SANDHILL CRANES

The Graceful, Elegant, And Ancient Species



What is the Story of Sandhill Cranes?

- According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the earliest Sandhill Crane fossil is estimated to be 2.5 million years old.
- The recovery of the Sandhill Crane is one of the great conservation success stories of our time.
  - Today in Wisconsin, Cranes have maintained a sustainable population.
- Cranes have high spiritual and social significance and are valued for different reasons by many people and cultures.



Did you Know these Interesting Facts?

- **Wingspan**: 6 to 7 feet
- **Lifespan**: 20-40 years
- **Flight Speed**: 25–35 miles per hour
- **Travel Distance**: Up to 300 miles/day during migration
- **Calls**: Bugling or rattling calls are haunting and beautiful, similar to prehistoric pterodactyls!

Why are Sandhill Cranes Unique Migratory Birds?

- Sandhill Cranes live long but are slow to reproduce.
- They **MATE FOR LIFE**, working together to incubate eggs and raise their chicks.
- They are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 which strictly **PROHIBITS** the capture, killing, or possession of Sandhill Cranes without proper permits.

How do Sandhill Cranes Bring People Together?

- Ecotourism and the growth of Crane events further showcase the growing value Sandhill Cranes provide.
  - The International Crane Foundation and Aldo Leopold Foundation host an annual Great Midwest Crane Festival where Cranes gather to fly south for the winter as Wisconsin's largest Crane congregation.
  - National Geographic named the annual Sandhill Crane migration as one of North America's greatest natural wildlife phenomena.

How Can We Co-Exist with Sandhill Cranes?

- **NEVER FEED CRANES** and encourage neighbors not to feed cranes.
- **PICK UP TRASH** and keep trash cans secured to avoid entanglement in garbage.
- **SLOW DOWN** while driving or bicycling and be watchful of Cranes walking on the side of the road.
- **KEEP YOUR DISTANCE** if you see Cranes in the area. Speak quietly to avoid spooking them.
- **LIMIT or ELIMINATE PESTICIDE** on lawns that can be lethal to Cranes and other wildlife.
  - Cranes help control pests naturally by eating earthworms, mole crickets, and beetle grubs.

What do Sandhill Cranes Eat?

- Diet varies by season and location.
- Menu items include plant material such as roots, berries, seeds and nuts.
- They also eat snails, crayfish, insect larvae, amphibians, small reptiles and small rodents.



Sources

https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/bird-species/interesting-facts-sandhill-cranes/
https://rowe.audubon.org/crane-facts
https://savingcranes.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/crane_conservation_strategy_sandhill_crane.pdf
https://cranetrust.org/file_download/inline/c5335a77-2dcd-42a6-9ec1-b079c3273af9
https://greatmidwestcranefest.org/