conservation and restoration of Western/Central population of the Siberian Crane. On top of the page is the slogan "Siberian Crane is the rarest birds in the world". At the bottom of the page contains brief information about status– "Siberian Crane is listed in the Red List of IUCN, Red Data Book of Russian Federation and red data books for the subjects of the Russian Federation".

The right side of the questionnaire is a post card with ARRINP mailing address.

On the left side of the second page there is detailed description of adult and juvenile Siberian Cranes as well as differences from other similar birds (Eurasian Crane, Gray Heron, and Swan). Graphic images of the Siberian Crane as well as similar birds on the ground and in flight are inserted next to the description. At the bottom of the page, hunters can find the address and telephone of ARRINP for following sending information.

The right side of the second page consists of a request to share information and questions.

"If you have seen the Siberian Crane or have heard about it, answer please on questions below, insert information about your address, phone and e-mail, cut the page and send it to the proposed address.

1. **Place of sighting** (region, district, direction and distance of closest settlements);
2. **Description of sighting place** (wetland, bank of river or lake, agriculture fields, etc);
3. **Number of sighted Siberian Cranes** (pair, pair with chick, along bird, group of birds and so on);
4. **Behavior of birds** (what they are doing: flying, feeding, resting, walking with chick, staying near their nest and so on);
5. **Date of sighting** (if you don't know exact date, you can write approximate date) and other details of the sighting.

The left and right sides of the cards are divided with a perforated line. Therefore, the left side with Siberian Crane picture and its description as well as with description of similar birds can be left by local people, while the right side can be sent to ARRINP.

1,500 copies were printed in January 2012 and posted in spring 2012 to West Siberian regions: (North - 300 copies to Salekhard Town, Yamalo-Nenetski Autonomous Region; Central - 100 copies - to Berezovo Town, 200 copies to Khanty-Mansi Town, and 100 copies to Uvat Village, Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region; South - 150 copies – to Tobolsk Town and 200 copies to Tyumen City; Astrakhan Region - 250 copies) (Figure 6, 7). 400 copies are left in Moscow for further distribution along Siberian Crane flyways.



Captive-bred Siberian Cranes released into the wild at breeding grounds in West Siberia. Photo by Alexander Sorokin



Roundtable discussion on Yamalo-Nenetski Autonomous Region (YaNAR) Red Data Book. (Participants from left to right include V.V. Vladimirov – Vice Governor of YaNAR, A.G. Sorokin - Head of Biodiversity Department of All Russian Research Institute for Nature Protection, and A.M. Ermakov - Executive Director of "STERKH" Fund and the Deputy of YaNAR Parliament.). Photo by Anastasia Shilina



Preparation for interview of Mr. Alexander Ermakov at TV Centre of YaNAR encouraging viewers to take responsibility for Siberian Cranes, avoid or report illegal hunting, and to report sightings. Photo by Anastasia Shilina



Siberian Crane Flyways in Western Siberia


- *Siberian Crane Central Asian flock migration route*
- *Siberian Crane Western Asian flock migration route*
- *Known places of Siberian Crane population nesting grounds in West Siberia*
- *Known places of Siberian Crane wintering grounds*



Meeting in Uvat settlement (Tyumen Province) on 15 June, 2011. Photo by Anastasia Shilina

	ФГУ «Всероссийский научно-исследовательский институт охраны природы»	<input type="text"/>	Почтовая карточка
<div data-bbox="478 969 774 1070" style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Белый журавль стерх – одна из самых редких птиц в мире </div>		ПОЧТОВАЯ КАРТОЧКА	
Занесен в Красную книгу России, в Красные книги 15-ти субъектов Российской Федерации, в Международную Красную книгу			
		Куда Москва, Знаменское-Садки, ФГУ «ВНИИприроды» Минприроды России	Тел. _____ e-mail _____ Адрес отправителя _____ Индекс предприятия связи _____

The front side of questionnaire card on the Siberian Crane sightings for distribution among hunters

