



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Status and Harvests of Sandhill Cranes 2023

Mid-continent, Rocky Mountain, Lower Colorado River Valley and Eastern Populations



Acknowledgments

This report provides population status, recruitment indices, harvest trends, and other management information for the Mid-Continent (MCP), Rocky Mountain (RMP), Lower Colorado River Valley (LCRVP), and Eastern (EP) populations of sandhill cranes. Information was compiled with the assistance of many biologists from across North America. We acknowledge the contributions of: P.P. Thorpe, T. Liddick, J. Drahota, and D. Fronczak for conducting annual aerial population surveys; D. Collins and R. Vanausdall for conducting the RMP productivity survey; K. Fleming for conducting the U.S. Federal harvest surveys for the MCP; S. Olson and L. Harding for compiling population and harvest information collected on sandhill cranes in the Pacific Flyway; R. Pierce and D. Fronczak for compiling population information for the EP; and D.S. Benning, R.C. Drewien, J.A. Dubovsky, and D.E. Sharp for their career-long commitment to sandhill crane management. We especially want to recognize the support of the state and provincial biologists in the Central, Pacific, and Mississippi Flyways for the coordination of sandhill crane hunting programs and especially the distribution of crane hunting permits and assistance in conducting annual cooperative surveys and sharing harvest data. Thanks to T. Cooper and D. Collins for reviewing earlier drafts of this report.

Citation: Seamans, M.E. 2023. Status and harvests of sandhill cranes: Mid-Continent, Rocky Mountain, Lower Colorado River Valley, and Eastern Populations. Administrative Report, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Lakewood, Colorado. 17pp + tables and figures.

This report contains annual estimates of migratory bird abundance, harvest, and hunter participation and activity. Due to the large volume of data, the number of years, and geographic areas involved, data tables may be large and complex. Readers that may need help reading and interpreting the data, or that may need data presented in an alternative format to facilitate reading and interpretation, should contact the author at mark_seamans@fws.gov.

Division of Migratory Bird Management sandhill crane reports are available online at <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/sandhill-crane-population-status-reports>

STATUS AND HARVESTS OF SANDHILL CRANES

MID-CONTINENT, ROCKY MOUNTAIN, LOWER COLORADO RIVER VALLEY and EASTERN POPULATIONS 2023

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Abstract: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working with partners, annually assesses the population status and harvest of four populations of sandhill cranes: the Mid-continent, Rocky Mountain, Lower Colorado River Valley, and Eastern populations. Annual abundance estimates of the Mid-Continent Population (MCP) of sandhill cranes were relatively stable from 1982 to the mid-2000s. Some of the MCP annual indices have increased in recent years and are more variable interannually compared to historic values. The spring 2023 estimate of abundance for sandhill cranes in the Central Platte River Valley (CPRV), Nebraska, corrected for visibility bias, was 1,259,199 birds. This estimate is 83% higher than the 2022 estimate and is a record high for the MCP. The photo-corrected average using the most recent 3 years of data (2011–23) is 909,046, which is well above the established population-objective range of 350,000–475,000 cranes. All Central Flyway states, except Nebraska, allowed crane hunting in portions of their states during 2022–23. An estimated 23,529 Central Flyway hunters participated in these seasons. This estimate was 12% higher than the number that participated in the previous season for the same states. Hunters harvested 56,178 MCP cranes in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway during the 2022–23 season. The fall 2022 pre-migration survey for the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) counted 18,632 cranes, 22% lower than the count from 2021. The 3-year average was 22,744 sandhill cranes, which exceeds the established population objective of 17,000–21,000 for the RMP. Hunting seasons during 2022–23 in portions of Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming resulted in a harvest of 1,586 RMP cranes, an 11% increase from the previous year's harvest. The Lower Colorado River Valley Population (LCRVP) survey results indicated a 25% increase from 2022 (3,787 birds) to 2023 (4,719 birds). The 3-year average is 4,796 LCRVP cranes, which is above the population objective of 2,500 birds. The Eastern Population (EP) sandhill crane fall survey index for 2022 (107,164) was a 19% increase from the previous year, and well above the objective of 30,000 cranes for this population. A total of 1,085 cranes were harvested in Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee during the 2022–23 season, which was 30% higher than last year.

Introduction

The MCP of sandhill cranes, numerically the most abundant of all North American crane populations, is comprised of lesser (*Antigone canadensis canadensis*) and greater (*A. c. tabida*) subspecies of sandhill cranes. The breeding range extends from northwestern Minnesota, northern Ontario, and western Quebec, then northwest through Arctic Canada, Alaska, and into eastern Siberia. The MCP wintering range includes western Oklahoma, New Mexico, southeastern Arizona, Texas, and northern portions of Mexico (Fig. 1). Extensive spring aerial surveys on major concentration areas that are corrected for observer visibility bias provide annual indices of abundance that are used to estimate population trends. These surveys are conducted in late March, at a time when cranes that wintered in Mexico, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas usually have migrated northward to spring staging areas along the Platte River in Nebraska, but before spring "break-up" conditions allow cranes to move into Canada (Benning and Johnson 1987). The MCP Cooperative Flyway Management Plan (Central, Mississippi and Pacific Flyway Councils 2018) established regulatory thresholds for changing harvest regulations that are based on an objective of maintaining sandhill crane abundances at 1982–2005 levels (i.e., spring index of 349,000–472,000 [$\bar{x} = 411,000 \pm 15\%$]), rounded up to the nearest 5,000 birds. Sandhill crane hunters are required to obtain either a sandhill Crane hunting permit and/or register under the Harvest Information Program (HIP) to hunt MCP cranes in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway, Minnesota in the Mississippi Flyway, and Alaska in the Pacific Flyway. The permits or HIP registration records provide the sampling frame to conduct annual harvest surveys. In Canada, the harvest survey is based on the sales of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Permits, which are required for all crane hunters.

The RMP is comprised exclusively of greater sandhill cranes that breed in isolated river valleys, marshes, and meadows of the U.S. portions of the Central and Pacific Flyways (Drewien and Bizeau 1974). The highest nesting concentrations are in western Montana and Wyoming, eastern Idaho, Colorado, and Utah. The RMP migrates through the San Luis Valley (SLV) in Colorado and winters primarily in the Middle Rio Grande Valley, New Mexico, with smaller numbers wintering in the southwestern part of New Mexico, in southeastern Arizona, and at several locations (~14) in the Northern Highlands of Mexico (Fig. 2). During 1984–96, the RMP was monitored at spring stopover areas in the SLV. However, cranes from the MCP also began to use this area, which confounded estimates of RMP abundance. In 1995, a fall pre-migration (September) survey replaced the spring count as the primary tool for monitoring population change. The RMP Cooperative Flyway Management Plan established a population objective (17,000–21,000 birds), and identifies surveys used to monitor recruitment and harvest levels that are designed to maintain a stable abundance (Pacific Flyway Council and Central Flyway Council 2016). The plan contains a formula for calculating allowable annual harvests consistent with the goal of staying within the range of the population objective. All sandhill crane hunters in the range of the RMP must obtain a state permit to hunt cranes, which provides the sampling frame for independent harvest estimates and allows for assignment of harvest quotas by state. In many areas, harvest estimates are supplemented by periodic mandatory check-station reporting.

The LCRVP is numerically the least abundant of the six migratory populations of sandhill cranes recognized in the U.S. (Drewien et al. 1976, Drewien and Lewis 1987). The LCRVP is comprised exclusively of greater sandhill cranes that breed primarily in northeastern Nevada and southwest Idaho, with smaller numbers in parts Utah (Fig. 3), and winters largely in the Colorado River Valley of Arizona and Imperial Valley of California (Grisham et al. 2018). LCRVP cranes are thought to have the lowest recruitment rate of any sandhill crane population in North America (Drewien et

al. 1995). In the fall, these cranes leave breeding areas during late September-early October, congregate at several staging areas, and migrate through eastern Nevada to wintering areas. Wintering areas historically extended south along the Colorado River to near its delta with the Gulf of California. However, the current wintering distribution is concentrated at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, on areas just north of the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge belonging to the Colorado River Indian Tribes in southwestern Arizona, areas within and near the Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR in southern California, and the Gila River in Arizona. Collectively, these areas are believed to winter more than 90% of the total cranes in the LCRVP. Spring migration is generally initiated as early as the first week of February. Since 1998, an aerial cruise survey has been conducted that covers the four main winter concentration areas.

The EP, which consists of greater sandhill cranes, has rebounded from near extirpation in the late 1800's (Walkinshaw 1949, 1973; Leopold 1949). Management actions, such as regulating take and the protection and restoration of habitat, allowed this population to increase to a level that exceeded 30,000 cranes by 1996 (Meine and Archibald 1996). Most EP cranes breed across the Great Lakes region (Wisconsin, Michigan, Ontario, and Minnesota); however, the range of this population is currently expanding in all directions (Fig. 4) (Lacy et al. 2015). By early fall, EP cranes leave their breeding grounds and congregate in large flocks on traditional staging areas throughout the breeding range. During migration, EP cranes use traditional stopover areas which include Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Wildlife Area in northwest Indiana and Hiwassee State Wildlife Refuge in southeast Tennessee. Historically, EP cranes primarily wintered in southern Georgia and throughout Florida (Walkinshaw 1973, Lewis 1977, Tacha et al. 1992, Meine and Archibald 1996). Recent annual Midwinter Survey data, conducted by state and federal agencies, show substantial numbers of cranes wintering farther north into Kentucky, Tennessee, and even Indiana in some years (2013–2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [unpublished data], Fronczak et al. 2017, Urbanek 2018).

Mid-Continent Population of sandhill Cranes

Sport hunting seasons for MCP cranes were not allowed in the U.S. 1918–60. In the Central Flyway, areas open to hunting were gradually expanded during 1961–74, but since that time have remained relatively stable. Operational hunting seasons are now held annually in portions of Colorado, Kansas, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. Nebraska is the only Central Flyway state that does not have a sandhill crane sport hunting season. Areas open to crane hunting in the Central Flyway during 2021–22 are shown in Fig. 5. Beginning in 2010, Minnesota, a Mississippi Flyway state, opened a limited hunt in the northwest portion of the state.

During 1961–74, hunters gradually improved their knowledge of sandhill cranes and improved their hunting success. During 1975–85, a tradition of sandhill crane hunting became established. Together with improvements in equipment (decoys, calls, clothing, blinds, etc.) and a shift from pass-shooting and hunting on roosts to decoy-hunting in fields, crane hunter success increased (Sharp and Vogel 1992). Dubovsky and Araya (2008) found that in the late 1990s and early 2000s hunters were more successful in harvesting 2 or 3 cranes per day than they were during the early 1980s. Average seasonal bags declined in the Central Flyway during the late 1990s and early 2000s, but during the last several seasons have increased to levels observed in the late 1980s to late 1990s (Fig. 12).

For most states, sandhill crane seasons began in relatively small areas, and expanded incrementally in subsequent years as experience with the seasons was gained. For example, sandhill crane seasons in North Dakota resumed in 1968 after being closed following the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918. During 1968–79, the number of counties open for crane hunting increased from 2 to 8, and increased to 30 during 1980–92 and were grouped into two zones that were west of Highway 281. Beginning in 1993, the zones were eliminated, and Federal frameworks were fully utilized for the designated hunting area (Sharp and Cornely 1997). In 2001, designated hunt areas in North Dakota and Texas were expanded, with the new areas having reduced frameworks of 37 days compared to 58 in other areas and a reduced daily bag. In 2014, North Dakota increased season length in the eastern zone to 58 days but kept the 2-bird daily bag limit; harvest data suggested there would be negligible effects on that segment of the population. Kansas was the most recent Central Flyway state to initiate a crane hunting season in 1993. Initially, crane hunting was open only in portions of 17 counties, but by 2003 the area was expanded to 62 counties, essentially the entire western portion of the state (Sharp et al. 2010). Also, during early years of these seasons, bag limits and shooting hours often were more restrictive than Federal frameworks allowed. Beginning in the 2019–20 season, South Dakota moved their hunt boundary eastward from where it had been historically.

MCP harvest areas have remained relatively consistent from year to year; however, the levels of harvest vary with respect to many factors including changes in hunting pressure, land use, and environmental factors. Most shifts in annual harvests occur locally, but large-scale changes in harvest distributions also have occurred. Since the late 1990s, the annual harvest has generally increased declined in North Dakota and, until recently, increased in Saskatchewan (Tables 5A and 6). Causal factors for these changes have not been determined but are likely different because birds staging in Saskatchewan are largely from the West-central Canada-Alaska breeding affiliation whereas those in North Dakota are from the East-central Canada-Minnesota breeding affiliation (Krapu et al. 2011). Increased hunting pressure in Saskatchewan, mainly by non-resident U.S. hunters (Araya et al. 2010), has likely contributed to increases in harvests whereas declines in harvests in North Dakota appear to be more complex and involve several interrelated factors, likely including changes in hunting pressure, land-use changes, and environmental conditions. More recently, in Texas the interest in crane hunting has increased, with the number of hunters and annual harvest approximately doubling from 2016 to 2021 (Table 3A).

The MCP included at least 510,000 sandhill cranes in March 1982, the last extensive survey involving high-altitude vertical photography of major spring migration staging concentrations. Beginning in 1982, an intensive photo-corrected ocular-transect survey of Nebraska's Central Platte River Valley (CPRV) and ocular assessments from other spring staging areas have been used to monitor the annual status and trends for this population (Table 1). Use of the CPRV count in the development of annual harvest recommendations relies on the premise that a high proportion (>90%) of the MCP are in the CPRV at the time of the annual survey. Recent research with radio-tracked birds suggests that the proportion of MCP cranes in the CPRV during the survey varies by year (Pearse et al. 2015). Annual variability in weather patterns can reduce the percentage below 90% in some years. However, conducting the survey a few days earlier or a few days later likely would not result in a 'better' count (i.e., a higher proportion of birds being in the CPRV), because birds migrate into and out of the area continuously (Pearse et al. 2015).

The count from the March 2023 survey for MCP was 1,259,199 cranes (Table 1, Fig. 6) in the CPRV, which represents a record high estimate since the survey was initiated in 1974 (Liddick 2023). The natural log-transformed annual photo-corrected estimates for the CPRV portion of the

survey suggest an increasing population trend ($P = 0.01$) since 2006 with higher counts in several of the recent surveys (Fig. 7); however, estimates also have more interannual variability in recent years relative to historic values, resulting in a poor fit of the trend to the data ($R^2 = 0.36$). The 3-year-average index for photo-corrected estimates in the CPRV during the most recent three years that surveys have been conducted (2021-23) was 909,046 cranes, which is well above the management objective level (350,000-475,000) for this population (Fig. 8). Due to COVID restrictions the survey was not completed in 2020, and ground counts used to correct aerial counts were not done in 2021.

Since 1975, special sandhill Crane Hunting Permits, or more recently HIP certification, have been required for crane hunters participating in seasons in the Central Flyway. Additionally, a limited MCP sandhill crane hunt was offered in Minnesota starting in 2010, for which a state-issued permit is required for hunters to participate. A sample of these permittees is mailed questionnaires soon after the completion of each hunting season. The resulting responses enable estimation of hunting activities and success (Martin 2007). Estimated numbers of hunters registering as sandhill crane hunters in Texas has been increasing since 1997 when crane hunting was included in the combination licenses issued by the state, with a record high of 122,553 permits issued in 2008. In 2009, Texas revised their licensing system and crane hunters now must go to selected locations to obtain their permit, which resulted in a 91% decrease in the number of permits issued to individuals in 2009 compared to 2008. Thus, the number of crane hunters in Texas likely did not decrease as suggested by the number of permits issued; rather, the number of hunters classified as crane hunters by the Texas registration process declined. For the 2019-20 season, Oklahoma did not provide information needed to estimate hunter activity and harvest in time to conduct surveys of their hunters; thus, no estimates of the number of hunters or their harvest of cranes is available. For the 2020–21, 2021–22, and 2022–23 seasons, Oklahoma reported the number of permits as they did prior to 2019, with the addition of hunters who received a free online crane hunting permit (Table 2A). These free permits were not previously in the HIP sample of Oklahoma crane hunters, and their inclusion resulted in a large increase in the number of hunters for these seasons. The number of crane hunters in Texas increased 89% from 2019 to 2020 (Table 3A), and appears to be the result of crane hunting becoming more popular. During the 2022–23 season in the Central Flyway, 87,577 hunters were either HIP-certified or obtained crane hunting permits, which were not limited in number (Tables 2A, 2B), with 23,529 of these individuals hunting at least one time (Tables 3A, 3B, Fig. 9). The 2022–23 number of active hunters in the Central Flyway increased 12% from the previous year (Fig. 9). During 2022–23, the number of hunters in Texas comprised 71% of the sandhill crane hunters in the Central Flyway. Minnesota issued 1,424 permits for the 2022–23 season and had 898 active hunters (4% decrease and 7% increase, respectively, from the 2021–22 season).

Federal frameworks for most areas in the Central Flyway allow daily bag/possession limits of 3/9, which most states selected. Portions of North Dakota, Texas and Minnesota have had lower bag and possession limits of 2/6; the bag/possession limit in Minnesota was lowered to 1/3 beginning with the 2018-19 season. Specific dates selected by states in the Central Flyway and Minnesota for 2022-23 were similar to those of previous hunting seasons (Table 4).

An index to crippling-loss rate (number of cranes lost/[number of cranes lost + retrieved]) in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway has declined ($R^2 = 0.91$, $P < 0.01$) from over 16% in 1975 to a preliminary estimate of 1.1% during the most recent hunting season (Fig. 10). During the 2022–23 season the number of days afield per hunter (2.18) was 9% lower than that of the previous year (Fig. 11) and was 28% lower than the long-term average of 3.02. The preliminary estimate of seasonal bag per hunter was 2.39 birds (Fig. 12), which is 8% higher than the long-term

average of 2.22. The preliminary estimate of retrieved and unretrieved mortality associated with the sport harvest in the Central Flyway was 8% lower than the previous year's estimate (Fig. 13). The increasing trend ($R^2 = 0.71$, $P < 0.01$) in the Central Flyway's harvest of MCP cranes during 1975–2022 likely is related to improved knowledge of crane behavior, hunting techniques, and hunter success (Sharp and Vogel 1992, Dubovsky and Araya 2008), and increased numbers of cranes available for harvest in recent years due to growth in the MCP.

