

whooping cranes

Second Louisiana Whooping Crane Chick Hatch Recorded on Wednesday

Release Date: 04/14/2016



April 14, 2016 – For the second time this week, a Whooping Crane chick hatched in Jefferson Davis Parish to the same nesting pair that brought forth the first chick hatched in Louisiana in the wild in more than 75 years.

The second chick hatched Wednesday (April 13), two days after the first Monday (April 11).

The hatchings, the first seen in Louisiana's wild since 1939, represents another step forward in the program established in February of 2011 when the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries reintroduced Whooping Cranes back into the state at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WLWCA) in Vermilion Parish.

LDWF has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Service (USGS) and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to return the species to the state. Project funding comes from LDWF Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge funds, State Wildlife Grants Program, and private/corporate donations, which are facilitated by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation. Chevron has been a major corporate donor in the program.

The new parents paired earlier this winter and nested and produced eggs for the first time in mid-March. The female is 4 years old and the male just 3 years old.

Once abundant in Louisiana in the 1800s, the Whooping Cranes dwindled to two in 1945 and had disappeared by 1950 in the state.

Whooping Cranes in Louisiana are designated as a non-essential, experimental population (NEP) under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. This designation and its implementing regulation were developed to be more compatible with routine human activities in the reintroduction area. The initial cohort of birds received in 2011 marked the first presence of Whooping Cranes in the wild in Louisiana since 1950.

The WLWCA location in Vermilion Parish provides temporary shelter for the birds before their release into the wild. The cranes which make up the Louisiana population were raised at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md., and flown to Louisiana by the Windway Capital Corporation.

Anyone encountering a Whooping Crane is advised to observe the bird from a distance and to report their sighting to LDWF (<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/webform/whooping-crane-reporting-form>).

Whooping Cranes are large-bodied, white birds similar to white ibis, white pelicans, and wood storks, all of which must be distinguished from legally-hunted snow geese. However, a red head and black facial markings along with a height of five feet and a wingspan of 7-8 feet make them very distinctive. In flight, Whooping Cranes display black wing tips and fully extended neck and legs, which extend well beyond the tail.

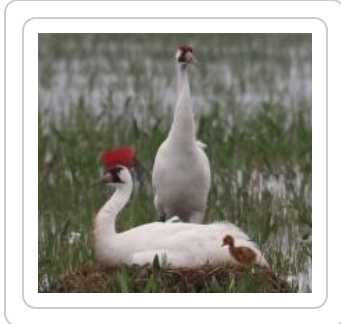
Juvenile Whooping Cranes are primarily white with some cinnamon-brown feathers remaining on their body, primarily on their head and neck. Their wing tips are black like an adult, but they lack the red head.

Anyone witnessing suspicious activity involving harassment or shooting of whooping cranes is advised to report that information to LDWF's Enforcement Division by calling 1-800-442-2511 or using the tip411 program, which may offer a cash reward for information leading to arrests or convictions. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone app from the Apple iTunes store free of charge. Citizen Observer, the tip411 provider, uses technology that removes all identifying information before LDWF receives the text so that LDWF cannot identify the sender.

Whooping Crane Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes/?fref=ts>). For more information, contact Sara Zimorski at szimorski@wlf.la.gov or 337-536-9400, ext. 4.

Historic Hatch: Whooping Crane Hatches in Wild in Louisiana for First Time Since 1939

Release Date: 04/12/2016



April 12, 2016 – A major milestone was reached this week in the reintroduction of the whooping crane in Louisiana when the first hatching of a chick in the state in more than 75 years occurred in Jefferson Davis Parish.

The hatching, the first seen in Louisiana's wild since 1939, represents another step forward in the program established in February of 2011 when the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries reintroduced whooping cranes back into the state at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area in Vermilion Parish.

LDWF has partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to return the species to the state. Project funding comes from the LDWF Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge funds, federal funds and private/corporate donations, which are facilitated by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation. Chevron has been a major corporate donor in the program.