<p>Стерх (Белый журавль)</p> <p>Крупная птица (крупнее гуся), высотой 1,5 м, с размахом крыльев около 2,5 м, длинными шеей, клювом и ногами.</p> <p>«Лицо», клюв, ноги – красные. Оперение взрослых белое, концы и нижние части крыльев черные (видны только в полете).</p> <p>Молодые буровато-рыжие, неравномерной окраски, позже белые с рыжими пятнами.</p> <p>Отличия стерха от других птиц: От <i>серого журавля</i> – ярко белым оперением и черными концами крыльев (видны только в полёте), темно-красным «лицом», клювом и ногами.</p> <p>От <i>лебедей</i> – длинными ногами и черными концами крыльев;</p> <p>От <i>цапель</i> – вытянутой (несложенной) в полёте шеей.</p>  <p>ФГУ «ВНИИприроды» 117628 Москва Знаменское-Садки, тел. 8(495) 423-8222</p>	<p><i>Если Вы видели стерха или слышали о встречах с ним, пожалуйста, ответьте на вопросы, отрежьте эту страницу и отправьте её по почте, указав на ней свой почтовый адрес, Ф.И.О., телефон и адрес электронной почты.</i></p> <p>Место встречи (область, район, направление и расстояние до ближайших населённых пунктов)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Описание места встречи (болото, берег реки, берег озера, сельхозугодья и др.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Сколько птиц Вы видели? (пара, пара с птенцом, одиночка, три птицы и т.д.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Что они делали? (летели, кормились, отдыхали, находились у гнезда, гуляли с птенцом и т.д.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Дата встречи (можно приблизительно) _____</p> <p>Другие важные на Ваш взгляд детали встречи</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Inside of questionnaire card on the Siberian Crane sightings for distribution among hunters



Eurasian Cranes are nearest neighbors of Siberian Cranes at breeding grounds in West Siberia.

Photo by Anastasia Shilina

Uzbekistan



Photo by Alexander Sorokin

Prepared by Dr. Maxim Mitropolsky & Dr. Eugenia Lanovenko
Institute of Zoology of National Academy of Science

Background

Siberian Cranes, along with large flocks of Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes, cross Uzbekistan during seasonal migrations. Siberian Crane sightings show that there are no traditional migration stopovers in the territory of Uzbekistan but that they have occasionally stopped for short periods of rest in different parts of the country.

Data has also continued to come in during the last decade. Almost all Siberian Cranes were sighted in flocks of Eurasian Cranes, and one was recorded in a flock of Demoiselle Cranes.

Near the town of Termez, Uzbekistan, a vast expanse of wintering grounds for Eurasian Cranes and other waterbirds was discovered in 2001. During the next few years, comprehensive surveys and bird censuses were conducted there. This site is considered a potential wintering ground for the Siberian Crane, and illegal hunting should be addressed to avoid killing of released Siberian Cranes. This can be achieved through hunter education and their involvement in crane conservation.

Spring hunting waterfowl is prohibited in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Autumn hunting season is opened on 15 August and continues until 1 February. On the wintering grounds of waterfowl (Tudakol, Chimkurgan, and South-Surkhan Reservoirs) the autumn hunting is finished on 30 November.

The government bans crane hunting. The Siberian Crane is listed in the Red Data Book of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes are included in the list of "Species banned for hunting". However dates of autumn hunting coincide with autumn crane migration as well as with crane wintering in Amudaria Valley and can be factor of disturbance.

Illegal crane hunting is occasional and connected with people who wish to kill a large bird. Often, illegal crane hunting is recorded at migration stopovers (Aidar-Arnasai Lake System, Kashkadaria Region and desert sites of Navoi Region) and wintering grounds in Amurdaria Valley in Surkhandaria Region. In the 1980s, illegal crane hunting was recorded only in spring because there were no wintering grounds in the area (cranes started to stay regularly in this area in winter since the 1990s) and spring migration was more intensive than autumn. At the present time illegal crane hunting is occurring in autumn and winter.

The penalty for illegally hunting Siberian Cranes is US\$6,000 for residents and US\$7,500 for foreigners and the penalty for illegally hunting Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes is US\$1,500 for residents and US\$500 for foreigners.

