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DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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WHOOPING CRANES "BREAK EVEN" IN 1961

Thirty-six wild whooping cranes--the same number as in the previous year--have settled down in their winter headquarters along the Gulf of Mexico on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, according to the latest aerial survey disclosed today by the Department of the Interior. Five of those counted are young of the year. Seven adults were found on Matagorda Island adjacent to the refuge, while the remaining whoopers are located on the refuge mainland.

In the fall of 1960, there were 30 adults and 6 young whooping cranes on the Aransas Refuge, all of which migrated north last spring to their nesting grounds in the Wood Buffalo Park area south of Great Slave Lake in Canada.

Both the 1960 and 1961 figures show the largest number of wild whoopers known to be in existence since recordkeeping began in 1938-39. There are also seven birds in captivity.

No trace has been found of five adult whoopers which went north last spring but have not yet returned from Canada. The Fish and Wildlife Service said the census flights at Aransas will continue periodically until after the spring migration.

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