Cranes from the MCP also occur in the RMP hunt areas in Arizona, New Mexico, Alaska (Tables 5A, 5B), Canada, and Mexico. Estimates for the 2022–23 sport harvest in Canada (Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan) were not available at the time this report was completed; historic estimates are provided in Table 6. For Alaska, sandhill cranes harvested in Game Management Units (GMUs) 11-13 and 18-26 are believed to be MCP cranes, while cranes harvested in GMUs 1-10 and 14-17 are believed to be Pacific Coast Population cranes. There also is some intermingling of MCP cranes with RMP cranes in portions of New Mexico and Arizona; however, periodic bag checks allow estimates of harvests for each population. The estimated MCP harvest for the RMP hunt areas in Arizona, New Mexico, and Alaska combined was 1,799 cranes for 2022–23. In the 13th year of Minnesota's sandhill crane hunt the harvest (863 cranes) increased by 53% from the previous year. No annual harvest surveys are conducted in Mexico, but annual MCP harvests probably are <10% of the retrieved harvest in the U.S. and Canada (R. Drewien and D. Nieman, personal communication). This assumed low level of harvest was supported by an independent assessment of harvest in Mexico (Kramer et al. 1995). Because harvest estimates for Canada were not available, the 2022–23 estimates of retrieved and unretrieved kill of MCP cranes by sport hunters throughout their range was not calculated. Historic information is provided in Tables 7A and 7B, and Fig. 14.

To assess the relative rates of change between population size (abundance) and harvest, we periodically assess trends in these parameters. We used linear regression on the natural log-transformed values for these variables for the years 1982-2021. Because >10% of the MCP occurs outside the CPRV in the spring of some years, we combined the photo-corrected counts in the CPRV with the ocular cruise estimates from areas outside the CPRV for analyses of population abundance. For harvest, we used only the estimates of 'retrieved' harvest for the Central Flyway, Minnesota, and MCP cranes harvested in hunt areas in Arizona and New Mexico, Alaska, and Canada, because crippling-loss rates for the latter three areas are unknown and there are no empirical estimates of harvest from Mexico. Regression of the log-transformed values indicate a significant slope for the abundance values ($P < 0.01$; $R^2 = 0.36$; slope = +1.6% per year change), suggesting an increasing trend in the abundance of cranes over the time frame. The regression of the harvest values also indicates an increase in the rate of harvest over that same time ($P < 0.01$; $R^2 = 0.71$; slope = +2.3% per year) (Fig. 15). These results suggest that the annual change in harvest is increasing faster than the rate of growth in crane abundance.

Subsistence harvest levels of MCP sandhill cranes historically were poorly documented. However, the 1997 U.S./Canada Migratory Bird Treaty Amendment identified improvements that should be made to sandhill crane harvest-monitoring programs in both the U.S. and Canada. Harvest surveys conducted during 2006–2017 on the Yukon-Kuskokwim (Y-K) Delta, Alaska, reported an average MCP harvest of 2,896 adults and fledged young and an average of 1,183 eggs (data from Naves and Keating 2019). The harvest estimate for birds is relatively similar to the 1985-2005 average (Wentworth 2007) of 3,151 adults and fledged young taken by subsistence hunters on the Y-K Delta, but that for eggs is 124% higher than the 1985-2005 average of 528 eggs. Efforts are being made to gather additional information on subsistence harvests for the remainder of Alaska, Siberia, and Canada.

Rocky Mountain Population of Greater sandhill Cranes

The RMP was not hunted in the U.S. from 1918–80. Arizona initiated the first modern-day season in 1981. Since that time hunting programs have been guided by a cooperative management plan, including a harvest strategy that has been periodically updated and endorsed by the Central and Pacific Flyways (Kruse et al. 2008). The harvest strategy for the RMP calculates an allowable harvest based on crane survey counts and recruitment relative to the population objective. Thus, allowable harvest changes annually based on the status of the birds.

Counts conducted in the SLV during the spring migration suggested that the number of RMP cranes was relatively stable during 1984–96 (Table 8). However, survey biologists found that these estimates contained increasing numbers of the MCP (lesser subspecies). An adjustment, using ground-derived proportions, was made to correct for the lesser subspecies but was not a viable approach for the long-term (Benning et al. 1996). In 1996, the survey was discontinued (Table 8). In 1997, an attempt was made to survey these cranes during the fall (October) in the SLV, but MCP cranes also were present at that time. Biologists concluded that neither a spring nor a fall count in the SLV would result in a reliable index to the abundance of the RMP. As an alternative, a cooperative 5-state September pre-migration staging-area survey, experimentally tested in 1987 and 1992, has been ongoing operationally since 1995. Because there appears to be minimal commingling of RMP cranes with cranes from other populations during that time, the September pre-migration survey for the RMP appears to be a good alternative to either a spring or fall survey in the SLV and was designated as the official count for the RMP in 1997 (Table 9). Although operational in 1995 and 1996, the survey was variable in timing and survey effort. What appears to be lower population estimates (Table 9) in 1995 and 1996 is likely more an artifact of inconsistent survey effort (R. Drewien, personal communication).

The Cooperative Flyway Management Plan (Pacific Flyway Council and Central Flyway Council 2016) recommends using the most recent three-year running average of the September survey to determine status of the RMP. The 2022 September pre-migration survey resulted in 18,632 cranes counted, a 22% decrease from the count in 2021 (Thorpe et al. 2022) (Table 9). The 3-year average is 22,744 which is 4% lower than the previous 3-year average (23,630) and exceeds the range of the established population objective (17,000–21,000) (Fig. 18).

During 1986–95, important breeding areas in the Intermountain West experienced extremely dry conditions and indices of recruitment (% juveniles) were low (generally between 4–6%) (Fig. 19). A return to more favorable breeding conditions during 1996–99 resulted in higher recruitment rates (8–12%), but drier conditions resulted in lower production during 2000–02. Since 2003 recruitment rates generally have been above-average due to improved wetland habitats and favorable spring and summer breeding conditions. The recruitment rate of 10.8% (30% above the long-term [1972–2021] average of 8.2) suggested above average nesting conditions, but a mean brood size of 1.08 (Collins and Vanausdall 2022) indicated the opposite in 2022.

Special limited hunting seasons during 2022–23 resulted in a harvest of 1,586 RMP sandhill cranes (Tables 10A, 10B), which was 11% greater than last year (Fig. 16). Based on the surveys conducted last fall which resulted in 3-year (2020–22) average values that were lower for abundance but higher for recruitment (Figs. 18, 19), management guidelines allow for a maximum allowable take of 2,543 birds during the 2023-24 hunting season, an 8% decrease from that for the 2022–23 season.

Lower Colorado River Valley Population of Greater sandhill Cranes

The LCRVP is the smallest of the migratory populations of sandhill cranes in North America. The range of this population is believed to overlap ranges with the Rocky Mountain and Central Valley populations. Historically, winter counts of the LCRVP were not well-coordinated or conducted using a consistent methodology. However, efforts have been made to standardize areas surveyed and the timing of the survey to obtain more accurate counts and increased ability to determine trends in population abundance. Beginning in 1998, a coordinated winter aerial cruise survey with a fixed-wing aircraft has been conducted at the four major wintering areas: Cibola NWR, Colorado River Indian Tribal lands, Sonny Bono Salton Sea NWR, and the Gila River. Collectively, these counts are believed to contain >90% of the total number of cranes in this population. The counts are not corrected for cranes present but not seen by aerial crews, and therefore have unknown bias and precision. The fixed-wing aircraft survey was again conducted in 2023. The survey resulted in a count of 4,719 birds in 2023, a 25% increase from the previous year's count of 3,787 birds (Table 11, Fig. 20). The current 3-year average for the winter count is 4,796 cranes.

The LCRVP was not hunted after the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in 1918. In 2007, the Service completed an Environmental Assessment entitled "Proposed hunting regulations for the Lower Colorado River Valley Population of Greater sandhill Cranes in the Pacific Flyway" (U.S.D.I. 2007). In 2008, the Service determined that a small allowable harvest (about 30) could be allowed on this population in years when the 3-year average of winter counts exceeded 2,500. The hunting season is guided by a cooperative management plan (Pacific Flyway Council 1995) which includes methodology for determining allowable harvests and allocation of the harvest. Once a hunting season is initiated, this season would be experimental for 3 years. After the 3 years, the season would be reviewed and revised if necessary.

A limited youth hunting season for this population was conducted during 2010 in Arizona, the only state that has hunted these cranes. No LCRVP cranes were harvested. The Pacific Flyway currently has no plans to conduct hunts for LCRVP cranes.

Eastern Population of Greater sandhill Cranes

In 1979, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a coordinated fall index survey of historic EP migratory staging areas in the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyways. This survey is conducted annually in late October by volunteers and agency personnel who count the number of cranes at staging areas throughout the EP range. Overall, the survey documented a long-term increasing trend in EP cranes with an average growth rate in the population of 3.9% per year (1979-2009) (Amundson and Johnson 2010). A more recent analysis indicates the growth rate has increased to 4.4% per year (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, unpublished data). The most recent fall count from 2022 was 107,164, which was 19% higher than the 2021 index of 90,029. The 3-year average is 97,385 (Table 12, Fig. 21). This index is not a statistically designed population estimate; however, the index does reasonably represent a conservative population estimate for EP cranes.

In 2010, the Mississippi and Atlantic Flyway Councils endorsed a management plan for EP cranes (Ad Hoc Eastern Population sandhill Crane Committee 2010). One of the plan's provisions

included guidelines for potential harvest of this population when the 3-year average of the fall survey is above 30,000 cranes. Kentucky and Tennessee initiated experimental hunting seasons in 2011 and 2013, respectively; the season in Kentucky became operational in 2015 and that for Tennessee in 2017. Alabama initiated an experimental season beginning in the 2019-20 season (Table 13), and the season will become operational in the 2023-24 season. Hunting seasons for this population of sandhill cranes are allowed between September 1 and January 31 and have a maximum length of 60 days. Actual season dates have been from early-December to late-January in Kentucky and late November to late January in Tennessee (Table 13). During recent years the seasons in each state have extended from early December through the end of January. According to the hunt plan, the number of tags a state can issue cannot exceed 10% of the state's five-year average peak crane abundance. Each tag allows a hunter to harvest one crane. Hunters in all three states are required to complete mandatory crane identification training, tag and report harvested birds, and complete a post-season survey. In the 2022–23 season, Kentucky issued 1,148 tags to hunters, who harvested 180 cranes (Table 14)(J. Brunjes, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, personal communication). Tennessee issued 2,500 tags to hunters and 640 cranes were harvested in 2022–23 (Table 14) (J. Feddersen, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, personal communication). Alabama issued 1,200 tags to hunters in 2022-23 and 265 cranes were harvest harvested (Maddox 2023) (Table 14). The total number of Eastern Population sandhill cranes harvested during 2022–23 hunting season was 1,085 birds, which was 30% higher than last year.

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Table 1. Annual spring abundance indices for the Mid-Continent Population of sandhill cranes. Estimates presented for: (1) the Central Platte River Valley (CPRV), NE; (2) other areas in Nebraska outside the CPRV and in other states; and (3) total combined estimates.

Year	CPRV Ocular Cruise Transect	CPRV Ocular Transect	CPRV Photo Corrected Ocular Transect Annual	CPRV Photo Corrected Ocular Transect 3-Year AVG	Other NE	KS	TX	CO ^a	OK ^{a,b}	NM ^a	WY ^b	Total Ocular Cruise Transect	Total Ocular Transect	Total Photo Corrected Ocular Transect Annual	Total Photo Corrected Ocular Transect 3-Year AVG
1974	162,600				9,000	1,900	3,200	0	400		0	177,100			
1975	223,600				2,300	900	tr	500	100		100	227,500			
1976	147,500				2,800	300	800	0	100		1,000	152,500			
1977	173,400				1,100	1,600	30,700	0	400		12,500	220,000			
1978	149,800	188,582			2,200	700	4,900	0	0		2,300	159,900	198,682		
1979		203,574			2,600	1,100	0	500	1,500		0		209,274		
1980	223,400	254,417			5,000	4,100	1,400	0	100		500	234,500	265,517		
1981		248,882			8,300	11,200	21,800	500	0		0		290,682		
1982		347,996	417,263		7,100	2,000	7,800	2,800	0		100		367,796	437,063	
1983		306,316	343,378		4,100	200	7,000	0	200		tr		317,816	354,878	
1984		222,710	261,802	340,814	18,100	900	800	0	1,100		tr		243,610	282,702	358,214
1985		378,127	514,763	373,314	11,500	3,000	1,200						393,827	530,463	389,348
1986		317,025	353,040	376,535	1,000	200	2,100						320,325	356,340	389,835
1987		383,581	416,058	427,954	0	tr	400						383,981	416,458	434,420
1988		386,853	463,457	410,852	0	0	7,700						394,553	471,157	414,652
1989		391,353	391,995	423,837	100	1,000	800						393,253	393,895	427,170
1990		385,950	412,154	422,535	11,000	5,200	10,300						412,450	438,654	434,569
1991		297,831	340,645	381,598	100	800	200						298,931	341,745	391,431
1992		257,709	406,457	386,419	12,200	300	1,100						271,309	420,057	400,152
1993		253,799	378,883	375,328	16,800	37,750	13,500						321,849	446,933	402,912
1994		395,543	477,215	420,852	14,600	0	0	2,400					410,143	491,815	452,935

a CO, OK, and NM were eliminated from the Official Survey Area in 1985 by the CF CMU.

b The 2018 revision to the Management Plan added OK and WY to counts for determination of the percentage of cranes in the Central Platte River Valley.

c Survey not conducted due to COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

Table 1 (continued)

Year	CPRV Ocular Cruise Transect	CPRV Ocular Transect	CPRV Photo Corrected Ocular Transect Annual	CPRV Photo Corrected Ocular Transect 3-Year AVG	Other NE	KS	TX	CO ^a	OK ^{a,b}	NM ^a	WY ^b	Total Ocular Cruise Transect	Total Ocular Transect	Total Photo Corrected Ocular Transect Annual	Total Photo Corrected Ocular Transect 3-Year AVG
1995		273,376	326,181	394,093	30,400	0	0	6,700					303,776	356,581	431,776
1996		318,514	519,984	441,127	7,600	0	0	3,900					326,114	527,584	458,660
1997		350,932	534,630	460,265	16,200	100	0						367,232	550,930	478,365
1998		337,203	530,848	528,487	13,600	100	0						350,903	544,548	541,021
1999		219,794	284,858	450,112	3,500	100,000	0						323,294	388,358	494,612
2000		484,585	490,118	435,275	16,900	26,100	500						528,085	533,618	488,841
2001		387,336	413,498	396,158	10,500	42,300	3,500						443,636	469,798	463,925
2002		309,029	315,044	406,220	17,100	15,100	1,200		5,800				342,429	348,444	450,620
2003		300,918	348,023	358,855	24,800	4,100	3,800						333,618	380,723	399,655
2004		365,370	426,534	363,200	17,700	1,200	2,200		100				386,470	447,634	392,267
2005		412,285	491,915	422,157	27,100	2,900	8,700		2,600				450,985	530,615	452,991
2006		178,564	216,810	378,420	70,000	2,100	5,500						256,164	294,410	424,220
2007		307,094	384,118	364,281	20,400	3,600	5,900						336,994	414,018	413,014
2008		474,051	545,884	382,271	24,500	1,100	0						499,651	571,484	426,637
2009		457,436	565,257	498,420	29,900	tr	10,800						498,136	605,957	530,486
2010		455,104	691,534	600,892	17,600	1,300	28,000						502,004	738,434	638,625
2011		347,501	482,797	579,863	18,800	3,500	14,300		4,700				384,101	519,397	621,263
2012		253,783	339,642	504,658	12,900	tr	4,200						270,883	356,742	538,191
2013		745,854	867,061	563,167	16,080	279	9,740		1,800				771,953	893,160	589,766
2014		402,228	617,903	608,202	24,390	5,996	7,534		239				440,148	655,823	635,242

a CO, OK, and NM were eliminated from the Official Survey Area in 1985 by the CF CMU.

b The 2018 revision to the Management Plan added OK and WY to counts for determination of the percentage of cranes in the Central Platte River Valley.

c Survey not conducted due to COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

Table 1 (continued)

Year	CPRV Ocular Cruise Transect	CPRV Ocular Transect	CPRV Photo Corrected Ocular Transect Annual	CPRV Photo Corrected Ocular Transect 3-Year AVG	Other NE	KS	TX	CO ^a	OK ^{a,b}	NM ^a	WY ^b	Total Ocular Cruise Transect	Total Ocular Transect	Total Photo Corrected Ocular Transect Annual	Total Photo Corrected Ocular Transect 3-Year AVG
2015		326,053	386,471	623,812	24,545	4,479	37,121		2,195				392,198	452,616	667,200
2016		272,250	405,716	470,030	11,218	261	16,500		175				300,229	433,695	514,045
2017		436,671	568,369	453,519	18,674	180	9,193		16				464,718	596,416	494,242
2018 ^b		516,397	1,005,612	659,899	12,137	1,058	23,906		932		3,475		557,905	1,047,120	692,410
2019 ^b		633,839	945,996	839,992	16,818	2,423	39,460		777		4,140		697,457	1,009,614	884,383
2020 ^c															924,289
2021 ^b		487,418	782,462	911,357	9,394	1,422	38,123		0		4,512		536,339	835,851	964,195
2022 ^b		464,933	685,476	804,645	23,911	727	13,869		115		3,650		503,407	730,472	858,646
2023		686,716	1,259,199	909,046	6,661	662	11,872		68		6,100		705,895	1,284,563	950,295

a CO, OK, and NM were eliminated from the Official Survey Area in 1985 by the CF CMU.

b The 2018 revision to the Management Plan added OK and WY to counts for determination of the percentage of cranes in the Central Platte River Valley.

c Survey not conducted due to COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

Table 2A. Federal Mid-Continent sandhill crane permits issued in the Central Flyway (CF) and Minnesota.