In recent years, the hunting pressure on cranes has decreased due to large-scale information and education conducted by Crane Working Group of Uzbekistan (CWGUz). It includes regular meetings with hunters and border guards, organizing a Crane Celebration as well as involving the "Flight of Hope" Project on the reintroduction of Siberian Cranes and creation of alternative wintering grounds for this species. In 2011, a project for educating hunters was been implemented with support by MBZ Species Conservation Fund.

Project Implementation

1. Organizing meetings with hunters

At the beginning of the autumn hunting season, CWGUz members organized a meeting with hunters from regional opening hunting societies in five regions – in Samarkand (20.09.2011), Dzhizak (22 Sept 2011), Bukhara (23 Sept 2011), Kashkadaria (30 Sept 2011), and Surkhandaria (2 Oct 2011).

In Samarkand, 32 participants representing mostly regional and local branches of Uzbekistan Hunting Society attended the meeting. In addition, nature conservationists, mentors of Biological-Soil Department of Samarkand State University, and staff of Nature Inspection of Samarkand Region participated in this meeting. Reasonability of fish pond development was a key issue for the discussion. Fish ponds are used by cranes during season migrations as short-term stopover exactly in Samarkand Region. During presentation about Siberian Crane status, the film of "Interrupted Flight" by Remi Mollicone was shown. Soon after the meeting this film was passed to local TV, which has broadcasted it few times since that time.

In Surkhandaria Region in Termez 22 participants attended the meeting, including hunters, inspectors from local hunting departments, nature conservationists and farmers. Some farmers attracted cranes to crop fields during migration as well as during winter at wintering grounds in Amudaria River Valley. Some education materials were passed to State Border Management Agency during a small meeting, as crane wintering grounds are located in the border between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

In Dzhizak Region 17 participants including game keepers from regional and local hunting departments and representatives of regional inspection of wildlife management attended the meeting where the problem of crop damage by migrating cranes at stopovers was discussed. In this region the cases of illegal crane hunting occur quite often, therefore issues on crane conservation and involvement of hunters were discussed. Thanks to crane conservation awareness activities, 12 reports about crane sightings during autumn migration were sent to scientists after the meeting.

In Bukhara Region, 12 game keepers from regional and local hunting departments and representatives of regional inspection of wildlife management attended the meeting. Cranes are not often visitors to this region; therefore only general problems of nature conservation were discussed.

In Kashkadaria in Karshi Town the meeting was held in Regional Hunting Society. 18 people participated in this meeting, including game keepers and staff of Regional Inspection of Wildlife Management Agency. At this meeting the most urgent problem of regular cases of illegal hunting was discussed. It was noted that poachers are very experienced and it is very difficult to detain them. The most "hot" site for illegal hunting is the bank of Talimargan Reservoir proposed for including in the *Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds*. Reports about importance of this site for cranes and other waterbirds were presented to hunters. Participants provided information about Siberian Crane sightings in spring in 2008 and 2010.

2. Preparation and distribution of information materials among hunters during meetings

The following materials were prepared in Uzbek languages and distributed widely among regional hunting societies as well as during meetings with hunters:

- a) Poster about identification of cranes and their differences from other large birds is prepared (250 copies)
- b) The poster "Help to Save the Siberian Crane" with information about legal protection in Uzbekistan (50 copies)
- b) Brochures about cranes for each of five region of Uzbekistan (Surkhandaria, Kashkadaria, Samarkand, Bukhara, and Dzhizak). In every brochure the information about crane status, habitats, sightings and protection measures in the region are given. Pictures of cranes are included in brochures. Every brochure was published in Uzbek and Russian languages (50 copies for every of five regions).

3. Creating a documentary film about cranes in Uzbekistan

Filming was conducted during crane wintering (February) and spring migration seasons (March – April) in 2012 in Surkhandaria, Kashkadaria, Samarkand and partly Navou Provinces of Uzbekistan. This footage was used for preparation of a slide show about Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes. It was decided to prepare a slide show, as this video form is more useful for most offices of local hunting departments in Uzbekistan, which have computers but not TVs and video players.

The slide show also includes some footage of Siberian Cranes taken in July 2011 at Jeiran Ecological Center. Captions for the slide show were prepared in Russian and are being translated into Uzbek language for wider distribution among hunters and other local people.

