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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**INFORMATION SERVICE**

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release OCTOBER 14, 1955

**"SAFE PASSAGE" ASKED FOR WHOOPING CRANES ON SOUTHWARD FLIGHT**

"Give a safe passage to the rare whooping cranes as they migrate southward to their winter home on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas," was the plea made today to the public by Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay.

Reports from the Canadian breeding grounds indicate that some of these giant white birds are about to start their 5,000-mile flight to Texas. En route, the birds traditionally travel through North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Their major stopover point is along the Platte River in Nebraska. Residents of these States are particularly urged to do everything possible to support the Federal law which prohibits shooting or otherwise molesting these birds.

Normally, the whoopers reach the safety of the Aransas Refuge, located on the Gulf Coast of Texas, by late October. In recent years it has been during the fall migration, when hunters are afield, that most of the known losses of these majestic birds have occurred. Hunters are cautioned, therefore, not to shoot at any large white bird.

Close to five feet in height, with a wingspread of seven feet, the average whooping crane is not difficult to identify. In flight, its long neck and spindly legs are completely outstretched. Its white body, black wingtips, and resounding "whoop" distinguish it from other birds.

The young birds, however, are not white like their parents but are a rusty-brown color.

In the fall of 1954, only 21 adult birds arrived at the Aransas Refuge. That was the first year that no young birds accompanied the adults.

During the past summer, field biologists of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the National Audubon Society were successful in locating a breeding flock of whooping cranes in a remote wilderness area of Canada. Since then, officials of the Canadian Wildlife Service have reported that six young whooping cranes, including two sets of twins, were spotted on September 12 during an aerial reconnaissance over Wood Buffalo National Park.

If these six young survive the hazardous southward flight, conservationists believe the species may be saved from extinction.

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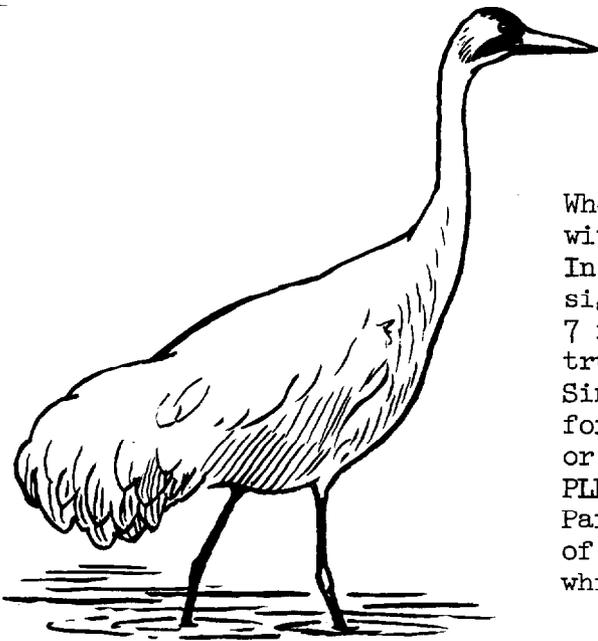
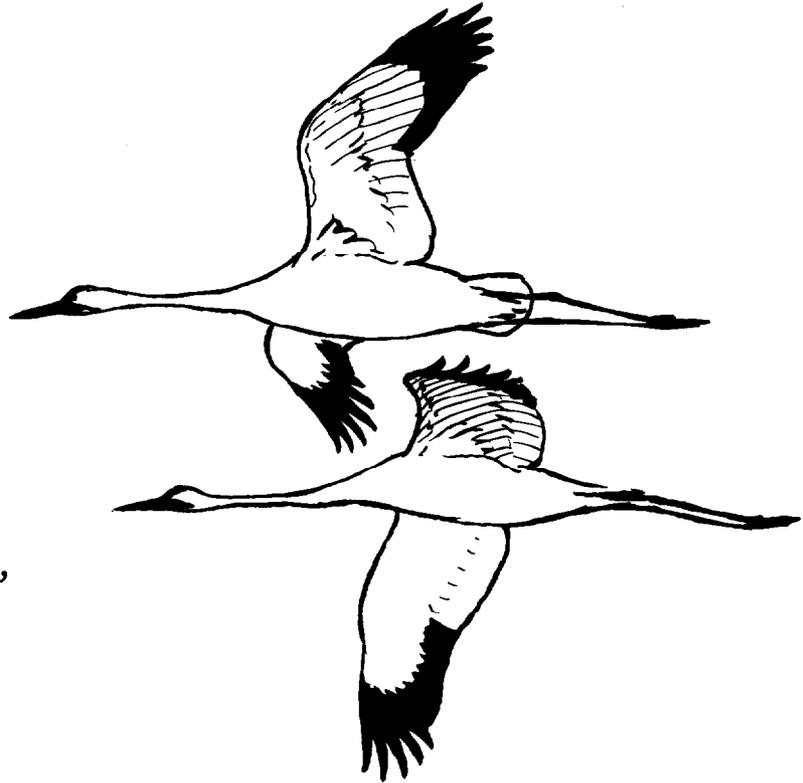
NOTE TO EDITORS: The enclosure may be reproduced or used as a poster. Additional copies may be obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Information, Washington 25, D. C.

# WANTED!

# SAFE PASSAGE for the WHOOPING CRANES

America's largest and rarest birds.

The Fish and Wildlife Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior is asking hunters to give a safe passage to this majestic white bird which traditionally travels through North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma on its migrations. Major stop-over is along the Platte River in Nebraska. The whoopers begin their hazardous 2,000-mile flight to their winter home in time to reach the safety of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas by late October. In recent years it has been during the fall migration, when hunters are afield, that most of the known losses of the whoopers have occurred.



Whoopers are great white birds about 5 feet tall, with red-crowned heads and black-tipped wings. In migration they fly high, sometimes out of sight, borne along on wings with a spread of 7 feet, and signaling their passage with trumpetlike calls that carry great distances. Since Whooping Cranes are sometimes mistaken for snow geese, white pelicans, American egrets, or whistling swans,  
**PLEASE DO NOT SHOOT ANY LARGE WHITE BIRD.** Particular heed should be given to the safety of the young whooping cranes since they are not white like their parents but a rusty color.

**THIS BIRD IS FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL!  
DO YOUR PART TO HELP IT LIVE AND PERPETUATE ITSELF.  
GIVE IT A SAFE PASSAGE WHEN IT GOES SOUTH IN OCTOBER TO WINTER  
ON THE ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE AND WHEN IT RETURNS  
NORTH IN APRIL TO CANADA TO BREED.**