Year	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	CF	
										Total	MN
1975	401		158	1,225	4,172	171	198	5,482	56	11,863	
1976	341		117	1,195	4,137	265	200	5,060	37	11,352	
1977	374		82	1,452	6,294	519	134	4,897	48	13,800	
1978	343		209	956	5,798	620	98	5,198	52	13,274	
1979	528		159	1,288	4,949	470	63	5,098	43	12,598	
1980	437		118	1,082	5,754	510	240	5,239	33	13,413	
1981	397		53	1,022	5,796	466	197	5,297	30	13,258	
1982	528		147	962	4,714	750	579	4,650	40	12,370	
1983	575		175	706	8,033	909	528	7,317	63	18,306	
1984	538		113	721	7,436	1,187	544	6,838	43	17,420	
1985	555		143	710	6,802	1,102	656	7,417	59	17,444	
1986	617		99	595	8,926	1,073	705	7,258	25	19,298	
1987	610		128	502	8,778	1,213	517	6,289	30	18,067	
1988	512		162	480	6,214	1,472	437	7,053	38	16,368	
1989	434		172	430	6,128	1,717	524	8,066	25	17,496	
1990	389		143	533	7,268	1,725	646	11,994	22	22,720	
1991	501		238	602	3,353	1,618	668	11,142	25	18,147	
1992	498		303	582	3,760	1,397	721	9,848	18	17,127	
1993	411	575	336	541	4,572	1,277	708	10,407	37	18,864	
1994	427	567	320	547	4,790	1,561	636	10,515	49	19,412	
1995	571	711	351	564	5,242	1,323	650	10,755	42	20,209	
1996	612	837	369	499	5,570	1,391	677	11,334	41	21,330	
1997	572	997	325	454	4,934	1,393	757	37,365 ^b	46	46,845	
1998	4,937 ^b	1,088	270	449	6,082	1,385	951	32,523 ^b	49	42,797	
1999	4,847 ^b	1,235	279	516	6,050	1,438	810	33,380 ^b	52	48,607	
2000	5,169 ^b	1,084	283	493	7,451	1,333	721	44,719 ^b	58	61,311	
2001	5,869 ^b	1,374	253	509	8,078	1,315	680	49,410 ^b	72	67,560	
2002	5,644 ^b	1,279	303	496	8,245 ^c	1,186	619	37,558 ^b	54	55,384	
2003 ^a	5,854 ^b	1,206	273	471	6,030 ^c	1,000	563	43,199 ^b	50	58,646	
2004 ^a	5,784 ^b	1,180 ^c	308	548	5,788 ^c	780 ^c	307	52,161 ^b	61	66,917	
2005 ^a	5,766 ^b	805 ^c	281	494	7,441 ^c	698 ^c	490	51,511 ^b	68	67,554	
2006 ^a	4,792 ^b	826 ^c	265	512 ^d	7,410 ^c	615 ^c	445 ^e	70,968 ^b	78	85,911	
2007 ^a	4,931 ^b	598 ^c	238	480 ^d	7,442 ^c	731 ^c	390 ^e	101,382 ^b	58	116,250	
2008 ^a	5,772 ^b	655 ^c	272	677 ^d	6,501 ^c	736 ^c	398 ^e	122,553 ^b	73	137,637	
2009 ^a	4,038 ^b	540 ^c	139	862 ^d	7,774 ^c	1,029 ^c	693 ^e	11,332 ^b	62	26,469	
2010 ^a	4,280 ^b	508 ^c	283	701 ^d	8,375 ^c	1,055 ^c	410 ^e	12,560 ^b	86	28,258	1,954
2011 ^a	783 ^b	801 ^c	311	575 ^d	8,024 ^c	1,104 ^c	356 ^e	13,905 ^b	86	25,945	1,342
2012 ^a	801 ^b	571 ^c	186	859 ^d	8,519 ^c	451 ^c	343 ^e	14,083 ^b	102	25,915	1,032
2013 ^a	856 ^b	735 ^c	288	404 ^d	9,085 ^c	2,278 ^c	421 ^e	18,369 ^b	106	32,542	1,086
2014 ^a	848 ^b	787 ^c	356	368 ^d	4,692 ^c	660 ^c	390 ^e	20,105 ^b	433	28,639	1,216
2015 ^a	787 ^b	1,040 ^c	404	365 ^d	4,543 ^c	510 ^c	--- ^f	22,033 ^b	454	30,136	1,199
2016 ^a	841 ^b	1,055 ^c	376	416 ^d	3,956 ^c	559 ^c	171 ^e	23,962 ^b	569	31,905	1,139
2017 ^a	913 ^b	1,075 ^c	604	534 ^d	4,006 ^c	714 ^c	224 ^e	26,312 ^b	646	35,028	1,125
2018 ^a	954 ^b	1,218 ^c	676	2,413 ^d	4,102 ^c	642 ^c	237 ^e	29,668 ^b	392	40,302	1,091
2019 ^a	1,019 ^b	1,456 ^c	1,013 ^b	2,818 ^d	3,839 ^c	--- ^g	242 ^e	32,841 ^b	714	43,942	1,073
2020 ^a	1,107 ^b	1,970 ^c	1,005 ^b	2,763 ^d	5,168 ^c	11,513 ^c	210 ^e	38,832 ^b	619	63,187	1,288
2021 ^a	1,170 ^b	2,343 ^c	1,385 ^b	2,362 ^d	4,440 ^c	11,904 ^c	289 ^e	45,013 ^b	621	69,527	1,479
2022 ^a	9,194 ^b	2,270 ^c	562 ^b	3,471 ^d	5,544 ^c	12,536 ^c	250 ^e	52,568 ^b	1,182	87,577	1,424

a Preliminary

b Harvest Information Program (HIP) or a point-of-sale electronic record (without cost) used to identify crane hunters in lieu of a special sandhill crane hunting permit

c States began charging a fee for crane hunting permits which reduces the number of permits issued to hunters that only hunt cranes.

d NM uses a combination of electronic and paper permits.

e SD uses a special question in their HIP questionnaire to identify sandhill crane hunters; TX hunters can only obtain crane permits in selected locations.

f All hunters put in stratum "did not hunt" or "no" in state HIP sample frame, so no estimate is available.

g Hunters name and address data not supplied, so no estimate is available.

Table 2B. Decadal and long-term annual averages of federal Mid-Continent sandhill crane permits issued in the Central Flyway (CF) and Minnesota.

Years	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	CF Total	MN
1975-79	397		145	1,223	5,070	409	139	5,147	47	12,577	
1980-89	520		131	721	6,858	1,040	493	6,542	39	16,344	
1990-99	981	859	293	529	5,162	1,451	722	17,926	38	27,606	
2000-09	5,362	955	262	554	7,216	942	531	58,479	63	74,364	
2010-19	1,208	925	450	945	5,914	886	310	21,384	359	32,261	1,226
2020-22	3,824	2,194	984	2,865	5,051	11,984	250	45,471	807	73,430	1,397
1975-2022	1,983	1,046	313	879	6,083	1,709	462	25,114	159	37,269	1,265

Table 3A. Estimated active Mid-Continent sandhill crane hunters in the Central Flyway (CF) and Minnesota. Active hunters are those permittees reporting hunting cranes 1 or more times.

Year	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	CF Total	MN
1975	226		69	806	2,896	80	117	2,733	22	6,949	
1976	203		68	752	1,328	148	80	2,497	16	5,092	
1977	189		40	921	4,126	339	77	2,329	27	8,048	
1978	190		86	836	3,776	334	50	2,390	21	7,683	
1979	275		61	745	3,225	307	29	2,356	13	7,011	
1980	216		50	625	3,387	275	160	2,439	12	7,164	
1981	216		23	598	3,315	269	103	2,543	14	7,081	
1982	138		56	386	2,429	342	260	1,553	8	5,172	
1983	211		64	253	3,551	384	225	2,435	20	7,143	
1984	206		51	301	3,189	467	208	2,380	19	6,821	
1985	187		37	216	2,383	372	168	2,613	12	5,988	
1986	106		17	178	3,095	299	149	1,991	5	5,840	
1987	113		29	133	2,529	358	120	1,942	5	5,229	
1988	117		48	171	1,779	531	78	2,497	11	5,232	
1989	74		52	152	2,018	492	153	2,805	6	5,752	
1990	101		33	180	2,614	395	172	4,130	6	7,631	
1991	153		69	220	1,674	370	139	3,231	3	5,859	
1992	96		95	182	1,776	330	153	2,655	7	5,294	
1993	87	294	97	218	2,223	357	140	3,602	5	7,023	
1994	93	293	79	211	2,497	456	151	3,350	11	7,141	
1995	154	393	118	211	2,408	331	143	3,707	6	7,471	
1996	91	382	82	166	2,744	355	169	3,356	9	7,354	
1997	67	452	68	124	2,386	264	178	4,515	10	8,064	
1998	96	480	43	155	2,785	345	237	4,022	10	8,173	
1999	133	533	60	204	2,444	375	173	2,699	8	6,629	
2000	192	430	64	160	2,481	223	209	3,180	11	6,950	
2001	202	555	72	173	2,934	391	145	3,554	13	8,039	
2002	175	517	85	166	2,407	237	144	4,037	15	7,783	
2003 ^a	236	495	60	244	2,271	64	114	4,821	10	8,315	
2004 ^a	315	539	93	252	2,491	265	79	5,121	16	9,171	
2005 ^a	280	274	90	233	3,370	259	165	5,383	24	10,078	
2006 ^a	144	445	71	245	3,272	243	144	5,531	25	10,120	
2007 ^a	158	255	82	241	3,145	166	57	5,685	19	9,808	
2008 ^a	191	283	84	239	2,815	255	64	6,338	24	10,293	
2009 ^a	159	213	50	286	3,546	371	63	3,179	67	7,934	
2010 ^a	302	182	93	192	3,474	332	52	4,187	29	8,843	964
2011 ^a	138	449	95	206	3,733	418	44	2,712	41	7,836	643
2012 ^a	139	214	59	270	3,332	160	54	2,972	39	7,239	410
2013 ^a	118	235	94	276	3,326	638	91	5,473	35	10,286	485
2014 ^a	89	151	88	252	1,743	231	56	5,145	70	7,825	401
2015 ^a	126	334	115	263	1,430	158	--- ^b	3,241	78	5,745	424
2016 ^a	144	332	113	310	1,504	219	39	6,746	96	9,503	471
2017 ^a	221	710	98	360	1,562	246	71	7,066	305	10,639	397
2018 ^a	178	457	175	416	1,626	258	73	8,807	94	12,084	383
2019 ^a	174	554	152	549	1,124	--- ^c	41	10,072	138	12,804	333
2020 ^a	216	735	229	505	1,752	3,722	52	19,999	177	27,387	480
2021 ^a	251	818	358	498	1,633	3,116	71	14,240	116	21,101	632
2022 ^a	768	504	240	579	2,272	1,947	50	16,822	347	23,529	898

^a Preliminary^b All hunters put in stratum "did not hunt" or "no" in state HIP sample frame, so no estimate is available.^c Hunter name and address data not supplied, so no estimate is available.

Table 3B. Decadal and long-term annual averages of active Mid-Continent sandhill crane hunters in the Central Flyway (CF) and Minnesota.

Years	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	CF Total	MN
1975-79	217		65	812	3,070	242	71	2,461	20	6,957	
1980-89	158		43	301	2,768	379	162	2,320	11	6,142	
1990-99	107	404	74	187	2,355	358	166	3,527	8	7,064	
2000-09	205	401	75	224	2,873	247	118	4,683	22	8,849	
2010-19	163	362	108	309	2,285	296	58	5,642	93	9,280	491
2020-22	412	686	276	527	1,886	2,928	58	17,020	213	24,006	670
1975-22	180	417	87	330	2,580	479	117	4,689	43	8,753	532

Table 4. Season dates (month/day) for the hunting of Mid-continent sandhill cranes in the Central Flyway states and Minnesota.

Year	CO	KS Central Zone ¹	KS West Zone ²	MT ¹	MT ²	NM	ND Area 1	ND Area 2	OK	SD	TX Area A	TX Area B	TX Area C	WY	MN
1960	-	-	-	-	-	01/01-01/30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1961	-	-	-	-	-	11/04-12/03	-	-	-	-	11/04-12/03	-	-	-	-
1962	-	-	-	-	-	11/03-12/02	-	-	-	-	11/03-12/02	-	-	-	-
1963	-	-	-	-	-	11/02-12/01	-	-	-	-	11/02-12/01	-	-	-	-
1964	-	-	-	-	-	10/31-11/29	-	-	-	-	10/31-11/29	-	-	-	-
1965	-	-	-	-	-	10/30-11/28	-	-	-	-	10/30-11/28	-	-	-	-
1966	-	-	-	-	-	10/29-11/27	-	-	-	-	10/29-11/27	-	-	-	-
1967	10/01-10/30	-	-	-	-	11/04-01/02	-	-	-	-	11/04-01/02	-	-	-	-
1968	10/01-10/30	-	-	-	-	11/02-12/28	11/09-12/08	-	12/14-01/02	11/09-12/08	11/02-12/28	12/14-01/02	-	-	-
1969	10/04-11/02	-	-	-	-	11/01-12/28	11/08-12/07	-	12/13-01/11	11/08-12/07	11/01-12/28	12/13-01/11	-	-	-
1970	10/03-11/01	-	-	-	-	10/31-01/10	11/14-12/13	-	12/05-01/10	11/14-12/13	10/31-01/10	12/05-01/10	-	-	-
1971	10/02-11/07	-	-	-	-	10/30-01/30	11/13-12/02	-	12/04-01/30	11/13-12/02	10/30-01/30	12/04-01/30	-	-	-
1972	10/01-11/05	-	-	10/01-11/06	-	11/03-01/31	11/11-12/10	-	12/02-01/28	11/11-12/10	10/28-01/28	12/02-01/28	-	10/07-11/05	-
1973	10/01-11/05	-	-	09/29-11/04	-	10/27-01/27	11/10-12/09	-	12/01-01/27	11/10-12/09	10/27-01/27	12/01-01/27	-	10/13-11/11	-
1974	10/01-11/05	-	-	09/28-11/03	-	10/26-01/26	11/09-12/08	-	11/30-01/26	11/09-12/08	10/26-01/26	11/30-01/26	-	10/12-11/10	-
1975	10/04-11/08	-	-	10/04-11/09	-	10/25-01/25	11/08-12/07	-	11/29-01/25	11/08-12/07	10/25-01/25	11/29-01/25	-	10/11-11/09	-
1976	10/02-11/06	-	-	10/02-11/07	-	10/30-01/30	11/06-12/05	-	11/27-01/23	11/06-12/05	10/30-01/30	12/04-01/30	-	10/09-11/07	-
1977	10/01-11/06	-	-	10/01-11/06	-	10/29-01/29	09/07-09/11	-	11/26-01/22	09/07-09/11	11/01-01/31	12/05-01/31	-	10/08-11/06	-
1978	09/30-11/05	-	-	09/30-11/05	-	10/28-01/28	09/07-09/11	-	11/25-01/21	09/07-09/11	10/31-01/31	12/05-01/31	-	10/07-11/05	-
1979	10/13-11/18	-	-	09/29-11/04	-	10/27-01/27	09/07-09/11	-	11/24-01/20	09/07-09/11	10/30-01/30	12/04-01/30	-	10/13-11/18	-
1980	10/11-11/16	-	-	10/04-11/09	-	10/30-01/31	09/06-09/14	09/06-09/10	11/22-01/18	09/20-09/28	10/31-01/31	12/05-01/31	-	10/11-11/16	-
1981	10/10-11/15	-	-	10/03-11/08	-	10/31-01/31	09/05-09/20	09/05-09/13	11/22-01/18	09/20-09/28	10/31-01/31	12/05-01/31	-	10/03-11/08	-
1982	10/02-11/28	-	-	10/02-11/28	-	10/31-01/31	09/04-09/19	09/04-09/12	10/23-01/23	10/02-11/11	10/30-01/30	12/04-01/30	-	09/25-11/21	-
1983	10/01-11/27	-	-	11/01-11/27	11/01-11/27	10/29-01/28	09/10-11/06	09/10-09/30	10/22-01/22	10/01-11/06	11/12-02/12	12/03-02/12	01/14-02/12	09/24-11/20	-
1984	09/29-11/25	-	-	09/29-11/25	11/01-11/25	10/27-01/27	09/08-11/04	09/08-09/28	10/13-01/13	09/29-11/04	11/10-02/10	12/01-02/10	01/12-02/10	09/22-11/18	-
1985	09/28-11/24	-	-	09/28-11/24	11/01-11/24	10/26-01/26	09/07-11/03	09/07-09/27	10/12-01/12	09/28-11/03	11/09-02/09	11/30-02/09	01/11-02/09	09/21-11/17	-
1986	10/04-11/30	-	-	10/04-11/30	11/01-11/30	10/25-01/25	09/06-11/02	09/06-10/03	10/11-01/11	09/28-11/02	11/08-02/08	11/29-02/08	01/03-02/08	09/20-11/16	-
1987	10/03-11/29	-	-	10/03-11/29	10/03-11/29	10/24-01/24	09/05-11/01	09/05-10/02	10/10-01/17	09/26-11/01	11/14-02/14	11/28-02/07	01/02-02/07	09/19-11/15	-
1988	10/01-11/27	-	-	10/01-11/27	10/01-11/27	10/22-01/22	09/10-11/06	09/10-09/30	10/22-01/22	09/24-10/30	11/12-02/12	11/26-02/05	01/07-02/12	09/17-11/13	-
1989	09/30-11/26	-	-	09/30-11/26	09/30-11/26	10/21-01/21	09/09-11/05	09/09-09/29	10/21-01/21	09/30-11/05	11/11-02/11	12/02-02/11	01/06-02/11	09/16-11/12	-
1990	09/29-11/25	-	-	09/29-11/25	09/29-11/25	10/20-01/20	09/08-11/04	09/08-10/14	10/20-01/20	09/29-11/04	11/10-02/10	12/01-02/10	01/05-02/10	09/15-11/11	-
1991	09/28-11/24	-	-	09/28-11/24	09/28-11/24	10/19-01/19	09/07-11/03	09/07-10/13	10/19-01/19	09/28-11/03	11/09-02/09	12/07-02/09	01/04-02/09	09/15-11/11	-
1992	10/03-11/29	-	-	09/26-11/22	09/26-11/22	10/17-01/17	09/05-11/01	09/05-10/11	10/17-01/17	09/26-11/01	11/14-02/14	12/05-02/14	01/02-02/07	09/15-11/11	-
1993	10/02-11/28	11/06-01/02	-	09/25-11/21	09/25-11/21	10/16-01/16	09/11-11/07	09/11-11/07	10/16-01/16	09/25-10/31	11/13-02/13	12/04-02/13	01/08-02/13	09/15-11/11	-
1994	10/01-11/27	11/05-01/01	-	09/24-11/20	09/24-11/20	10/15-01/15	09/10-11/06	09/10-11/06	10/15-01/15	09/24-10/30	11/12-02/12	12/03-02/12	01/07-02/12	09/15-11/11	-
1995	09/30-11/26	11/04-12/31	-	09/23-11/19	09/23-11/19	10/31-01/31	09/09-11/05	09/09-11/05	10/22-01/18	09/23-11/19	11/11-02/11	12/02-02/11	01/06-02/11	09/14-11/10	-

KS¹ Central Zone: East of the West Zone Boundary to the line of OK/KS state line headed north on I-35 to I-135, I-70 to US 81 to the NE state line.