Project Outputs

1. The project helped hunters to understand the importance of cranes and wetlands;
2. For the first time brochures in two languages (Russian and Uzbek) were published. Brochures were issued for every of five regions with specific information about crane ecology in these regions.
3. Hunters, inspectors and nature conservationists can understand importance of wetlands protection used by cranes during migration and wintering through presentations and reports at the meetings.
4. Propaganda of nature conservation, information about punishment for poaching, demonstration of film “Interrupted Flight” had an impact on changing hunting behavior.
5. A film about nature, waterbirds and cranes in Uzbekistan was created to help draw hunters away from crane shooting. Uzbekistan applied lessons learned from a similar experience with a film about the saiga antelope.



Meeting with hunters in Samarkand with participation of representatives of Uzbekistan Hunting Society, nature conservationists, mentors of Biological-Soil Department of Samarkand State University, and staff of Nature Inspection of Samarkand. Photo by Natalia Marmazinskaya



Maxim Mitropolskiy and Eugenia Lanovenko are coordinators of the project in Uzbekistan. Meeting with hunters in Samarkand Province. Photos by Natalia Marmazinskaya



Meeting in Termez, Surkhondaria Region, where Eurasian Crane wintering grounds are located. Photo by Alexander Filatov



Map of Uzbekistan. Blue circles – sites where hunting is allowed only until 30 November (Tudakul Lake, South Surkhan and Chimkurgan Reservoirs); yellow circles – sites where crane shootings were reported in 1980s - 1990s; red circles – sites where crane shootings were reported recently



Eurasian Cranes flying over Gulbakhor in the south of Uzbekistan. Photo by Maxim Mitropolskiy



Crane migration stopovers in the south of Uzbekistan. Photo by Maxim Mitropolskiy



Demoiselle Cranes on spring migration in Samarkand Province in Uzbekistan. Photo by Maxim Mitropolskiy



Demoiselle Cranes flying over a desert in the south of Uzbekistan. Photo by Maxim Mitropolskiy



Uzbek and Russian researchers during a survey of the Eurasian Crane wintering grounds at Termez in Amudaria River Valley in 2011. Photo by Alexander Sorokin



Eurasian Cranes at wintering grounds at Termez in Amudaria River Valley near the border with Afghanistan. Photo by Eugenia Lanovenko



Fields of winter wheat are feeding sites at Eurasian Cranes wintering grounds at Termez in Amudaria River Valley near the border with Afghanistan. Photo by Eugenia Lanovenko



Eurasian Cranes on the rice fields at their wintering grounds at Termez in Amudaria River Valley near the border with Afghanistan. Photo by Eugenia Lanovenko



Reeds in Amudaria River Valley at wintering grounds of Eurasian Cranes at Termez, near the border with Afghanistan. Photo by Eugenia Lanovenko



Irrigation canals in Amudaria River Valley, at Eurasian Cranes wintering grounds at Termez near the border with Afghanistan. Photo by Eugenia Lanovenko

**Стерх - одна из самых редких птиц в мире
Помогите сохранить стерха!**

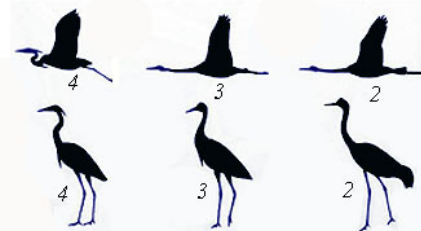
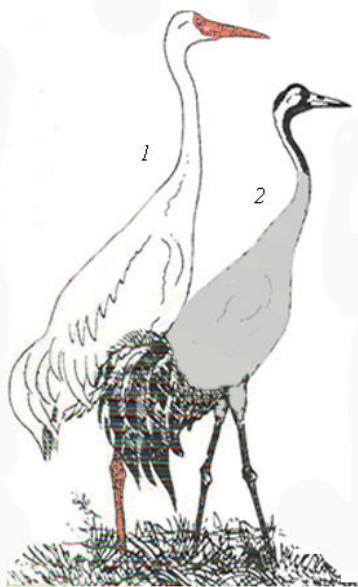