"This is something we've been looking forward to and anticipating since the reintroduction began in 2011," said LDWF biologist Sara Zimorski, who leads the Louisiana whooping crane project. "One of the major steps in restoring the species is successful reproduction. We've had several pairs nesting the last couple of years but until now no favorable outcomes. It's an exciting time for us and all of our partners who have worked so hard alongside us.

"This couldn't have been done without the assistance of private landowners. The support and cooperation of the many landowners and farmers on whose property the birds spend time is critical to the success of the project."

The new parents paired earlier this winter and nested and produced eggs for the first time in mid-March. The female, is 4 years old and the male, is just 3 years old.

Once abundant in Louisiana in the 1800s, the species dwindled to two in 1945 and had disappeared by 1950 in the state.

"I'd like to commend and congratulate our hard-working biologists and partners who have shepherded our program so well," LDWF Secretary Charlie Melancon said. "The ultimate goal is to establish a self-sustaining whooping crane population in Louisiana so that this beautiful bird can thrive for generations to come. The first chick hatched here is a step in that direction."

The whooping cranes in Louisiana are designated as a non-essential, experimental population (NEP) under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. This designation and its implementing regulation were developed to be more compatible with routine human activities in the reintroduction area. The initial cohort of birds received in 2011 marked the first presence of whooping cranes in the wild in Louisiana since 1950.

The White Lake WCA location in Vermilion Parish provides temporary shelter for the birds before their release into the wild. The cranes which make up the Louisiana population were raised at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md., and flown to Louisiana by the Windway Capital Corporation.

Anyone encountering a whooping crane is advised to observe the bird from a distance and to report their sighting to LDWF (<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/webform/whooping-crane-reporting-form>).

Whooping cranes are large-bodied, white birds similar to white ibis, white pelicans, and wood storks, all of which must be distinguished from legally-hunted snow geese. However, a red head and black facial markings along with a height of five feet and a wingspan of 7-8 feet make them very distinctive. In flight, whooping cranes display black wing tips and fully extended neck and legs, which extend well beyond the tail.

Juvenile whooping cranes are primarily white with some cinnamon-brown feathers remaining on their body, primarily on their head and neck. Their wing tips are black like an adult, but they lack the red head.

Anyone witnessing suspicious activity involving harassment or shooting of whooping cranes is advised to report that information to LDWF's Enforcement Division by calling 1-800-442-2511 or using the tip411 program, which may offer a cash reward for information leading to arrests or convictions. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone app from the Apple iTunes store free of charge. Citizen Observer, the tip411 provider, uses technology that removes all identifying information before LDWF receives the text so that LDWF cannot identify the sender.

whooping crane Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes/?fref=ts>). For more information, contact Sara Zimorski at szimorski@wlf.la.gov or 337-536-9400, ext. 4.

Two Louisiana Whooping Cranes Found Dead in Southeast Texas

Release Date: 01/14/2016

Jan. 14, 2016 – Two whooping cranes that were part of an experimental population in Louisiana were found dead in southeast Texas in Jefferson County on Monday (Jan. 11). These birds, a male and female, were almost two years old and were part of a group being introduced in an effort to establish a self-sustaining population in Louisiana that now numbers 44.

Although originally released in Louisiana at the White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WLWCA) near Gueydan, the two whooping cranes, along with two other birds from Louisiana, had been in southeast Texas for more than eight months. The deaths of the cranes are being investigated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The whooping crane is protected under the federal Endangered Species and Migratory Bird Treaty Acts and by Texas and Louisiana state law.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is working cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to return the species to the state.

"While incredibly frustrating to lose two more birds we will not be discouraged in our efforts to try and recover this endangered species," said LDWF biologist Sara Zimorski, who leads the Louisiana whooping crane project.

Whooping cranes are large-bodied, white birds similar to white ibis, white pelicans, and wood storks, all of which must be distinguished from legally-hunted snow geese. However, a red head and black facial markings along with a height of five feet and a wingspan of 7-8 feet make them very distinctive. In flight, whooping cranes display black wing tips and fully extended neck and legs, which extend well beyond the tail.

