Fun Facts:

- Cranes are among the oldest living birds on the planet with fossil records placing cranes in Nebraska more than nine million years ago.
- The pair bond that lasts a lifetime is based on dancing displays.
  - These displays include wing flapping, bowing, and jumping.
  - The pair will create a unison call in order to form a bond.
- Cranes will lay 1-2 eggs in the spring and their offspring are referred to as colts.
- There are 5 or 6 subspecies of Sandhill Cranes depending on opinion:
  - **Migratory** (Lesser, Greater and sometimes Canadian Crane)
  - **Non-Migratory** (Florida, Mississippi, and Cuban Crane)

ON THE REFUGE:

- The subspecies found at Sherburne is the largest of 6 subspecies- Greater Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis tabida*).
- There are approximately 36 breeding pairs on the refuge each year based on unison call surveys.
- Sherburne has one of the largest staging area in the fall with up to 11,000 individuals roosting before their migration south towards Florida.

IDENTIFICATION TIPS

Height: 4.5-5 ft.

Weight: 10-14 lbs.

Wingspan: 6 ft.

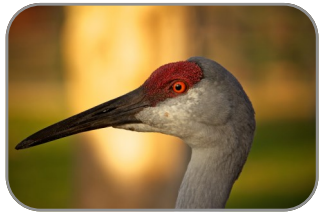


Photo by: USFWS

- Red, featherless skin on the crown
- White to pale grey feathers
- At Sherburne, due to preening in iron rich mud, the white to pale grey appearance in the feathers turns to a rusty brownish color.

What do I eat?

- Cranes readily eat cultivated foods such as corn, wheat, and sorghum which prepares the cranes for migration.
- In the spring, their diet is comprised of small mammals, insects, snails, reptiles, and amphibians.

Contact information:

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge
17076 293rd Ave. NW
Zimmerman, MN 55398 (M-F 8:00AM-4:00PM)

Phone: (763) 389-3323

Email: Sherburne@fws.gov

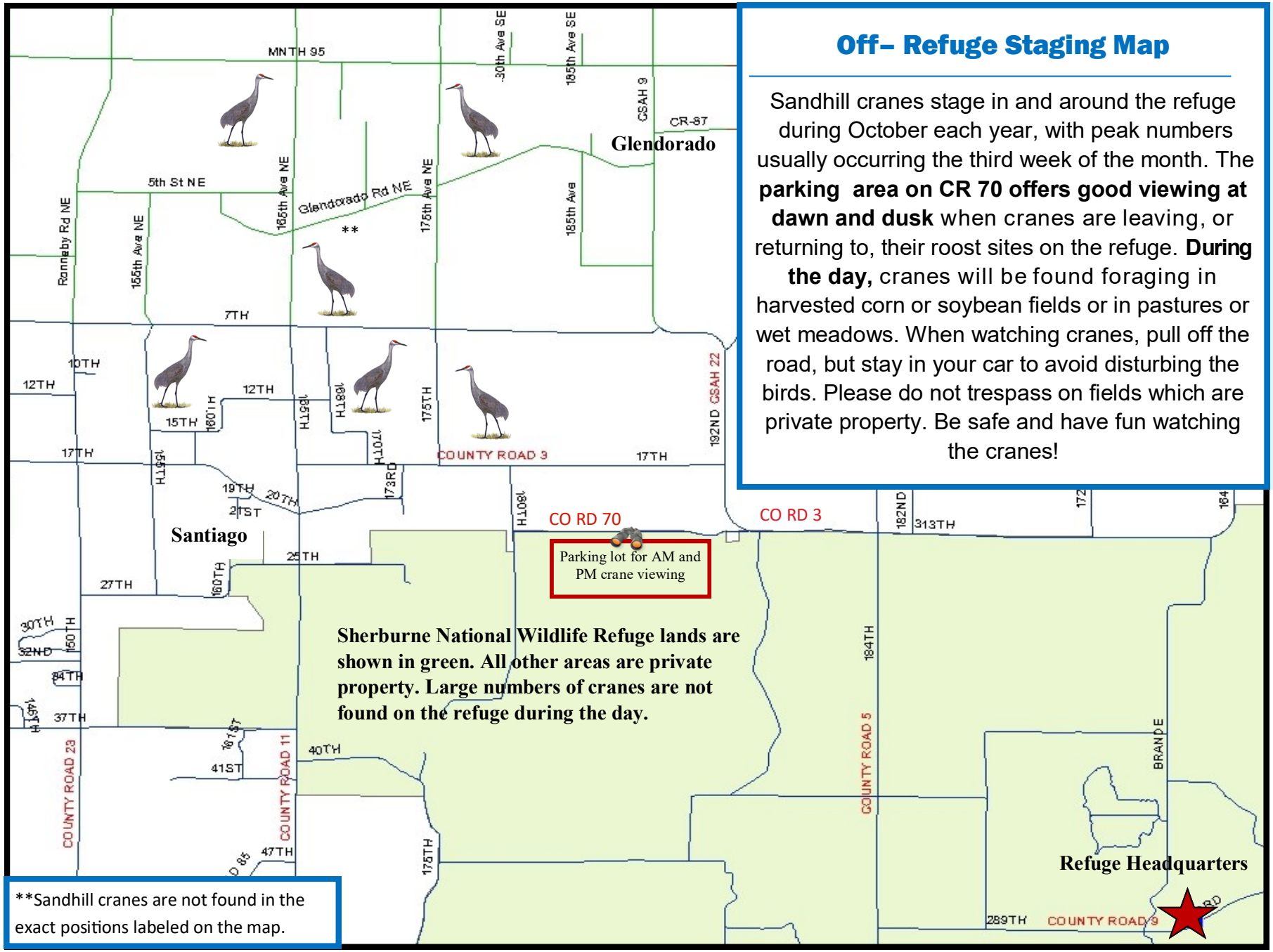
Website: www.fws.gov/refuge/sherburne

Photo by: USFWS

Sandhill Crane Fall Migration

Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Sandhill Crane Viewing Map– Self Guided Tour



Off– Refuge Staging Map

Sandhill cranes stage in and around the refuge during October each year, with peak numbers usually occurring the third week of the month. The **parking area on CR 70 offers good viewing at dawn and dusk** when cranes are leaving, or returning to, their roost sites on the refuge. **During the day,** cranes will be found foraging in harvested corn or soybean fields or in pastures or wet meadows. When watching cranes, pull off the road, but stay in your car to avoid disturbing the birds. Please do not trespass on fields which are private property. Be safe and have fun watching the cranes!

**Sandhill cranes are not found in the exact positions labeled on the map.