**В Узбекистане
встречается
только
весной и осенью
во время миграции**

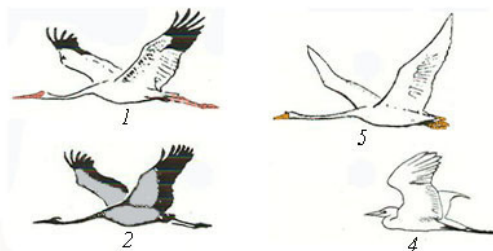
**Занесен в Красную
книгу Узбекистана
и международную
Красную книгу**

Poster on the Siberian Crane conservation in Russian

Отличия стерха от похожих видов птиц



при плохом освещении



при ярком освещении

1- стерх, 2- серый журавль, 3- журавль красавка, 4-белая цапля, 5- лебедь-шипун

Poster for hunters on Siberian and Eurasian cranes identification and their differences from other birds



Серый журавль (*Grus grus*) один из крупных журавлей. В Кашкадарьинской области пролетные стаи серого журавля встречаются с конца февраля-начала марта до конца апреля весной и с конца сентября до ноября осенью. Весной пролет этих птиц активно проходит через Каршинскую степь, Карнабчуль и предгорья Гиссарского хребта. На юге области они иногда в небольшом количестве остаются зимовать в районе оз.Ачикуль и в дхр.Талимаржан.

**НЕ СРЕЛЯЕТЕ В ЖУРАВЛЕЙ, И НЕ
ДАВАЙТЕ ДЕЛАТЬ ЭТО ДРУГИМ!!!
ПОСМОТРИТЕ НА ГРАЦИОЗНОСТЬ И
ВЕЛИЧИЕ ЭТОЙ ПТИЦЫ, И ПОКАЖИТЕ
ЕЕ ДРУГИМ!!!**

**ПОМОЖЕМ ВСЕ ВМЕСТЕ СОХРАНИТЬ
ЖУРАВЛЕЙ ДЛЯ БУДУЩИХ
ПОКОЛЕНИЙ!!!**

ОХОТА НА ЖУРАВЛЕЙ ЗАПРЕЩЕНА!!!

**ШТРАФЫ ЗА НЕЗАКОННУЮ ДОБЫЧУ
СОСТАВЛЯЮТ ОТ 50-ти ДО 150-ти
МИНИМАЛЬНЫХ ОКЛАДОВ.**

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сохранения видов Мохамеда бин Зайда (MBZ SCF)

صندوق محمد بن زايد
للمحافظة على الكائنات الحية
The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund

Макет буклета подготовлен Е.Н.Лановенко.
Фото Е.Филатовой. Перевод на узбекский язык
Э.Шерназаров.

Рабочая группа по журавлям Узбекистана (РГЖУз) объединяет профессионалов и любителей орнитологов, а также всех, заинтересованных граждан в деле изучения и сохранения журавлей. Ее членом может стать любой, кому не безразлична судьба журавлей в Узбекистане. Целью РГЖУз является сбор и распространение информации о журавлях, содействие мероприятиям по их охране, работе по экологическому просвещению. Мы рады Вас видеть в наших рядах!

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Рабочая группа по журавлям Узбекистана



Журавли Кашкадарьинской области



Ташкент 2011

The front side of a brochure on Eurasian Crane conservation in Russian. This brochure was published also in Uzbek language. Similar brochures in Russian and Uzbek languages were published for Siberian and Demoiselle Cranes

Conclusions

Through the activities and outputs described in the country section, the project established a good foundation and made important progress towards achieving our targeted long-term outcomes including:

1. Local stakeholders are getting involved in conservation activities and relationships are being fostered with hunters, hunting agencies, and hunter associations.
2. Hunters are learning about and being inspired by the beauty and plight of the Siberian Crane.
3. Hunters have been able to correctly identify Siberian Cranes and tell them apart from closely related species.
4. More hunters are choosing to avoid hunting cranes.
5. Hunters have been motivated to report crane sightings and know where to send reports.
6. Volunteer committees among hunters were created in Afghanistan and Pakistan, in countries where crane hunting is still possible. These committees are sharing information about necessity of crane conservation among other hunters and local people through trained committee members.

