

AMIGO

Aransas Matagorda Island Guardian/Orator



Whooping Crane Nesting Survey Locates a record 75 Nests

Mark Bidwell, Whooping Crane Coordinator for the Canadian Wildlife Service reports that, in close cooperation with Parks Canada, he and Kathy St. Laurent (CWS-Ontario) in mid-June completed this year's survey of nesting whooping cranes in and around Wood Buffalo National Park. All in all, they flew 17.7 hours in a Bell 206 helicopter and 7.1 hours in a Cessna 210 fixed wing. In addition to surveying the usual nesting territories, some reconnaissance work was done in areas identified as potential habitat but that hadn't been searched recently.

Mark noted, "We're pleased to report that we detected a record 75 nests, including a few in areas apparently being colonized by new nesting pairs. We made a number of changes, on scientific and safety grounds, to the way the survey is conducted so were happy to have good results despite the changes. We'll revisit the nesting territories in August to assess productivity. We will also take colleagues from USGS, USFWS and ICF to mark an additional 10 to 12 birds as part of the ongoing telemetry study that aims to better understand the ecology of, and threats faced by, the Aransas-Wood Buffalo population."

Tom Stehn, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added that, "The record of 75 nests found on the May surveys, surpasses by one the 74 nests found last year. Habitat conditions looked good, so hopes are high to have a good production season and an increase for the flock in 2011. With luck, a record 300 whooping cranes could make it to Aransas this fall!"

Article Submitted by Tom Stehn Photo by: Klaus Nigge

In conjunction with the “**Whooping Crane Nesting Survey Locates a record 75 Nests**” on page one the photo below shows typical Whooping Crane habitat on the nesting grounds at Wood Buffalo National Park.. Photo by Klaus Nigge



AMIGO News Letter (June/July/August 2011) Managers Corner

Here we are at the end of the third quarter of the fiscal year and we just received our operating budget for the year. We received \$3.1 million, only 2% less than the 2010 budget which is not bad, given the poor budget projection anticipated by many. With only three months left in the fiscal year, we will try our best to spend the appropriated funds prior to September 23rd. Fiscal year 2012 is anticipated to bring yet another budget cut which will undoubtedly be a little deeper. None-the-less, our shrewd business practices at Aransas will certainly be tested and we will need to hone our ability to be more frugal and enterprising. That being said, we will aggressively pursue other partnerships, grants and volunteers to offset the budget shortfall. We will promote increased visitation to the Refuge to boost fee collections for both entrance and hunting fees. We hope our new online hunt application method will increase our revenue by maximizing our available hunting opportunity. It is our intension to promote our hunting opportunities by advertising our new online hunt application process through various media. Having been allowed to deficit spend (without going over 95% of the 2010 budget) to this point, we were able to accomplish numerous projects: we partnered with the Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services Division to aerial gun feral hogs. A total of 291 hogs (134 on Matagorda and 157 on the Blackjack and Tatton Units) were shot. We completed the demolition of the old shop building on Matagorda, and the old concrete tower and restroom on the Blackjack. The Biology building received new siding, and the well house on Matagorda was expanded to include a new reverse osmosis water treatment system. The north boundary of the Blackjack and west boundary of the Tatton Unit fences are being replaced and total 15 miles. New entrance and tour loop road signs were purchased and installed by our resident volunteers. We purchased a new Caterpillar skid steer tractor to replace the old one. We received our new barge (Whooper I) in May which will greatly improve operations on Matagorda Island. Several windmills are being converted to solar power panels and/or refurbished. We partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard in collecting and disposing of hazardous orphaned containers on Matagorda. The Refuge provided logistical support while the Coast Guard covered the cost of the contractor who collected, tested and disposed of the containers. The budget outlook for 2012 looks bleak and the transition into a new budget system called, Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) will pose a challenge. The new system will redefine the role of our Administrative staff and provide a fully integrated management system which separates many of our duties. FBMS will address budgets, property, acquisitions, travel, and core financials. Bear with us as we learn the new system and we certainly hope it will not slow our ability to get the job done on the ground. Greek philosopher Hericlitus said, “nothing is as constant but change”. In the mean time, stay cool and pray for rain as the drought is tightening its grip on us.