KS² West Zone: KS/NE State Line south along US 283, KS road 24, KS -18 to US 183 to KS - 1 to the KS/OK state line.

MT¹ Central Flyway portion of MT, except that area south of I-90 and west of the Bighorn River and Sheridan Co.

MT² Sheridan County, MT.

Table 4 (continued)

Year	CO	KS Central Zone ¹	KS West Zone ²	MT ¹	MT ²	NM	ND Area 1	ND Area 2	OK	SD	TX Area A	TX Area B	TX Area C	WY	MN
1996	10/05-12/01	11/02-12/29	-	09/28-11/24	09/28-11/24	10/31-01/31	09/07-11/03	09/07-11/03	10/26-01/26	09/28-11/24	11/09-02/09	11/30-02/09	01/04-02/09	09/14-11/10	-
1997	10/04-11/30	11/01-12/28	-	10/04-11/30	10/04-11/30	10/31-01/31	09/06-11/02	09/06-11/02	10/25-01/25	09/27-11/23	11/08-02/08	11/29-02/08	01/03-02/08	09/13-11/09	-
1998	10/03-11/29	11/07-01/03	-	10/03-11/29	09/12-09/20	10/31-01/31	09/05-11/01	09/05-11/01	10/24-01/24	09/26-11/22	11/07-02/07	11/28-02/07	01/02-02/07	09/12-11/08	-
1999	10/02-11/28	11/06-01/02	-	10/02-11/28	09/11-09/19	10/30-01/30	09/11-11/07	09/11-11/07	10/30-01/30	09/25-11/21	11/13-02/13	12/04-02/13	01/08-02/13	09/11-11/07	-
2000	10/07-12/03	11/04-12/31	-	09/30-11/26	09/09-09/17	10/31-01/31	09/16-11/12	09/16-11/12	11/04-02/04	09/23-11/19	11/11-02/11	12/02-02/11	12/30-02/04	09/09-11/05	-
2001	10/07-12/03	11/03-12/30	-	09/29-11/25	09/08-09/16	10/31-01/31	09/15-11/11	09/15-10/21	11/03-02/03	09/22-11/18	11/10-02/10	12/01-02/10	12/29-01/20	09/15-11/11	-
2002	10/05-12/01	11/02-12/29	-	09/28-11/24	09/07-09/15	10/31-01/31	09/21-11/17	09/21-10/27	11/09-02/09	09/21-11/17	11/09-02/09	11/30-02/09	12/21-01/19	09/14-11/10	-
2003	10/04-11/30	11/01-12/28	-	09/27-11/23	09/06-09/14	10/31-01/31	09/20-11/16	09/20-10/26	10/25-01/25	09/27-11/23	11/01-02/01	11/22-02/01	12/20-01/18	09/13-11/09	-
2004	10/02-11/28	11/06-01/02	-	09/25-11/21	09/11-09/19	10/31-01/31	09/18-11/14	09/18-10/24	10/30-01/30	09/25-11/21	11/06-02/01	11/27-02/01	12/18-01/16	09/18-11/14	-
2005	10/01-11/27	11/09-01/05	-	09/24-11/20	09/10-09/18	10/31-01/31	09/17-11/13	09/17-10/23	10/29-01/29	09/24-11/20	11/05-02/05	11/26-02/05	12/24-01/29	09/17-11/13	-
2006	09/30-11/26	11/08-01/04	-	09/23-11/19	09/09-09/17	10/31-01/31	09/16-11/12	09/16-10/22	10/28-01/28	09/23-11/19	11/04-02/04	11/24-02/04	12/23-01/28	09/16-11/12	-
2007	10/02-12/02	11/07-01/03	-	09/22-11/18	09/08-09/16	10/31-01/31	09/15-11/11	09/15-10/21	10/27-01/27	09/22-11/18	11/04-02/04	11/24-02/04	12/23-01/28	09/15-11/11	-
2008	10/04-11/30	11/05-01/01	-	09/27-11/23	09/06-09/21	10/31-01/31	09/20-11/16	09/20-10/26	10/25-01/25	09/27-11/23	11/08-02/08	11/28-02/08	12/20-01/25	09/13-11/09	-
2009	10/03-11/29	11/11-01/07	-	09/26-11/22	09/05-09/20	10/31-01/31	09/19-11/15	09/19-10/25	10/24-01/24	09/26-11/22	11/07-02/07	11/27-02/07	12/19-01/24	09/19-11/15	-
2010	10/02-11/28	11/10-01/06	-	09/25-11/21	09/11-09/26	10/31-01/31	09/18-11/14	09/18-10/24	10/23-01/23	09/25-11/21	11/06-02/06	11/26-02/06	12/18-01/23	09/18-11/14	09/04-10/10
2011	10/01-11/27	11/09-01/05	-	09/24-11/20	09/10-09/25	10/31-01/31	09/17-11/13	09/17-10/23	10/22-01/22	09/24-11/20	11/05-02/05	11/25-02/05	12/24-01/29	09/17-11/13	09/03-10/09
2012	09/29-11/25	11/07-01/03	-	09/29-11/25	09/8-09/30	10/31-01/31	09/15-11/11	09/15-10/21	10/20-01/20	09/22-11/18	11/03-02/03	11/23-02/03	12/22-01/27	09/15-11/11	09/15-10/21
2013	10/05-12/01	11/06-01/02	-	09/28-11/24	09/07-09/29	10/31-01/31	09/14-11/10	09/14-11/10	10/19-01/19	09/28-11/24	11/02-02/02	11/22-02/02	12/21-01/26	09/14-11/10	09/14-10/20
2014	10/04-11/30	11/05-01/01	-	10/04-11/30	09/13-10/05	10/31-01/31	09/14-11/10	09/14-11/10	10/18-01/18	09/27-11/23	11/01-02/01	11/21-02/01	12/20-01/25	09/13-11/09	09/13-10/19
2015	10/03-11/29	11/11-01/07	-	10/03-11/29	09/12-10/04	10/31-01/31	09/19-11/15	09/19-11/15	10/24-01/24	09/26-11/22	10/31-01/31	11/20-01/31	12/19-01/24	09/19-11/15	09/12-10/18
2016	10/01-11/27	11/09-01/05	-	10/01-11/27	09/10-10/02	10/29-01/29	09/17-11/13	09/17-11/13	10/22-01/22	09/24-11/20	10/29-01/29	11/18-01/29	12/17-01/22	09/17-11/13	09/10-10/16
2017	09/30-11/26	11/08-01/04	-	09/30-11/26	09/09-10/08	10/28-01/28	09/16-11/12	09/16-11/12	10/21-01/21	09/23-11/19	10/28-01/28	11/24-01/28	12/16-01/21	09/16-11/12	09/16-10/22
2018	09/29-11/25	11/07-01/03	-	09/29-11/25	09/01-10/28	10/27/01/27	09/15-11/11	09/15-11/11	10/20-01/20	09/22-11/18	10/27-01/27	11/23-01/27	12/15-01/20	09/15-11/11	09/15-10/21
2019	10/05-12/01	11/06-01/02	-	09/28-11/24	09/01-10/27	10/26-01/26	09/14-11/10	09/14-11/10	10/26-01/26	09/28-11/24	10/26-01/26	11/22-01/26	12/14-01/19	09/14-11/10	09/14-10/20
2020	10/03-11/29	11/11-01/07	10/17-12/13	10/03-11/29	09/01-10/30	10/24-01/24	09/19-11/15	09/19-11/15	10/24-01/24	09/26-11/22	10/31-01/31	11/27-01/31	12/19-01/24	09/12-11/08	09/19-10/25
2021	10/02-11/28	11/10-01/06	10/16-12/12	10/02-11/28	09/01-10/30	10/30-01/30	09/18-11/14	09/18-11/14	10/23-01/23	09/25-11/21	10/30-01/30	11/26-01/30	12/18/01/23	09/11-11/07	09/18-10/24
2022	10/01-11/27	11/09-01/05	10/15-12/11	10/01-11/27	09/01-10/30	10/29-01/29	09/17-11/13	09/17-11/13	10/22-01/22	09/24-11/20	10/29-01/29	11/25-01/29	12/17-01/22	09/10-11/06	09/17-10/23

KS¹ Central Zone: East of the West Zone Boundary to the line of OK/KS state line headed north on I-35 to I-135, I-70 to US 81 to the NE state line.

KS² West Zone: KS/NE State Line south along US 283, KS road 24, KS -18 to US 183 to KS - 1 to the KS/OK state line.

MT¹ Central Flyway portion of MT, except that area south of I-90 and west of the Bighorn River and Sheridan Co.

MT² Sheridan County, MT.

Table 5A. Estimated retrieved harvests of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes in the Central Flyway states, and states outside the Central Flyway (AZ, NM, AK, MN).

Year	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	Central Flyway	AZ ^d	NM ^d	AK ^{b,c}	MN ^e	Outside Total	U.S. Total
1975	91		16	911	2,122	142	86	6,123	6	9,497			1,094	1,094	10,591	
1976	106		29	858	52	200	12	6,122	14	7,393			637	637	8,030	
1977	39		18	1,456	4,078	410	47	6,094	9	12,151			471	471	12,622	
1978	106		36	1,089	2,777	389	19	5,720	10	10,146			239	239	10,385	
1979	129		14	1,170	2,733	397	19	5,917	0	10,379			517	517	10,896	
1980	68		16	1,019	2,245	363	130	6,305	6	10,152			809	809	10,961	
1981	92		11	907	2,395	397	78	6,245	9	10,134	20		383	403	10,537	
1982	49		21	335	2,469	535	212	4,295	0	7,916	62		1,160	1,222	9,138	
1983	70		28	354	6,471	373	177	5,471	15	12,959	17		1,540	1,557	14,516	
1984	85		15	414	4,367	433	139	5,811	7	11,271	23		1,986	2,009	13,280	
1985	82		7	334	4,650	416	101	7,184	2	12,776	48		1,197	1,245	14,021	
1986	33		1	250	6,563	392	99	5,149	0	12,487	108	184	539	831	13,318	
1987	86		15	159	5,334	957	99	6,117	3	12,770	127	318	836	1,281	14,051	
1988	68		18	372	3,815	1,061	100	7,330	8	12,772	172	127	1,241	1,540	14,312	
1989	25		33	319	4,656	1,003	194	7,400	9	13,639	126	138	545	809	14,448	
1990	87		44	377	6,804	698	165	9,865	1	18,041	114	259	918	1,291	19,332	
1991	224		31	593	4,580	604	128	6,916	3	13,079	172	235	677	1,084	14,163	
1992	84		103	505	4,654	478	141	6,455	13	12,433	139	54	640	833	13,266	
1993	112	602	95	506	6,985	826	110	8,769	0	18,005	113	178	201	492	18,497	
1994	143	767	56	357	6,235	1,167	239	7,233	4	16,201	86	153	648	887	17,088	
1995	208	990	156	673	7,017	1,091	170	10,322	1	20,628	124	111	812	1,047	21,675	
1996	91	933	58	332	6,639	1,066	166	7,816	10	17,111	114	78	1,205	1,397	18,508	
1997	168	1,167	45	248	6,545	600	189	10,800	4	19,766	171	45	870	1,086	20,852	
1998	64	1,362	17	258	7,967	645	454	9,054	10	19,831	114	55	1,042	1,211	21,042	
1999	56	1,275	29	321	5,748	879	184	8,469	8	16,969	92	101	NA*	193	17,162	
2000	363	590	15	311	5,081	552	374	8,208	10	15,504	166	100	985	1,251	16,755	
2001	257	1,033	43	297	5,173	713	478	6,999	7	15,000	154	106	936	1,196	16,196	
2002	294	1,067	23	342	2,852	490	160	7,837	22	13,087	197	92	844	1,133	14,220	

^a Preliminary^b A proportion of the Alaskan harvest is composed of lesser sandhill cranes from the Pacific Coast Population^c Harvest data are from state harvest surveys for only the MCP portion of the state, except in 1977-81, 1986, 1991, and 1998-99 where federal MGS state totals are prorated by the long-term percent MC cranes; data from 2000 forward are MC portion from HIP.^d The MC harvest for AZ and NM represents MC sandhill cranes that were harvested in RMP areas and are not represented in the CF MC sandhill Crane Federal Harvest Survey^e Minnesota initiated a hunt in the NW portion of state.^g HIP sample frame from state was incomplete, so no estimate was calculated.

* No estimate is available.

Table 5A (continued)

Year	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	Central Flyway	AZ ^d	NM ^d	AK ^{b,c}	MN ^e	Outside Total	U.S. Total
2003 ^a	230	942	49	617	4,564	200	166	11,560	7	18,335	155	162	331		648	18,983
2004 ^a	92	856	54	350	3,967	441	67	8,715	4	14,546	192	167	435		794	15,340
2005 ^a	265	471	65	578	3,721	511	190	12,446	16	18,263	227	175	388		790	19,053
2006 ^a	96	1,341	12	682	3,906	538	202	10,834	20	17,631	201	245	314		760	18,391
2007 ^a	149	516	51	427	4,501	272	163	12,511	20	18,610	268	331	596		1,195	19,805
2008 ^a	32	453	73	483	4,179	493	83	17,169	24	22,989	138	329	1,249		1,716	24,705
2009 ^a	58	447	34	584	4,436	737	96	8,882	8	15,282	305	332	245		882	16,164
2010 ^a	115	293	95	432	4,752	940	91	12,069	25	18,812	253	421	1,204	830	2,708	21,520
2011 ^a	68	908	51	297	3,733	808	64	8,493	20	14,442	151	367	335	765	1,618	16,060
2012 ^a	77	437	30	388	3,019	401	185	10,309	41	14,887	300	341	1,360	407	2,408	17,295
2013 ^a	47	771	77	326	4,137	1,085	109	14,991	41	21,584	138	161	930	378	1,607	23,191
2014 ^a	41	176	114	269	2,924	390	85	11,740	37	15,776	151	123	1,123	247	1,644	17,420
2015 ^a	98	1,005	91	267	2,133	302	---f	8,283	28	12,207	311	132	---g	212	655	12,862
2016 ^a	102	873	111	660	2,507	538	183	18,196	83	23,253	292	404	1,036	287	2,019	25,272
2017 ^a	280	1,440	85	641	3,466	559	165	19,559	263	26,458	435	399	793	196	1,823	28,281
2018 ^a	102	1,127	73	701	3,424	718	119	22,526	33	28,823	587	284	705	129	1,705	30,528
2019 ^a	131	1,160	82	1,326	1,764	---	43	29,607	82	34,195	187	264	659	179	1,289	35,484
2020 ^a	229	1,718	95	1,520	2,998	8,974	146	55,871	182	71,733	651	671	1,409	472	3,203	74,936
2021 ^a	212	2,012	339	1,336	4,470	7,791	109	43,217	79	59,565	722	345	1,577	563	3,207	62,772
2022 ^a	371	631	237	1,721	3,465	3,164	75	45,419	233	55,316	736	269	794	863	2,662	57,978

^a Preliminary

^b A proportion of the Alaskan harvest is composed of lesser sandhill cranes from the Pacific Coast Population

^c Harvest data are from state harvest surveys for only the MCP portion of the state, except in 1977-81, 1986, 1991, and 1998-99 where federal MQS state totals are prorated by the long-term percent MC cranes; data from 2000 forward are MC portion from HIP.

^d The MC harvest for AZ and NM represents MC sandhill cranes that were harvested in RMP areas and are not represented in the CF MC sandhill Crane Federal Harvest Survey

^e Minnesota initiated a hunt in the NW portion of state.

^f All hunters put in stratum "did not hunt" or "no" in state HIP sample frame, so no estimate is available.

^g HIP sample frame from state was incomplete, so no estimate was calculated.

* No estimate is available.

Table 5B. Decadal and long-term annual averages of harvest of active Mid-Continent sandhill cranes in the Central Flyway states (CO, KS, MT, NM, ND, OK, SD, TX, and WY), states outside the Central Flyway (AZ, NM, AK, MN).

Years	CO	KS	MT	NM	ND	OK	SD	TX	WY	Central Flyway Total	AZ ^d	NM ^d	AK ^{b,c}	MN ^e	Outside Total	U.S. Total
1975-79	94		23	1,097	2,352	308	37	5,995	8	9,913			592		592	10,505
1980-89	66		17	446	4,297	593	133	6,131	6	11,688	78	192	1,024		1,171	12,858
1990-99	124	1,014	63	417	6,317	805	195	8,570	5	17,206	124	127	779		952	18,159
2000-09	184	772	42	467	4,238	495	198	10,516	14	16,925	200	204	632		1,037	17,961
2010-19	106	819	81	531	3,186	638	116	15,577	65	21,044	281	290	905	389	1,748	22,791
2020-21	271	1,454	224	1,526	3,644	6,643	110	48,169	165	62,492	703	428	1,260	633	3,024	65,516
1975-2021	127	912	59	597	4,231	982	145	12,134	30	18,868	211	223	836	425	1,273	20,141

Table 6. Estimated retrieved harvests of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes in Canada.