Meetings with hunters, game keepers, local people, regional and local administration, inspectors of regional and local departments, representatives of non-governmental nature conservation organizations, mentors and students were held at key areas which have international importance for Siberian, Eurasian and Demoiselle Cranes and other waterbirds during breeding, migrating and wintering.

Meetings helped to explain the status and threats to the Siberian Crane; to show international importance of key sites as Ramsar territories and WCASN sites used by Siberian Crane and other waterbirds; to promote change in the behavior of hunters, guard borders, and local people; and to involve them in crane and wetland conservation.

Presentations at the meetings as well as education and information materials which were distributed during the meeting and additional though regional and local Game and Fish Societies (brochures, posters, calendars, and also guidelines on crane captive breeding in Pakistan) enabled hunter to correctly identify the Siberian Crane and distinguish it from other crane species and other birds (egrets, swans, storks). This should reduce death rate due to mis-identification.

Improved understanding about the Siberian Cranes and its habitats inspired more hunters to understand and care about the plight of the Siberian Crane and to make choices to help protect the species and its ecosystems. During the meetings, project coordinators obtained important information about Siberian Crane sightings as well as about Eurasian Crane congregations during migration. Also very important was monitoring for Eurasian and Demoiselle Crane congregations which: 1) helps us to reduce conflicts between farmers and cranes, and 2) discover wild and reintroduced Siberian Cranes in flocks of Eurasian Cranes.

In Pakistan and Kazakhstan display boards with pictures, logos and slogans regarding crane and wetlands conservation were set up at key wetlands used by cranes and other waterbirds during migration. Their placement along well traveled roadsides increased their visibility. Excellent photos and focused messages continue to catch people's attention and direct people on where they can visit to get additional information. Boards raised the profile of network sites which have received recognition for their national and international conservation importance or have been targeted to be designated in the future.

In Pakistan and Uzbekistan, documentary films were created to attract the attention of government agencies and people to conservation of the unique wetlands that are home for cranes and other

waterbirds, including endangered Siberian Cranes. Films are planned to be broadcast on national and local TV channels.

In Pakistan, the publication and wide distribution of guidelines on captive breeding of cranes is very important to reduce capture of wild cranes through proper husbandry and breeding techniques for captive cranes.

All activities under the project were implemented at recognized or potential sites of the *Western/Central Asian Site Network for the Siberian Crane and Other Waterbirds (WCASN)* established within the framework of the *Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Conservation Measures for the Siberian Crane* under the Convention on Migratory Species. Through the project, some objectives and specific activities listed in the WCASN Action Plan adopted by Range States were implemented, including the following:

- Reduce uncontrolled hunting and poaching through publication and distribution of awareness materials (poster, booklets, and video). Identify key audiences and messages to promote needed changes in behavior (legislation, penalties for poaching, and species identification). Share these materials through national inspection services, hunting and fishing societies and in public sites (markets, shops, clubs, clinics, administration buildings, schools and colleges, and NGOs);
- Develop and promote regional guidelines for sustainable waterbird harvesting.

All project participants expressed their appreciation of MBZ SCF's support of their work; they considered the project very productive, and recommended continuation of the next phase of implementation with emphasis on the following activities included in WCASN Action Plan:

- Monitoring: Strengthen/establish regular monitoring of cranes and other waterbirds at WCASN sites to ensure updated knowledge of crane usage, habitat needs and conservation issues by establishing a monitoring network that integrates work of scientists and managers with hunters, students, governmental agencies, frontier guards, and other community groups.
- Public Awareness: Increase public awareness by involving local people in waterbird and habitat monitoring; implementing young scholar programmes; and organizing lectures and discussions with key stakeholders including hunters, frontier guards and other local groups at WCASN sites about conservation of cranes, other waterbirds and wetlands.

Additional support will also be sought to strengthen site management including:

- Build capacity for effective site management (including water management) and financial sustainability through development and implementation of site management plans, incorporating climate change adaptation measures.
- Conduct activities on site management including community participation, sustainable livelihoods and awareness building..