Dan Alonso Project Leader Aransas NWR

WHOOPING CRANE NUMBERS IN NORTH AMERICA

June 15, 2011

Wild Populations

	Adult	Young	Total	Adult Pairs
Aransas/Wood Buffalo	235	44	279 ^A	78
Florida non-migratory	20	0	20	8
Louisiana non-migratory	0	8 ^B	8	0
Wisconsin/Florida migratory	86	17 ^C	103	17
Subtotal in the Wild	341	69	410	103

^A The Aransas-Wood Buffalo population is currently estimated at 279. In 2010, a record 74 pairs nested and fledged 49 chicks, 45 of which arrived safely at Aransas. In May 2011, a record 75 nests were located.

^B Ten chicks were transported to White Lake, Louisiana in mid-February, 2011. Two are missing and presumed dead.

^C Two chicks hatched from wild nests in Wisconsin in 2010 are currently surviving. The other chicks shown are captive juveniles introduced into the wild in 2010. One wild chick hatched in 2011 is surviving.

Captive Populations

	Adult	Young ^A	Total	Breeding Pairs
Patuxent WRC, Maryland	68	5	73	15
International Crane Foundation, WI	34	1	35	11
Devonian Wildl. Cons.Cent./Calgary	18	1	19	6
San Antonio Zoo, Texas	7	0	7	1
Species Survival Center, Louisiana	10	0	10	2
Calgary Zoo, Alberta	2	0	2	0
Homosassa Springs Wildl State Park, FL	2	0	2	0
Lowry Park Zoo, Tampa, Florida	2	0	2	0
Jacksonville Zoo, Florida	2	0	2	0
Milwaukee County Zoo, Wisconsin	2	0	2	0
National Zoological Park, Washington D.C.	1	0	1	0
New Orleans Zoo, Louisiana	2	0	2	0
Sylvan Heights Waterfowl Park, NC	1	0	1	0
Subtotal in Captivity	151	7	158	36

^A Chicks raised in 2010 for the eastern migratory population and Louisiana flocks are listed as wild birds. Chicks hatched so far in 2011 are not listed.

TOTALS (Wild + Captive) 410 + 158 = 568

Article and Information submitted by Tom Stehn

Aransas NWR Volunteer Program Spotlight on Sally Kocian, our Sunday Volunteer

If you call or come by the Refuge on a Sunday, there's a good chance you'll meet Sally Kocian, Visitor Center Front Desk Assistant, who has been volunteering with us since January. Sally brings total enthusiasm to the front desk, greeting visitors and getting them all pumped up about being on the Refuge. She loves working with kids and also helped with our recent Fishing Day on June 4th.

Sally grew up on Long Island, NY. After high school, she joined the US Air Force where she met her husband, John. They were married 37 years when he passed away from cancer in 2008. Both Sally and John volunteered with different organizations for 40 years. They dedicated 15 years to Boy Scouts of America and during this time their son earned his Eagle in scouting. Sally admits she gets very involved with her organizations which included school sports and activities when her son was young and Baytown fishing club. To help the club, she became certified as weigh-master for Texas fishing tournaments.

Most recently, Sally began volunteering at the Refuge after a friend introduced her to bird watching, a new adventure, and brought her to Aransas NWR to take in the sights and sounds of nature. After a third visit, the friend suggested she might want to volunteer so she could learn more and get involved. So, Sally called us and the rest is history. She's now part of the Volunteer Program and wanting to contribute as much as she can to help wildlife. Sally does work full-time as an Area Manager for Linebarger, Goggin, Blair & Sampson, LLC, located in Victoria County Tax Office. She also loves meeting people, gardening, fishing, nature, and her pets. Welcome, Sally!