Year	AB	MB	SK	Total
1971	0	228	2,715	2,943
1972	0	113	2,030	2,143
1973	0	683	3,592	4,275
1974	0	58	6,641	6,699
1975	0	162	5,744	5,906
1976	0	868	1,767	2,635
1977	0	856	510	1,366
1978	0	1,111	421	1,532
1979	0	1,113	765	1,878
1980	0	1,412	5,688	7,100
1981	0	1,317	4,746	6,063
1982	0	1,191	3,794	4,985
1983	0	1,205	5,012	6,217
1984	0	1,210	5,197	6,407
1985	0	1,268	6,805	8,073
1986	0	1,577	8,463	10,040
1987	0	1,812	6,135	7,947
1988	0	1,698	5,394	7,092
1989	0	2,268	4,321	6,589
1990	0	1,848	5,351	7,199
1991	0	1,513	5,420	6,933
1992	0	1,476	5,242	6,718
1993	0	1,086	4,137	5,223
1994	0	1,224	4,925	6,149
1995	0	1,287	7,072	8,359
1996	0	1,519	6,058	7,577
1997	0	1,481	7,075	8,556
1998	0	1,557	8,640	10,197
1999	0	1,504	7,580	9,084
2000	0	1,473	9,082	10,555
2001	0	1,861	8,132	9,993
2002	0	2,043	7,105	9,148
2003	0	2,333	7,810	10,143
2004	0	2,595	8,951	11,546
2005	0	3,239	8,897	12,136
2006	0	3,549	8,366	11,915
2007	0	3,364	8,514	11,878
2008	0	2,862	8,959	11,821
2009	0	2,454	5,758	8,212
2010	0	2,659	8,021	10,680
2011	0	3,271	9,939	13,210
2012	0	3,294	8,746	12,040
2013	0	3,472	9,860	13,332
2014	0	3,629	11,782	15,411
2015	0	3,655	10,804	14,459
2016	0	3,739	10,499	14,238
2017	0	2,905	12,456	15,361
2018	0	3,120	11,210	14,330
2019	0	2,671	13,100	15,771
2020	969	2,065	5,233	7,298
2021	959	2,229	9,850	12,079
2022 ^a				

^a Estimates not available at the time the status report was completed.

Table 7A. Annual sport hunting mortality estimates for the Mid-Continent Population of sandhill cranes in North America.

Year	Central Flyway	Other Survey Area Total	Canada	Mexico ^b	Unretrieved No. America ^c	Total
1975	9,497	1,094	5,906	1,650	3,615	21,762
1976	7,393	637	2,635	1,067	2,252	13,983
1977	12,151	471	1,366	1,399	2,660	18,047
1978	10,146	239	1,532	1,192	2,453	15,561
1979	10,379	517	1,878	1,277	2,384	16,436
1980	10,152	809	7,100	1,806	3,683	23,550
1981	10,134	403	6,063	1,660	3,405	21,665
1982	7,916	1,222	4,985	1,412	2,924	18,459
1983	12,959	1,557	6,217	2,073	4,189	26,996
1984	11,271	2,009	6,407	1,969	3,967	25,623
1985	12,776	1,245	8,073	2,209	4,165	28,469
1986	12,487	831	10,040	2,336	4,511	30,205
1987	12,770	1,281	7,947	2,200	3,996	28,193
1988	12,772	1,540	7,092	2,140	3,782	27,327
1989	13,639	809	6,589	2,104	3,981	27,122
1990	18,041	1,291	7,199	2,653	4,748	33,932
1991	13,079	1,084	6,933	2,110	3,793	26,999
1992	12,433	833	6,718	1,998	3,369	25,351
1993	18,005	492	5,223	2,372	3,869	29,961
1994	16,201	887	6,149	2,324	3,548	29,109
1995	20,628	1,047	8,359	3,003	4,718	37,755
1996	17,111	1,397	7,577	2,609	4,328	33,021
1997	19,766	1,086	8,556	2,941	4,796	37,144
1998	19,831	1,211	10,197	3,124	5,048	39,411
1999	16,969	193 ^d	9,084	2,625	4,097	32,968
2000	15,504	1,251	10,555	2,731	4,336	34,377
2001	15,000	1,196	9,993	2,619	4,279	33,086
2002	13,087	1,133	9,148	2,337	3,711	29,415
2003 ^a	18,335	648	10,143	2,913	4,369	36,407
2004 ^a	14,546	794	11,546	2,689	4,277	33,851
2005 ^a	18,263	790	12,136	3,119	5,009	39,317
2006 ^a	17,631	760	11,915	3,031	5,193	38,530
2007 ^a	18,610	1,195	11,878	3,168	4,924	39,776
2008 ^a	22,989	1,716	11,821	3,653	4,956	45,135
2009 ^a	15,282	882	8,212	2,438	3,990	30,804
2010 ^a	18,812	2,708	10,680	3,220	5,137	40,557
2011 ^a	14,442	1,618	13,210	2,927	4,617	36,814
2012 ^a	14,887	2,408	12,040	2,934	4,936	37,205
2013 ^a	21,584	1,607	13,332	3,652	4,947	45,123
2014 ^a	15,776	1,644	15,411	3,283	5,093	41,207
2015 ^{a,e}	12,207	655	14,459	2,732	4,500	34,553
2016 ^a	23,253	2,019	14,238	3,951	5,062	48,523
2017 ^a	26,458	1,823	15,361	4,364	5,950	53,956
2018 ^a	28,823	1,705	14,330	4,486	5,498	54,842
2019 ^a	34,195	1,289	15,771	5,126	5,971	62,352
2020 ^a	71,733	3,203	7,298	8,223	6,890	97,347
2021 ^a	59,565	3,207	12,079	7,485	6,995	89,331
2022 ^{a,f}	56,178	2,662				

^a Preliminary^b Unknown harvests (Mexico) were assumed to be 10% of harvests in the U.S. and Canada.^c Unretrieved kill as reported by hunters is used for the Central Flyway; for the remainder of harvest areas, it is assumed to be 20% of retrieved harvests.^d There is no estimate available for AK in that year.^e Estimates (except Canada) biased low because of HIP sampling issues that led to estimates of zero harvest in SD and AK.^f Estimates for Canada, Mexico, North America, and Total not calculated because data for Canada was not available.

Table 7B. Decadal and long-term annual averages of annual sport hunting mortality estimates for the Mid-Continent Population of sandhill cranes in North America.

Year	Central Flyway	Other Survey Area Total	Canada	Mexico	Unretrieved No. America	Total
1975-79	9,913	592	2,663	1,317	2,673	17,158
1980-89	11,688	1,171	7,051	1,991	3,860	25,761
1990-99	17,206	1,036	7,600	2,576	4,231	32,565
2000-09	16,925	1,037	10,735	2,870	4,504	36,070
2010-19	21,044	1,748	13,883	3,667	5,171	45,513
2020-22	62,492	3,024				
1975-2022	18,868	1,296	9,051	2,837	4,360	35,565

Table 8. Spring population indices for Rocky Mountain sandhill cranes in the San Luis Valley, Colorado, 1984-96.

Year	Raw Count	Adjusted for Estimation Bias ^a	Adjusted by Removal of Lesser sandhill Cranes ^b	Other Areas	Index	Survey Condition
1984	10,962	14,488	13,562	550	14,112	POOR
1985	18,393	21,773	20,382	0	20,382	GOOD
1986	14,031	14,031	13,135	20	13,155	POOR
1987	13,561	15,661	14,660	0	14,660	POOR
1988	17,510	17,510	16,381	22	16,403	POOR
1989	17,302	18,389	17,004	0	17,004	GOOD
1990	20,851	24,593	21,221	275	21,496	GOOD
1991	19,990	18,405	16,045	175	16,220	GOOD
1992	23,516	23,516	19,999	9	20,008	GROUND
1993	17,576	17,576	16,478	1,260	17,738	POOR
1994	17,229	16,036	15,063	203	15,266	FAIR
1995	25,276	23,390	20,229	0	20,229	GOOD
1996	23,019	26,379	22,737	1,010	23,747	GOOD

^a Raw estimate adjusted by photography for estimation bias.

^b Population estimate adjusted to remove the number of lesser sandhill cranes (non-RMP cranes).

Table 9. Fall pre-migration population indices for Rocky Mountain sandhill cranes.

Year	UT	CO	ID	WY	MT	TOTAL	3-Year AVG
1987	1,578	1,443	10,686	2,327	1,447	17,481	
1992	2,810	3,181	5,801	2,248	5,264	19,304	
1995	1,528	2,284	6,864	1,671	3,681	16,028	
1996	1,849	1,255	8,334	2,526	2,974	16,938	
1997 ^{a,b}	2,450	1,604	8,132	2,255	3,595	18,036	17,001
1998	2,185	1,273	8,067	3,162	3,415	18,102	17,692
1999	2,292	1,102	8,761	4,205	3,141	19,501	18,546
2000	2,416	749	9,337	3,890	3,598	19,990	19,198
2001	1,522	666	7,160	2,626	4,585	16,559	18,683
2002	1,869	1,355	7,698	3,038	4,843	18,803	18,451
2003	2,546	745	7,822	3,446	4,964	19,523	18,295
2004	2,239	1,410	7,152	3,072	4,637	18,510	18,945
2005	2,646	1,052	7,668	3,911	5,588	20,865	19,633
2006 ^c						NS	19,633
2007 ^d	2,401	1,743	8,262	3,907	6,509	22,822	20,732
2008 ^e	3,708	1,080	6,123	3,826	6,419	21,156	21,614
2009	2,283	1,162	6,934	3,613	6,329	20,321	21,433
2010	3,242	985	5,776	3,726	7,335	21,064	20,847
2011	1,498	1,347	5,029	2,978	6,642	17,494	19,626
2012	2,109	413	3,432	3,587	5,876	15,417	17,992
2013	2,732	1,594	5,228	3,588	7,218	20,360	17,757
2014	2,783	1,258	6,064	3,008	6,555	19,668	18,482
2015	3,698	1,089	6,454	3,596	9,493	24,330	21,453
2016 ^f	3,298	1,135	5,445	4,879	7,507	22,264	22,087
2017	2,994	1,658	4,066	3,725	7,149	19,592	22,062
2018	2,770	1,908	4,469	5,101	7,553	21,801	21,219
2019	3,106	1,879	4,428	4,366	7,511	21,290	20,894
2020	3,222	1,446	5,096	6,608	9,264	25,636	22,909
2021	3,889	3,141	3,091	6,059	7,783	23,963	23,630
2022	2,330	1,526	3,957	3,975	6,844	18,632	22,744

^a Incomplete survey efforts in years prior might have resulted in lower estimates; the official count begins in 1997.

^b In October 1997, a special survey was also conducted in the SLV, Colorado and other areas, which resulted in a total of 27,090 Rocky Mountain and Mid-Continent cranes being counted.

^c In 2006, the survey was not conducted due to mechanical issues with the survey plane. The 3-yr Avg for 2006 is calculated using 2003-05.

^d The 3-yr average for 2007 was calculated using 2004, 2005, and 2007 because there was no survey in 2006.

^e The 3-yr average for 2008 was calculated using 2005, 2007, and 2008 because there was no survey in 2006.

^f Beginning 1n 2016 Wyoming added six new survey areas as allowed in the management plan.

Table 10A. Estimated retrieved harvests of the Rocky Mountain Population of sandhill cranes.

Year	UT	NM	AZ	WY	MT	ID	Total
1981			20				20
1982			9	143			152
1983			35	154			189
1984			33	101			134
1985			40	138			178
1986			23	195			218
1987			60	190			250
1988		310	40	128			478
1989	54	483	51	125			713
1990	35	79	9	58			181
1991	48	47	44	101			240
1992	0	147	39	168	42		396
1993	28	297	61	115	45		546
1994	34	416	27	150	40		667
1995	27	270	33	77	41		448
1996	32	236	27	84	49	20	448
1997	30	114	22	82	62	136	446
1998	34	180	37	93	59	135	538
1999	54	198	21	124	71	190	658 ^a
2000	69	257	37	163	91	193	810 ^b
2001	77	288	26	142	87	278	898
2002	60	164	42	132	51	194	643
2003	57	169	34	72	50	146	528
2004	53	189	35	124	51	142	594
2005	62	236	50	116	49	189	702
2006	87	327	10	194	54	235	907
2007	103	276	43	138	73	187	820
2008	101	379	24	162	85	185	936
2009	149	603	67	195	124	254	1,392
2010	190	547	56	182	108	253	1,336
2011 ^c	149	522	37	166	90	293	1,257
2012 ^c	91	417	85	134	129	275	1,131
2013 ^c	95	241	38	74	94	135	677
2014	73	183	20	94	121	134	625
2015	86	145	67	104	137	166	705
2016	72	453	74	158	140	258	1,155
2017	189	395	68	193	150	198	1,193
2018	203	623	102	189	154	253	1,524
2019	130	456	38	141	179	166	1,110
2020	137	160	61	114	151	172	795
2021	200	572	63	194	129	277	1,435
2022	223	656	69	227	138	273	1,586

^a RMP sandhill cranes (40) were also taken as part of research project in the San Luis Valley, CO

^b RMP sandhill cranes (20) were also taken as part of research project in the San Luis Valley, CO

^c Harvest includes crippling loss.

Table 10B. Decadal and long-term annual averages of retrieved harvests of the Rocky Mountain Population of sandhill cranes.

Years	UT	NM	AZ	WY	MT	ID	Total
1981-89		397	35	147			259
1990-99	32	198	32	105	51	120	434
2000-09	82	289	37	144	72	200	824
2010-19	128	398	59	144	130	213	1,071
2020-22	187	463	64	178	139	241	1,272
1981-2022	89	315	42	137	92	198	705

Table 11. Winter counts of Lower Colorado River Valley Population of sandhill cranes in Arizona and California.

Year	Cibola National Wildlife Refuge	Colorado River Indian Tribe	Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge	Gila River	Total	3-Year AVG
1998	775	596	351	178	1,900	
1999	1,200	511	325	163	2,199	
2000	820	1,259	235	252	2,566	2,222
2001	961	952	350	134	2,397	2,387
2002	1,003	168	417	52	1,640	2,201
2003	1,200	455	430	0	2,085	2,041
2004	1,341	354	521	312	2,528	2,084
2005	1,513	457	476	191	2,637	2,417
2006	1,141	673	493	360	2,667	2,611
2007	2,322	809	295	450	3,876	3,060
2008 ^a	115	NS	687	413	1,215	3,060
2009 ^b	289	1,216	603	293	2,401	2,981
2010 ^c	266	729	904	365	2,264	2,847
2011	553	636	899	327	2,415	2,360
2012	1,097	474	924	151	2,646	2,442
2013	1,629	344	671	434	3,078	2,713
2014	1,981	591	641	140	3,353	3,026
2015	676	720	688	452	2,536	2,989
2016	631	631	862	292	2,416	2,768
2017	940	636	819	321	2,716	2,556
2018	1,076	330	775	215	2,396	2,509
2019	1,171	192	1,062	497	2,922	2,678
2020	1,497	20	1,105	319	2,941	2,753
2021	4,812	0	954	117	5,883	3,915
2022	941	1,248	1,226	372	3,787	4,204
2023	864	2186	1532	137	4,719	4,796

NS = No survey was conducted.

^a In 2008, the survey was not complete. The 3-YR average for that year was calculated using 2005-07.

^b In 2009, the 3-YR average was calculated with 2006, 2007 and 2009 due to an incomplete survey in 2008.

^c In 2010, the 3-YR average was calculated with 2007, 2009, and 2010 due to an incomplete survey in 2008.

Table 12. Fall abundance index for Eastern Population of sandhill cranes.

Year	Abundance	3-YR Average
1979	14,385	
1980	15,808	
1981	11,943	14,045
1982	13,879	13,877
1983	16,148	13,990
1984	16,363	15,463
1985	16,170	16,227
1986	17,043	16,525
1987	22,342	18,518
1988	26,086	21,824
1989	22,785	23,738
1990	23,792	24,221
1991	24,685	23,754
1992	26,656	25,044
1993	26,187	25,843
1994	26,783	26,542
1995	33,774	28,915
1996	29,753	30,103
1997	27,641	30,389
1998	37,827	31,740
1999	33,583	33,017
2000	33,105	34,838
2001 ^a	NS	34,838
2002 ^b	31,575	32,754
2003 ^c	29,300	31,327
2004	28,822	29,899
2005	37,708	31,943
2006	37,529	34,686
2007	37,943	37,727
2008	44,110	39,861
2009	60,028	47,360
2010	49,647	51,262
2011	76,028	61,901
2012	86,989	70,888
2013	64,213	75,743
2014	82,694	77,965
2015	94,676	80,528
2016	70,858	82,743
2017	69,989	78,508
2018	97,073	79,307
2019	89,504	85,522
2020	94,961	93,846
2021 ^d	90,029	91,498
2022	107,164	97,385

NS = No survey conducted

^a In 2001, the survey was not conducted. The 3-YR average for that year was calculated using data from 1998-2000.

^b In 2002, the 3-YR average was calculated with 1999, 2000 and 2002 since the survey was not conducted in 2001.

^c In 2003, the 3-YR average was calculated with 2000, 2002 and 2003 since the survey was not conducted in 2001.

^d Illinois and Maryland began participating in the survey in 2021.

Table 13. Season dates (month/day) for the hunting of Eastern Population sandhill cranes.