Refuge Volunteer Sally Kocian providing important information to Aransas visitors. Article & photo courtesy of Bernice Jackson

We have three wonderful volunteers helping at the Visitor Center front desk this summer. Besides Sally, we have Jose Cruz from Austin and Donna Conyers from North Carolina. We are still in need of front desk help, particularly July-September. If you are interested in assisting, please call or e-mail Bernice at 361.286.3559 or Bernice_Jackson@fws.gov.

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to Host Archery and Rifle Hunts



Refuge hunter with his prize.

Article and photo courtesy of Bernice Jackson

The Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) will conduct an Archery Hunt and Rifle Hunt for white-tailed deer and feral (wild) hogs. We are now able to process permit applications online. Apply after July 1st on the Aransas NWR website: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/texas/aransas>.

The Archery Hunt will be held for nine days from Saturday, October 1, 2011 through Sunday, October 9, 2011. A maximum of four hundred permits will be issued on a first come, first served basis for the 36,225 acre Archery Hunt Area. Proposed fees for \$65 per adult hunter and \$35 per youth hunter for the nine-day hunt. Online and by mail, permits will be issued by Kinsail Corporation. By mail, applications and fees must either be received or postmarked by September 17, 2011 to be valid. In person, if permits are available, applications will be accepted at the Visitor Center beginning September 30th. Each hunter is required to submit a separate Big Game Hunt Application Form (3-2356). Each hunt permit is valid only for the named permittee. Money order, personal check (made to: Kinsail Corp.) or credit card per hunter per hunt are accepted as payment. Cash payment will be accepted at the Visitor Center beginning September 30th. Do not mail cash.

The Rifle Hunt will consist of four hunts on alternate weekends (Saturday and Sunday), November 5-6 and 19-20, 2011 and December 3-4 and 17-18, 2011. For each of the four hunt weekends, 100 permits will be issued on a first come, first served basis for the 19,668 acre Rifle Hunt Area. Proposed fees are \$135 per adult hunter and \$67.50 per youth hunter for both days. Online and by mail, permits will be issued by Kinsail Corporation. By mail, applications and fees must either be received or post marked no later than two weeks prior to your preferred hunt weekend. In person, if permits are available, applications will be accepted at the Visitor Center beginning the Friday scouting day before your hunt. Each hunter is required to submit a separate Big Game Hunt Application Form (3-2356). Hunters may submit applications together and hunt as a party. Each hunt permit is valid only for the named permittee. Money order, personal check (made to: Kinsail Corp.) or credit card per hunter per hunt are accepted as payment. Cash payment will be accepted at the Visitor Center beginning the Friday scouting day before your hunt. Do not mail cash. Each permit is valid only for the weekend specified.

For comments concerning proposed fee changes or to obtain more information about the Archery or Rifle Hunts, please call the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge at (361) 286-3559 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. daily.

July 2011

July 1st - Applications process begins for ANWR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1 *	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

August 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

September 2011

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

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Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip code _____
Home Phone _____
Other Phone _____
Email _____

Check here to go green, indicating that you will read your newsletter online and no longer receive it in the mail.

Membership Categories

- Senior (age 62+) - \$10.00
- Student (up to age 21) - \$5.00
- Individual - \$15.00
- Family - \$25.00
- Life - \$300.00
- Business - \$150.00
- Corporate Sponsor - \$500.00
- Additional contribution \$ _____
- Senior Couple (ages 62+) \$20.00
- \$ _____ Total Amount Enclosed

**Memberships expire
September 30th each year.**

Make checks payable to:

Friends of Aransas & Matagorda Island

Mail to: P. O. Box 74

Austwell, Texas 77950

FAMI Mission Statement

Friends of Aransas of Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge (FAMI)

will work to support and assist the Aransas and Matagorda Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex in its goal of enhancing habitat and wildlife and encouraging compatible wildlife-dependant public uses of the refuge through educational, interpretive, scientific and other activities appropriate to the mission of these Refuge.

Friends of Aransas/Matagorda Island
National Wildlife Refuge
P O Box 74
Austwell, TX 77950