Year	Kentucky	Tennessee	Alabama
2011	12/17-01/15	No Season	No Season
2012	12/15-01/13	No Season	No Season
2013	12/14-01/12	11/28-01/01	No Season
2014	12/13-01/11	11/22-11/23; 11/29-01/01	No Season
2015	12/12-01/10	11/28-11/29; 12/05-01/01	No Season
2016	12/17-01/15	12/03-01/12; 01-16-01/29	No Season
2017	12/16-01/14	12/02-01/28 ^a	No Season
2018	12/03-01/27	12/01-01/27 ^b	No Season
2019	12/02-01/26	12/07-01/27 ^c	12/03-01/05; 01/16-01/31
2020	12/07-01/31	12/05-01/31 ^d	12/04-01/03; 01/11-01/31
2021	12/07-01/31	12/04-01/30 ^d	12/02-01/09; 01/17-01/31
2022	12/07-01/31	12/03-01/31 ^d	12/03-01/08; 01/16-01/31

a In the Southeast Zone, the season was closed from 01/12-01/14.

b In the Southeast Zone, the season was closed from 01/18-01/20.

c In the Southeast Zone, the season was closed from 01/17-01/19.

d In the Southeast Zone, the season was closed from 01/15-01/17.

e In the Southeast Zone, the season was closed from 01/14-01/16.

Table 14. Estimated harvest and number of permits sold for Eastern Population sandhill cranes.

Year	KY Harvest	KY Tags Issued ^a	TN Harvest	TN Tags Issued ^a	AL Harvest	AL Tags Issued ^a	Total Harvest	Total Permits Issued
2011	50	534	No Season	No Season	No Season	No Season	50	534
2012	92	570	No Season	No Season	No Season	No Season	92	570
2013	87	570	350	1,200	No Season	No Season	437	1,770
2014	96	704	393	1,200	No Season	No Season	489	1,904
2015	75	694	161	1,200	No Season	No Season	236	1,894
2016	171	672	586	1,200	No Season	No Season	757	1,872
2017	119	660	830	2,319	No Season	No Season	949	2,979
2018	60	1,432	555	2,711	No Season	No Season	615	4,143
2019	96	1,237	746	2,958	291	1,200	1,133	5,395
2020	65	1,035	630	2,700	391	1,200	1,086	4,935
2021	117	1,029	484	2,500	234	1,200	835	4,729
2022	180	1,148	640	2,500	265	1,200	1,085	4,848
Average	101	857	538	1,999	295	1,200	607	2,793

^a Each tag allows a hunter to take one crane.

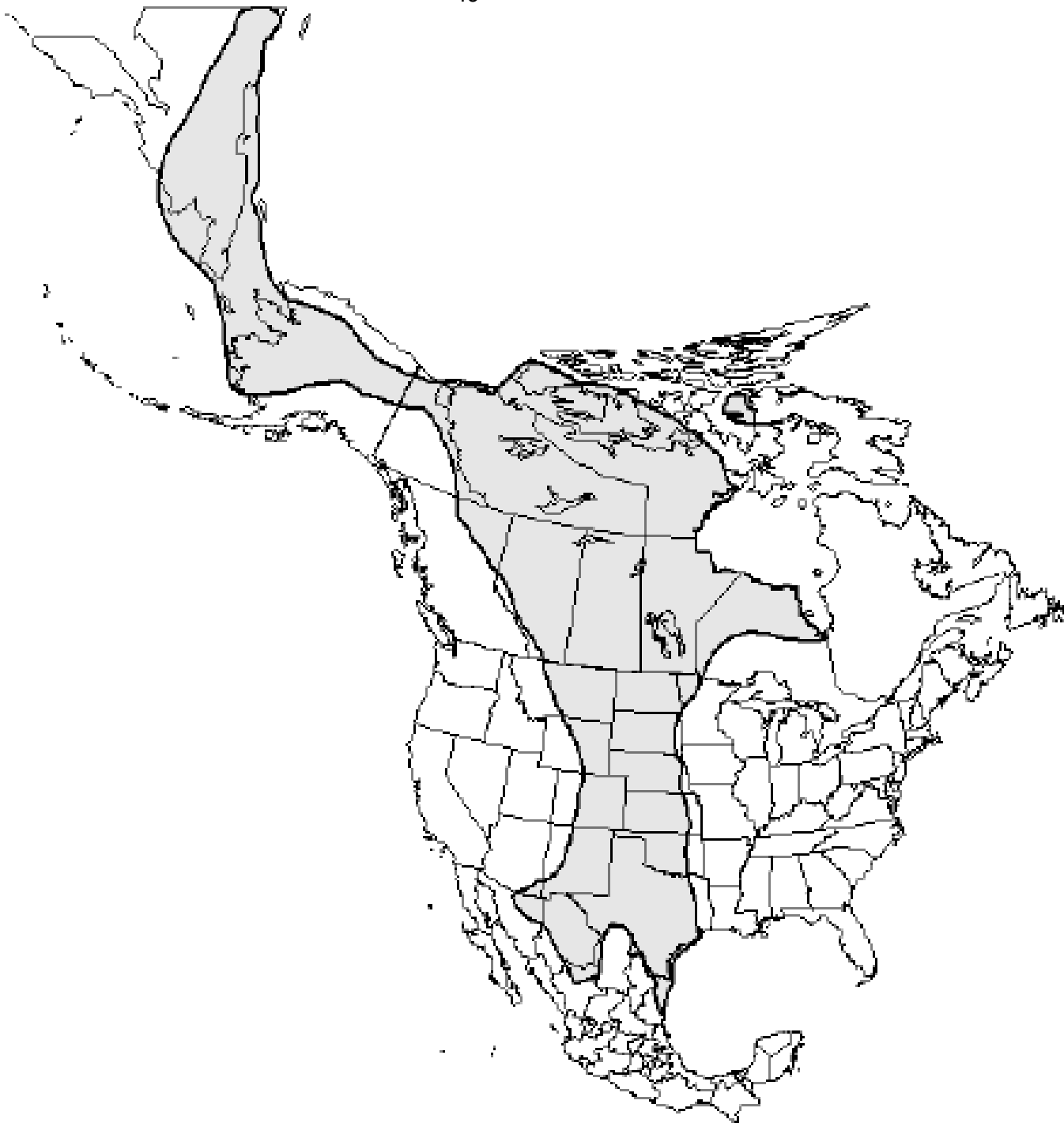


Figure 1. Primary wintering and breeding range and the approximate migration corridor of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes (based on figures in Tacha et al. 1994, Krapu et al. 2011).



Figure 2. Approximate range of the Rocky Mountain Population of Greater sandhill Cranes (Tacha et al. 1994, Drewien et al. 1996).

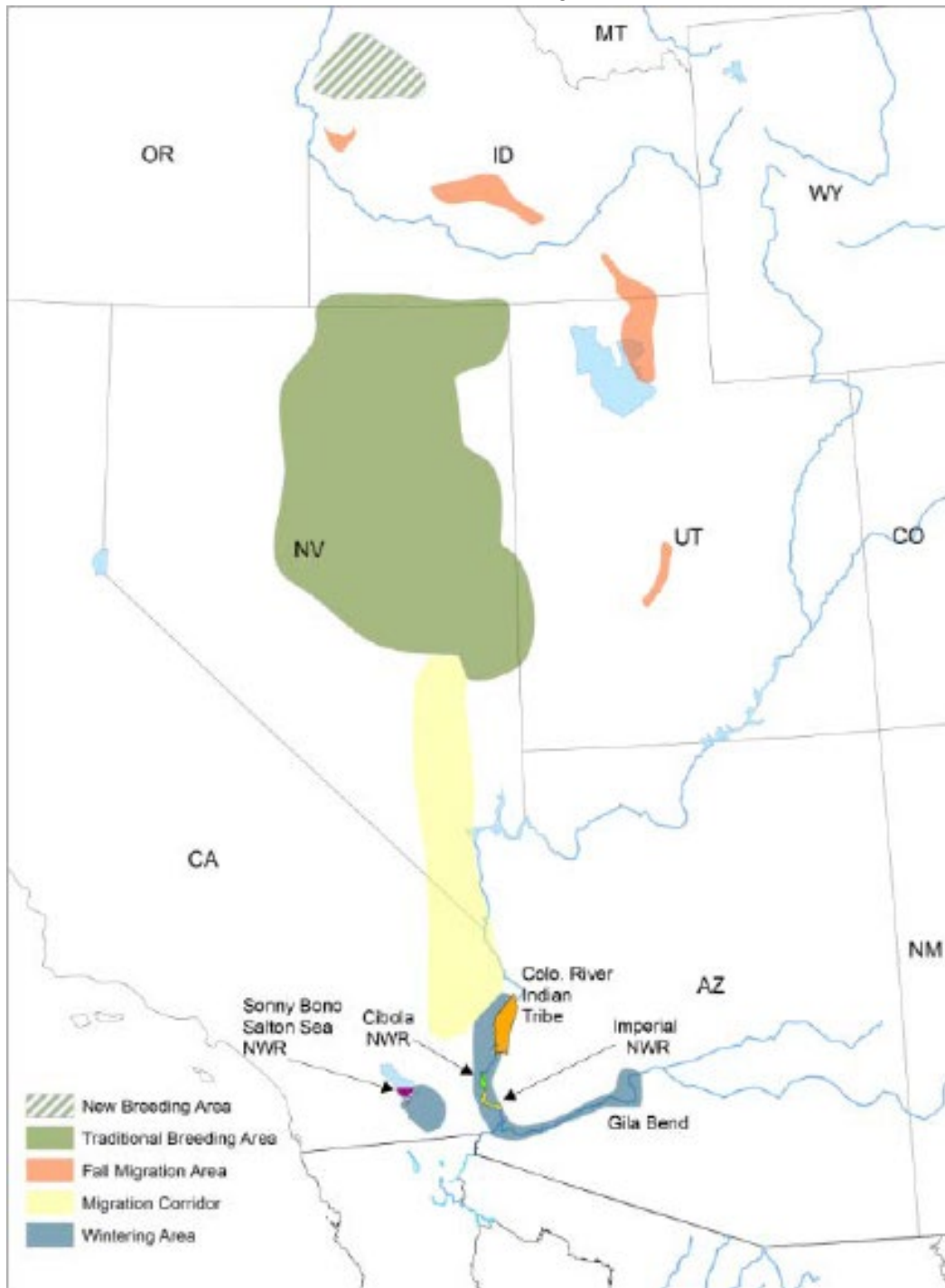


Figure 3. Approximate range of the Lower Colorado River Valley Population of Greater sandhill Cranes (based on Pacific Flyway Council [1995] and recent satellite telemetry information [D. Collins and K. Kruse, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, unpublished data]).

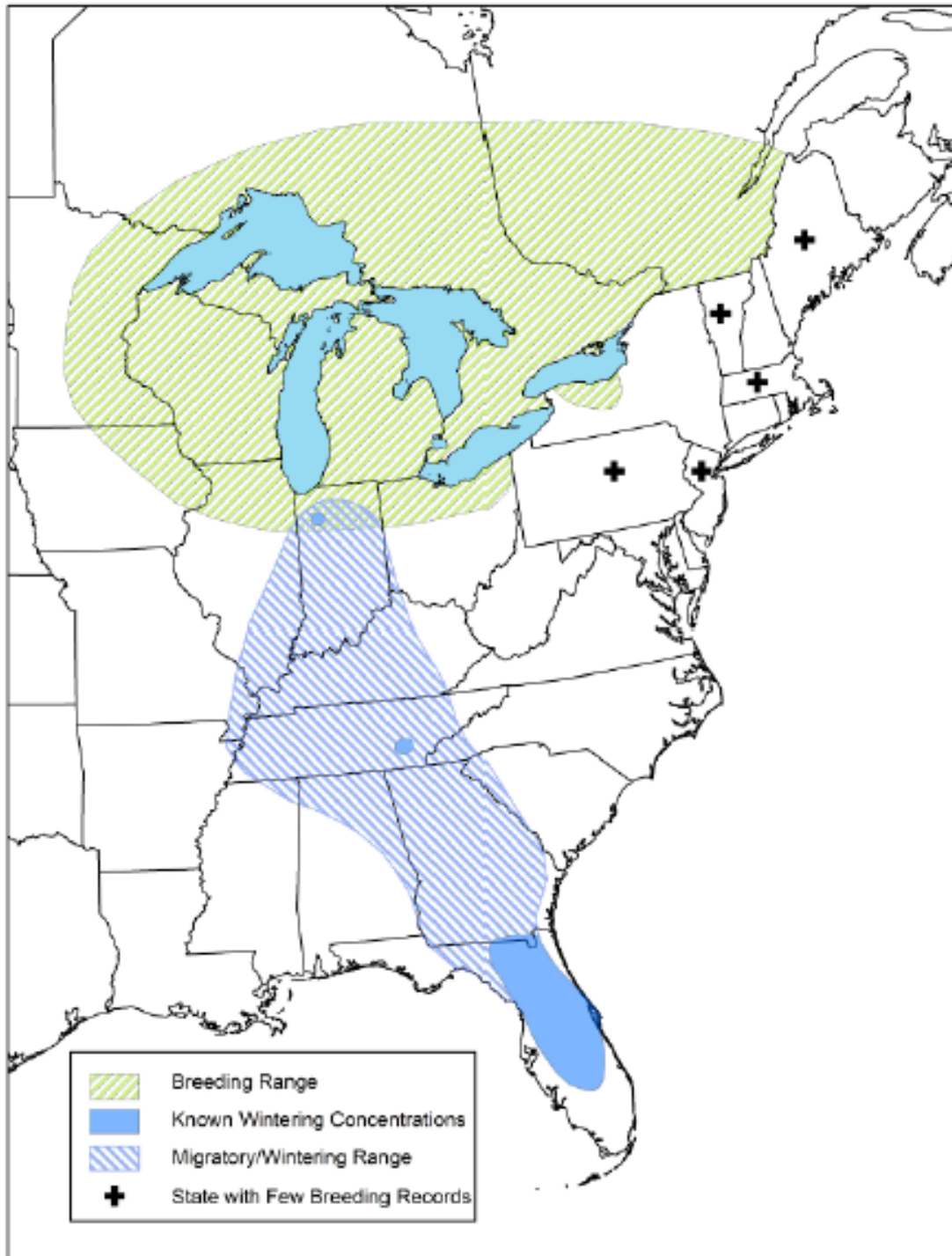


Figure 4. Approximate range of Eastern Population sandhill cranes based on various data sources including satellite telemetry data, breeding bird atlas records, and unpublished location information from knowledgeable individuals.

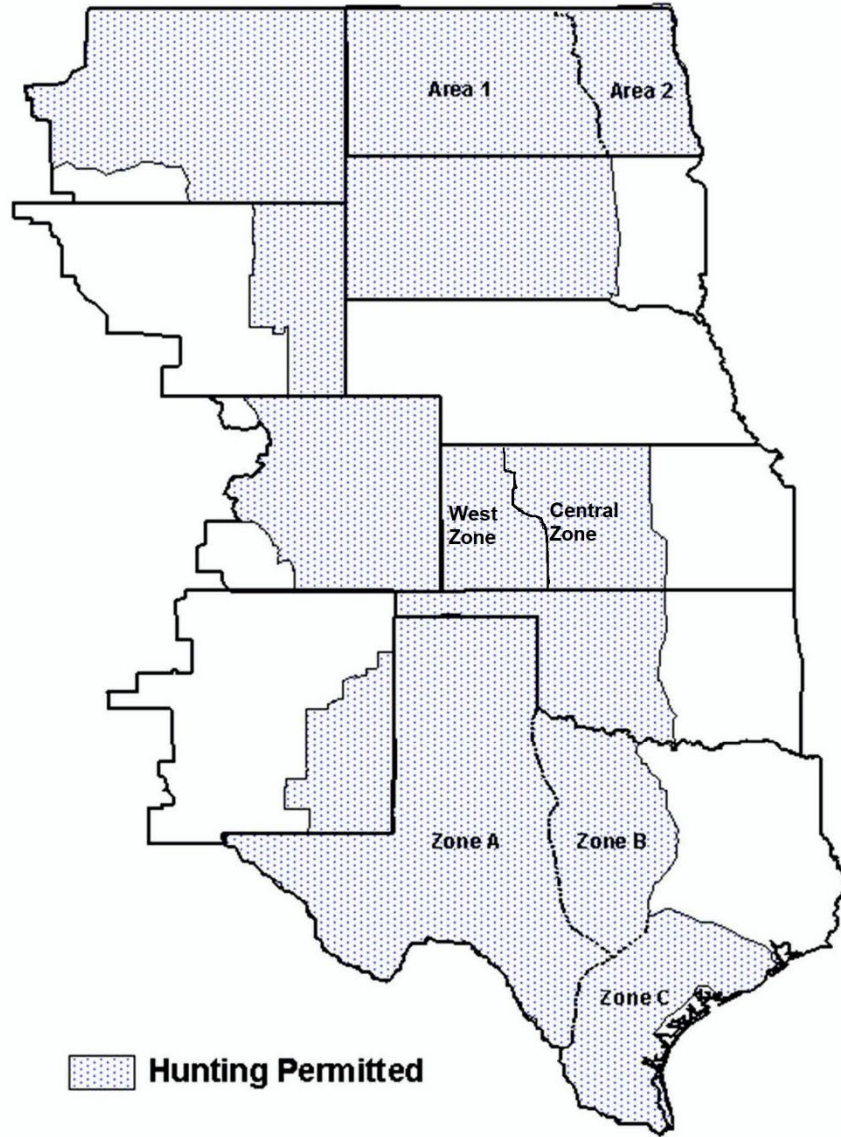


Figure 5. Areas open to the hunting of Mid-continent sandhill cranes by Federal frameworks in the Central Flyway states, 2021-22.

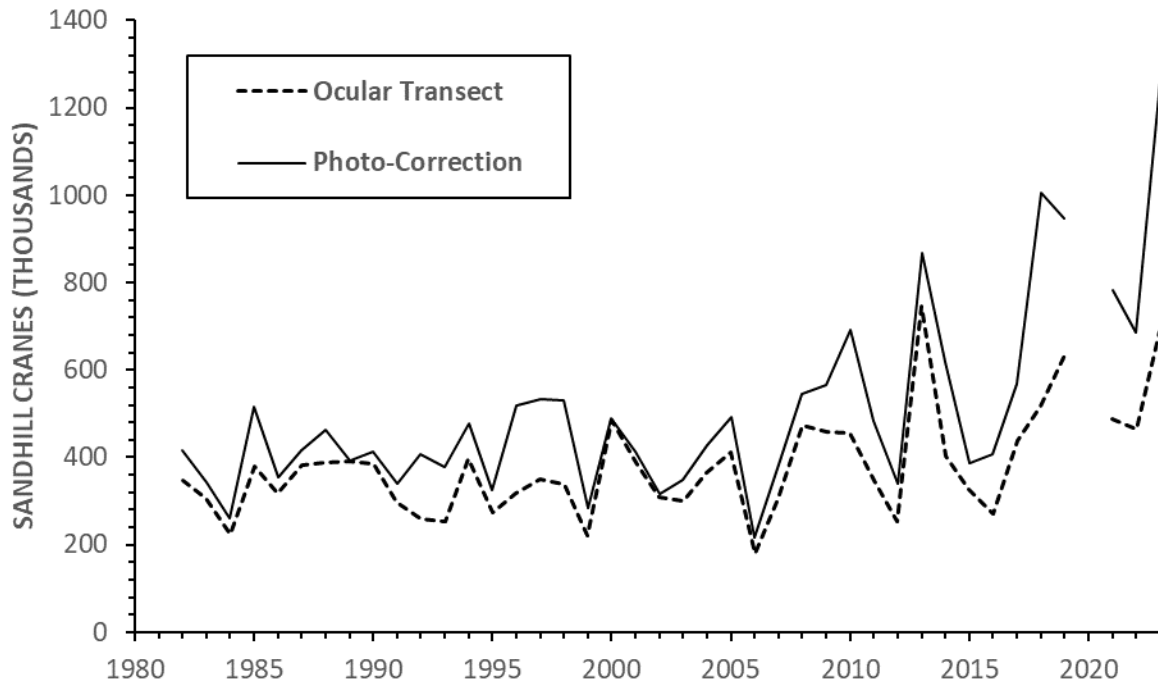


Figure 6. Spring population indices for Mid-Centiment sandhill cranes on the Central Platte River Valley, Nebraska. Survey was not conducted in 2020.

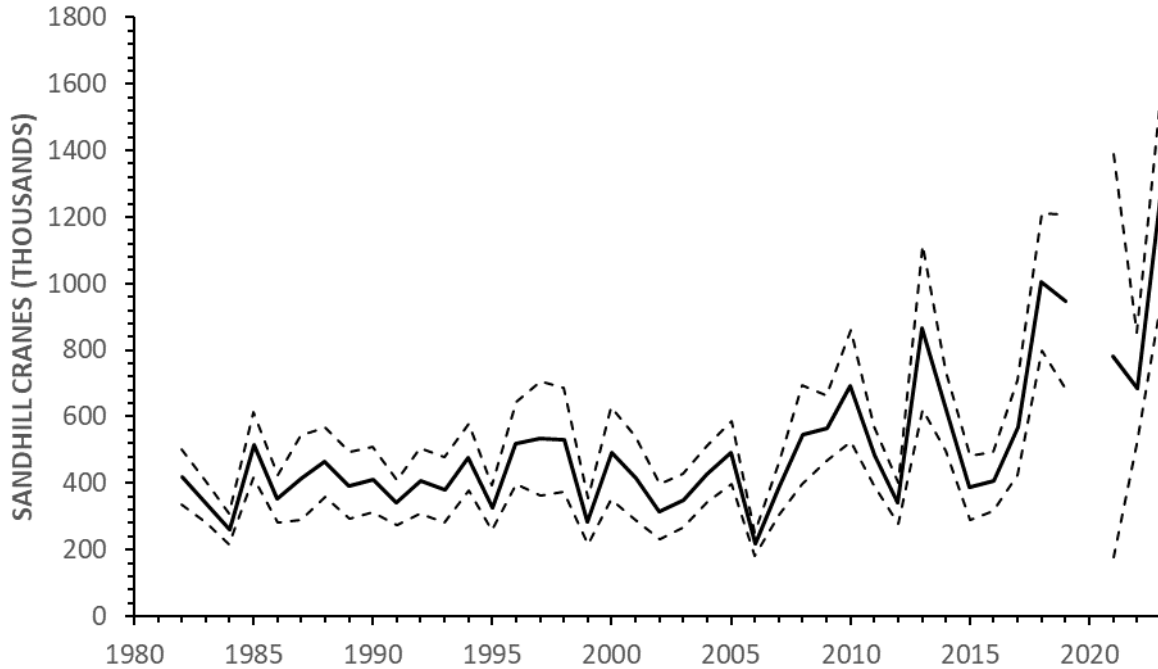


Figure 7. Photo-corrected spring population estimates (solid line) and the 95% confidence intervals (dashed lines) for Mid-Centiment sandhill cranes on the Central Platte River Valley, Nebraska. The survey was not conducted in 2020.

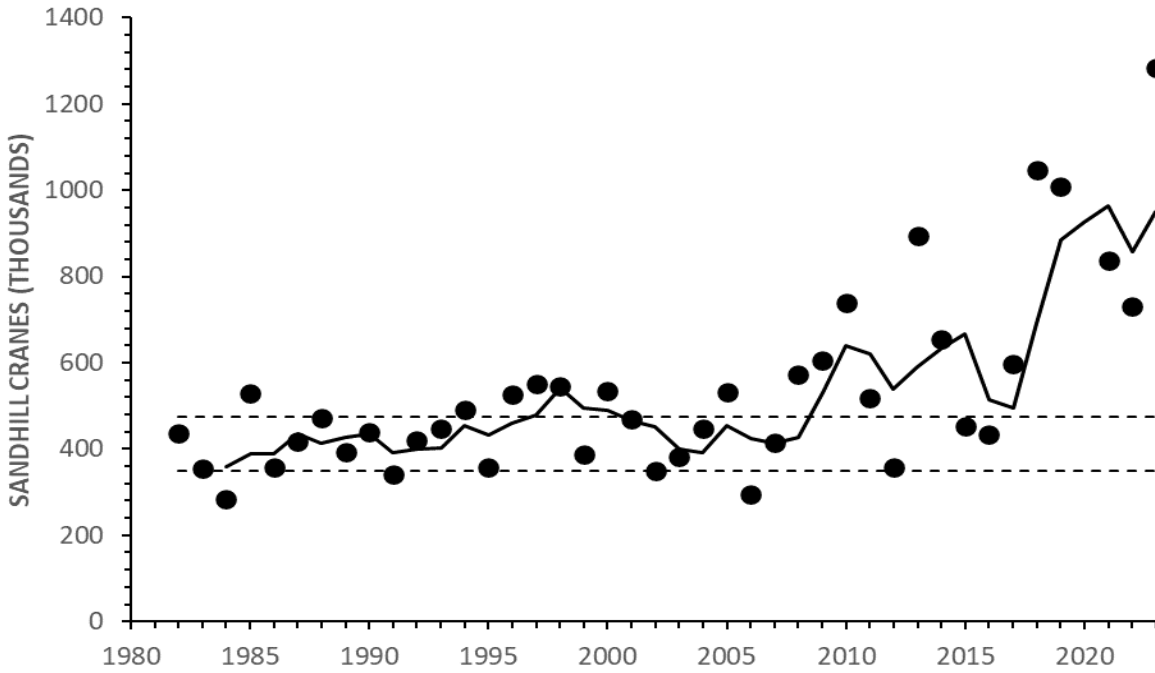


Figure 8. Annual and three-year average photo-corrected ocular transect spring population indices and population objective thresholds for Mid-Continent sandhill cranes.

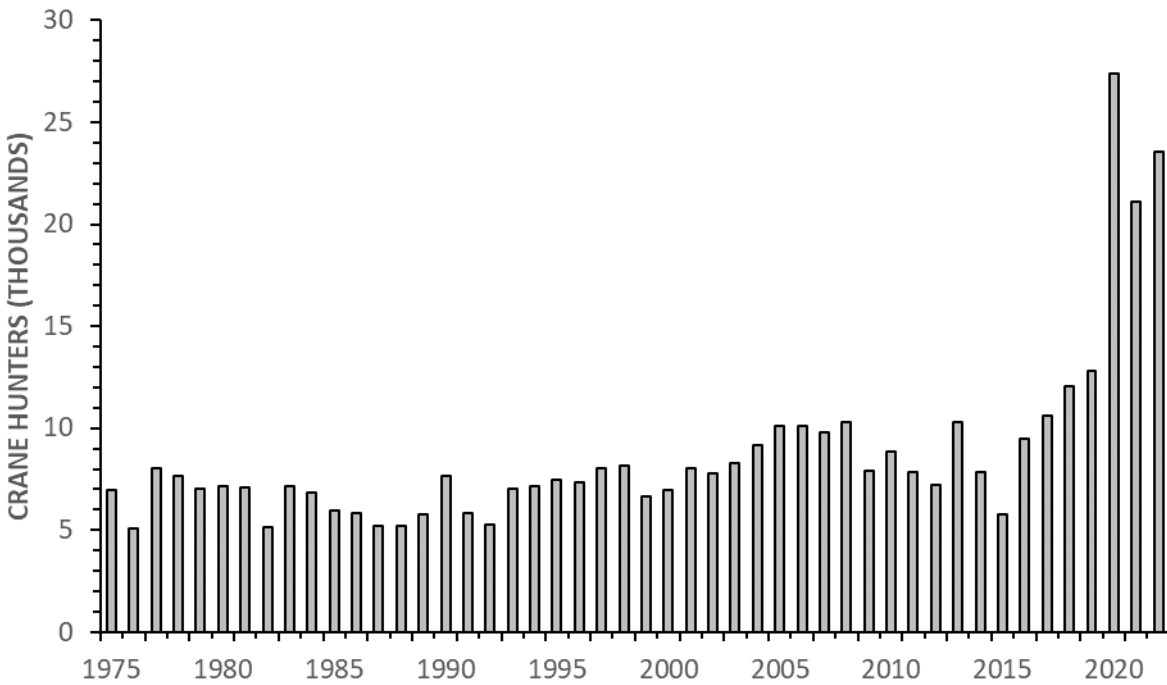


Figure 9. Active Mid-Continent sandhill crane hunters in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway.

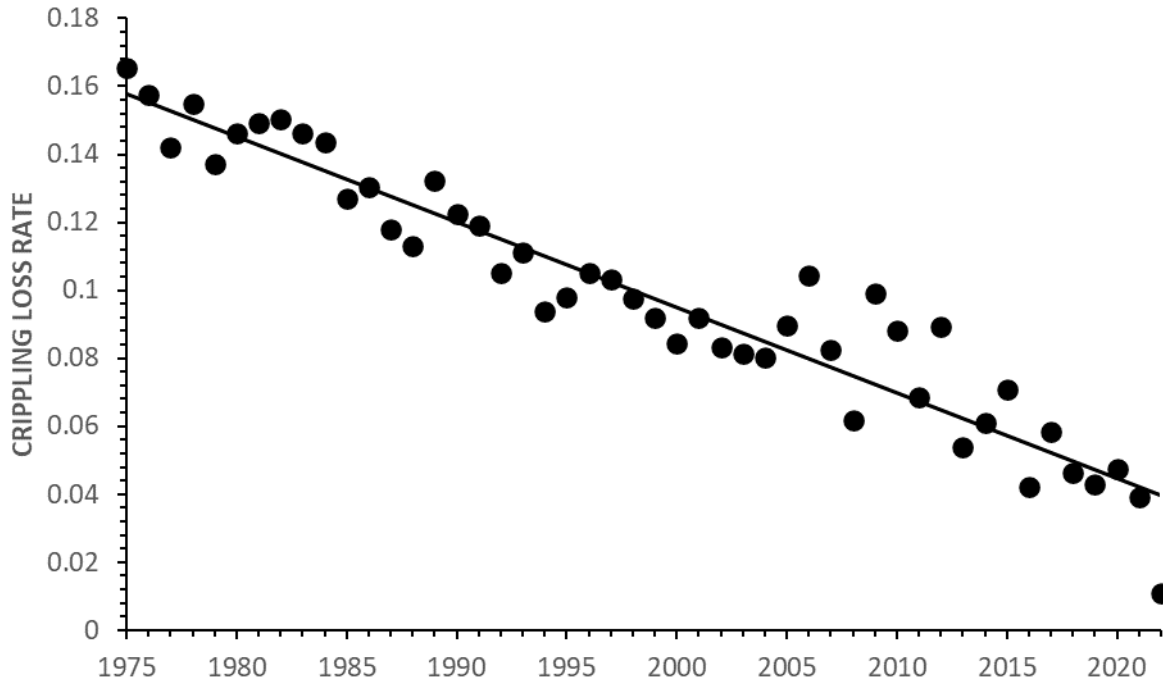


Figure 10. Crippling-loss rate (number lost/[number retrieved + lost]) of Mid-continent sandhill cranes in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway.

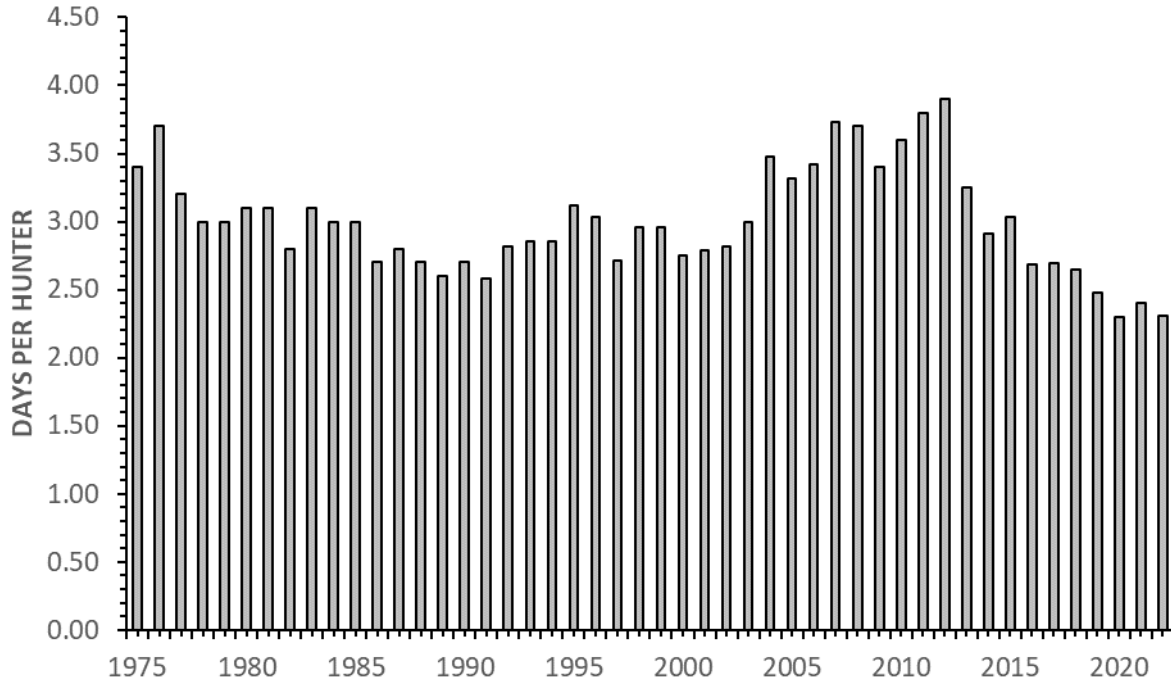


Figure 11. Average number of hunting days afield reported by active Mid-continent sandhill crane hunters in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway.



Figure 12. Seasonal bag per Mid-Continent sandhill crane hunter in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway.

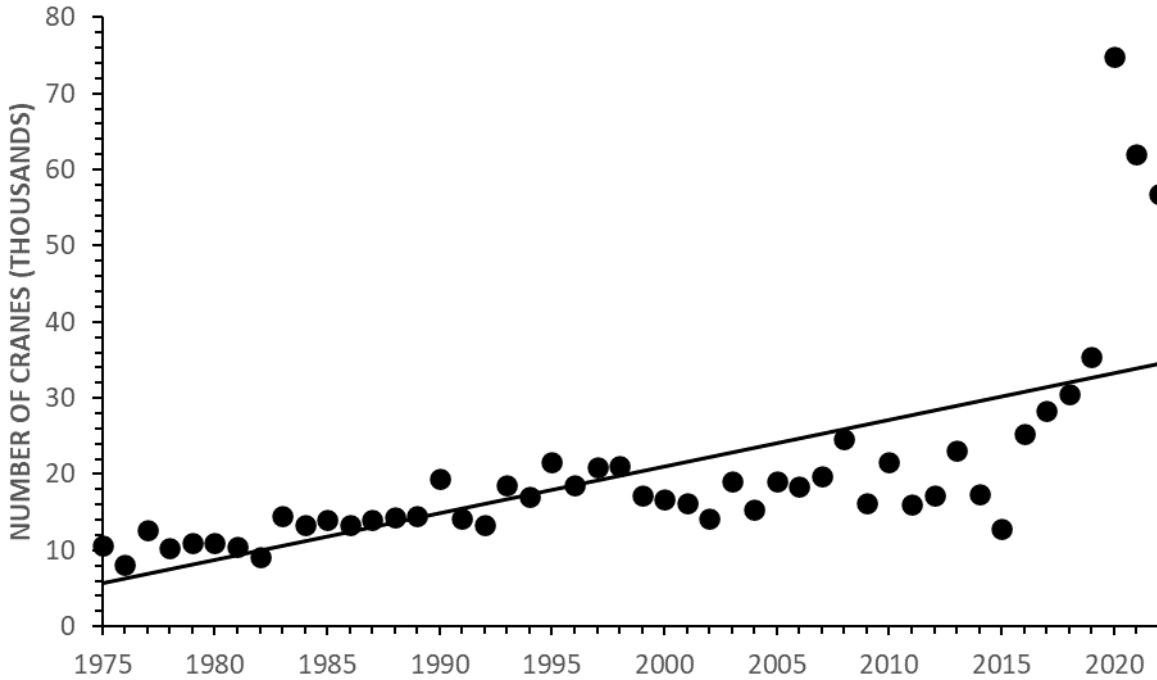


Figure 13. Estimated hunting mortality (retrieved plus unretrieved) of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes in the U.S. portion of the Central Flyway.

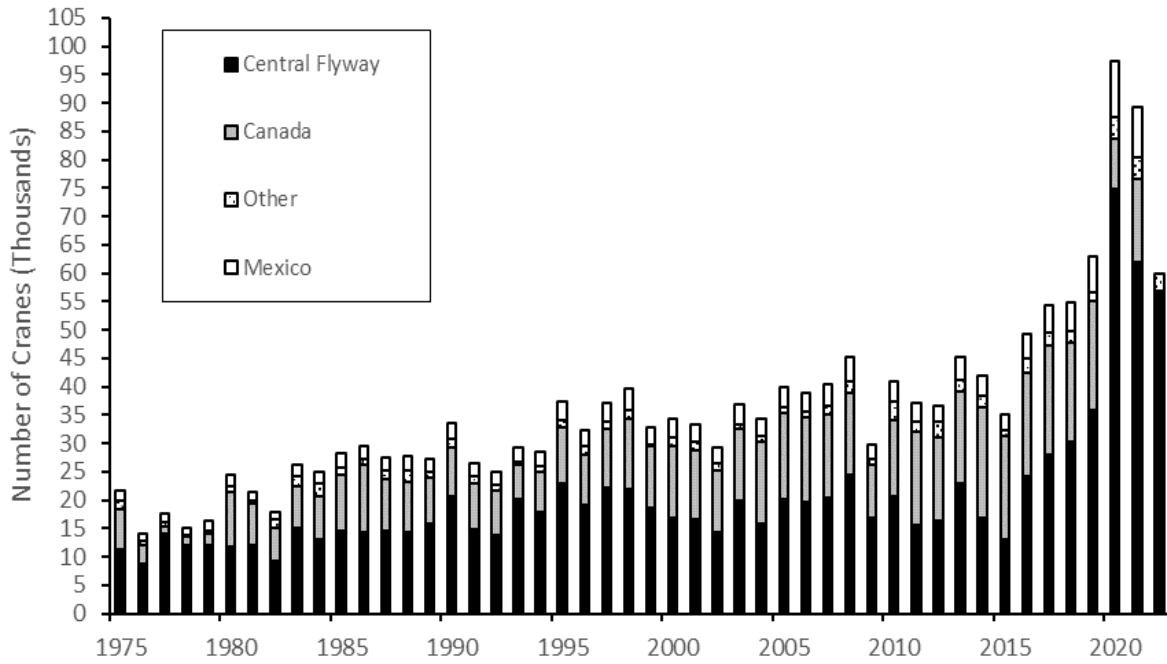


Figure 14. Estimated hunting mortality (retrieved plus unretrieved) of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes in North America. Data unavailable for Canada and Mexico for 2022.

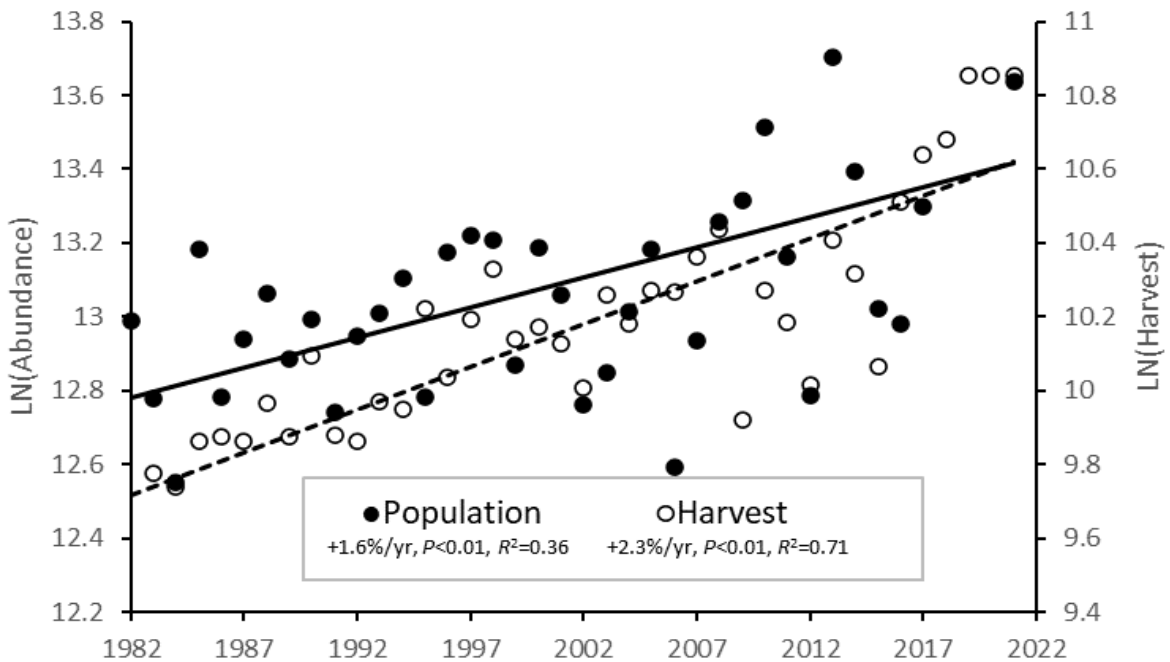


Figure 15. Relationship between indices of abundance and harvest of Mid-Continent sandhill cranes. Data unavailable for Canada and Mexico for 2022.

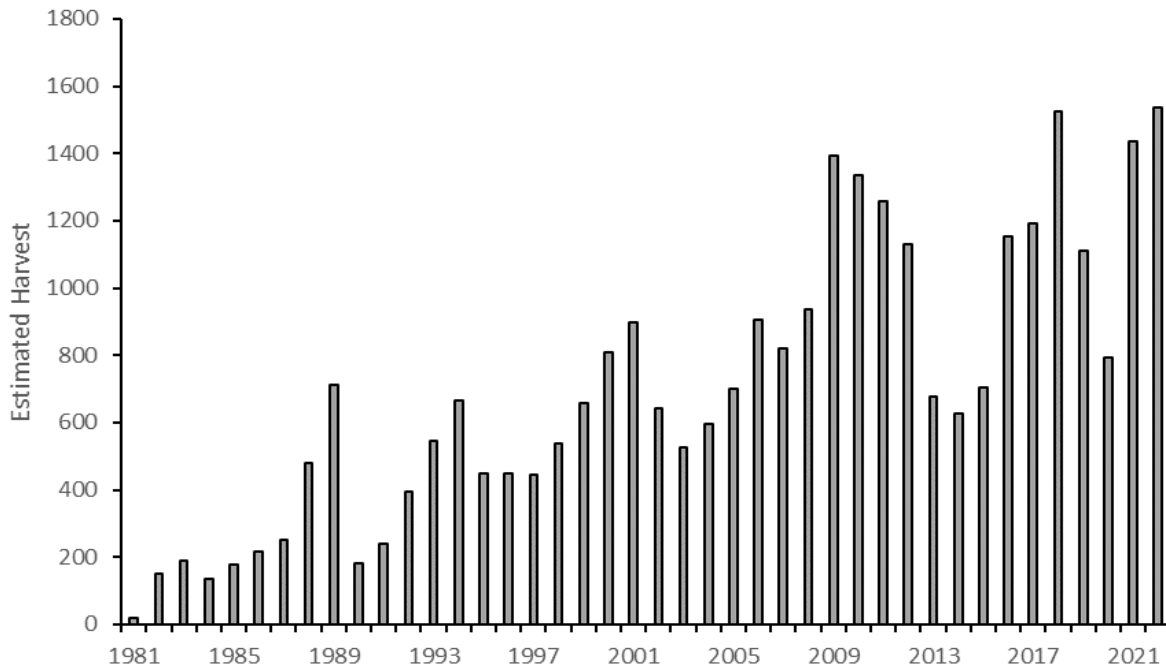


Figure 16. Estimated harvest of Rocky Mountain Population sandhill cranes.

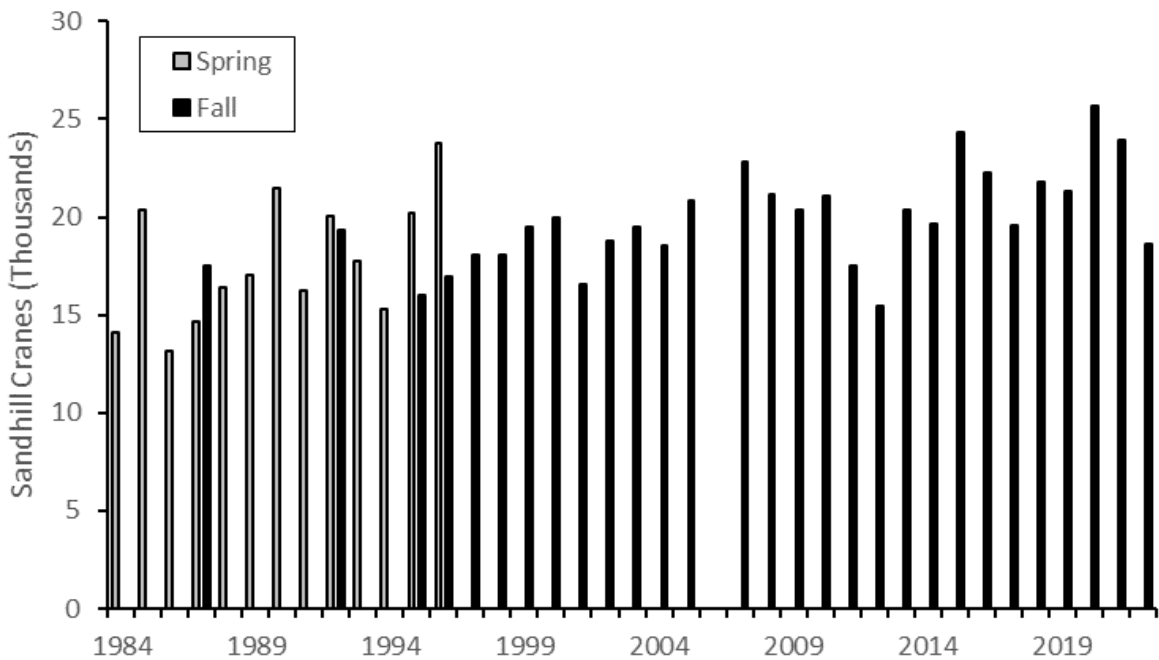


Figure 17. Abundance indices for the Rocky Mountain Population of sandhill cranes.



Figure 18. Annual and three-year average of fall pre-migration abundance indices for the Rocky Mountain Population of sandhill cranes.

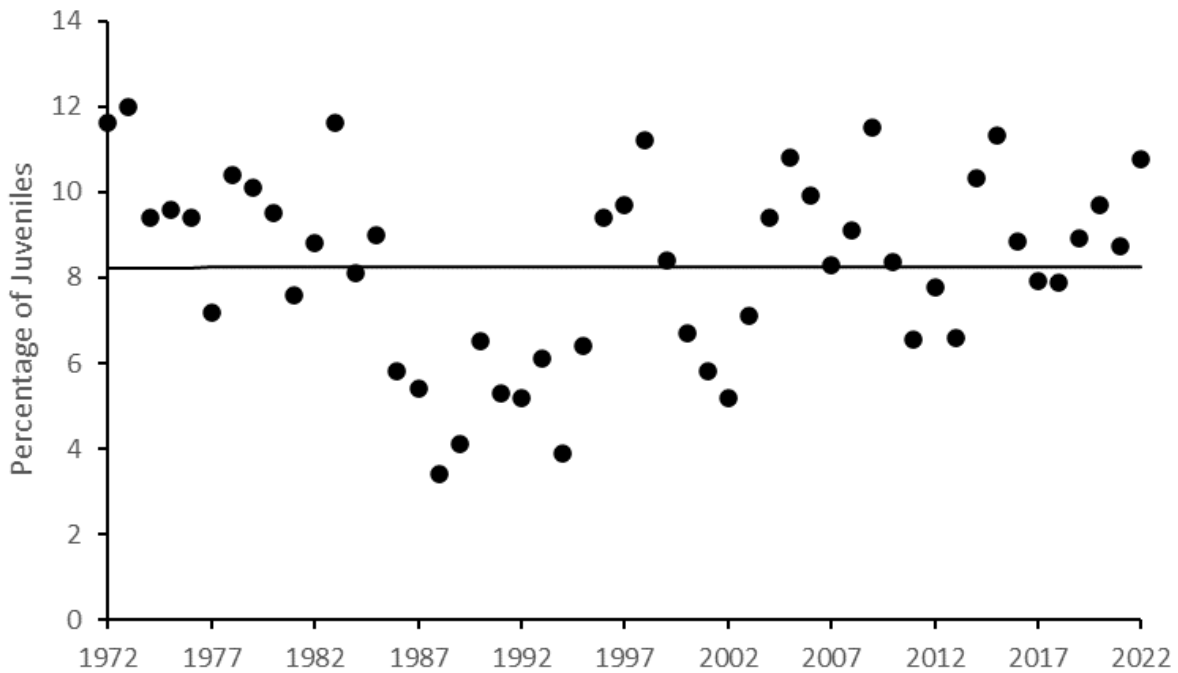


Figure 19. Annual indices for recruitment (% juveniles) of the Rocky Mountain Population of sandhill cranes. Solid line indicates the long-term (1972-2021) average of 8.2.

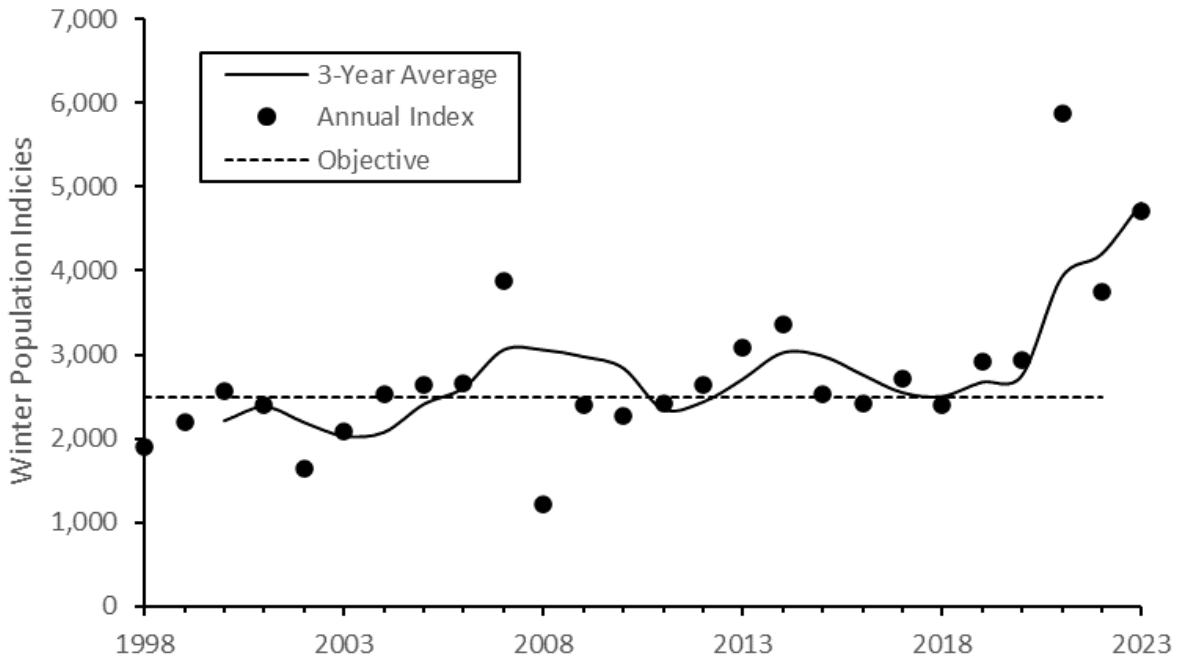


Figure 20. Annual and three-year average of winter counts of the Lower Colorado River Valley Population of sandhill cranes in Arizona and California.

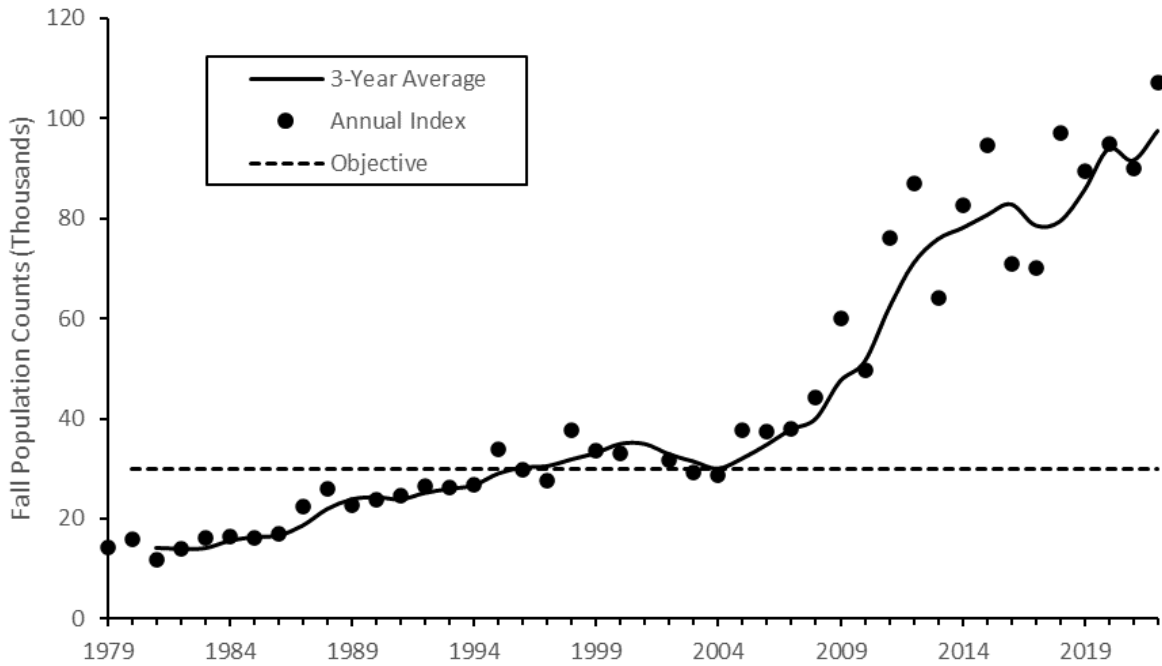


Figure 21. Annual and three-year average of fall counts of the Eastern Population of sandhill cranes.

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August 2023

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