Juvenile whooping cranes are primarily white with some cinnamon-brown feathers remaining on their body, primarily on their head and neck. Their wing tips are black like an adult, but they lack the red head.

Anyone encountering a whooping crane is advised to observe the bird from a distance and to report their sighting to LDWF (<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/webform/whooping-crane-reporting-form>).

Anyone witnessing suspicious activity involving whooping cranes is advised to report that information to LDWF's Enforcement Division by calling 1-800-442-2511 or using the tip411 program, which may offer a cash reward for information leading to arrests or convictions. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone app from the Apple iTunes store free of charge. Citizen Observer, the tip411 provider, uses technology that removes all identifying information before LDWF receives the text so that LDWF cannot identify the sender.

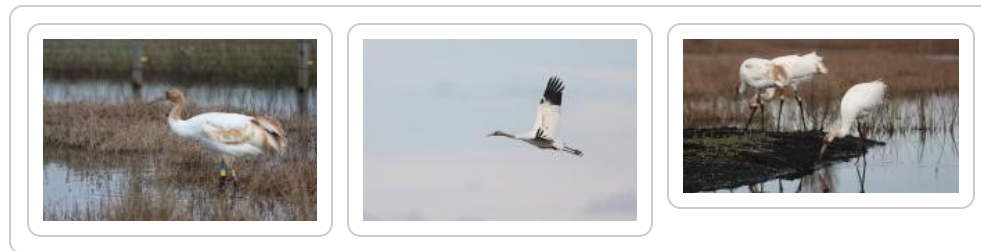
Donations in support of the cranes can be made through the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation by contacting Kell McInnis at 225-765-5100, kmcinnis@wlf.la.gov, or visiting the Foundation's website directly at <http://lawff.org/index.html>. Donations can also be mailed directly to the Foundation at P.O. Box 80378 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0378.

Visit our website: <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes> and Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes/?fref=ts> to learn more about the project. For more information on the Louisiana Whooping Crane Project, contact Sara Zimorski at szimorski@wlf.la.gov or 337-536-9400, ext. 4.

For more information on this case, contact the Eastern District of Texas U.S. Attorney's Office at 409-981-7902.

Eleven Juvenile Whooping Cranes Released into the Marsh at White Lake WCA

Release Date: 01/05/2016



Jan. 5, 2016 -- Eleven juvenile whooping cranes were released into the wild last Tuesday (Dec. 29) at White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA) near Gueydan. The juvenile cranes join 35 adults that are part of an experimental population being monitored by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF).

The cranes were delivered to southwest Louisiana on Dec. 3 from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md. LDWF is working cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to establish a non-migratory population in the state.

The whooping crane is protected under the federal Endangered Species and Migratory Bird Treaty Acts and by state law. Anyone encountering a whooping crane is advised to observe the bird from a distance and to report their sighting to LDWF (<http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/webform/whooping-crane-reporting-form>).

hunted snow geese. However, a red head and black facial markings along with a height of five feet and a wingspan of 7-8 feet make them very distinctive. In flight, whooping cranes display black wing tips and fully extended neck and legs, which extend well beyond the tail.

Juvenile whooping cranes are primarily white with some cinnamon-brown feathers remaining on their body, primarily on their head and neck. Their wing tips are black like an adult, but they lack the red head.

Anyone witnessing suspicious activity involving whooping cranes is advised to report that information to LDWF's Enforcement Division by calling 1-800-442-2511 or using the tip411 program, which may offer a cash reward for information leading to arrests or convictions. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone app from the Apple iTunes store free of charge. Citizen Observer, the tip411 provider, uses technology that removes all identifying information before LDWF receives the text so that LDWF cannot identify the sender.

Additional information on LDWF's whooping crane project is available at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes> or on the LDWF whooping crane Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/lawhoopingcranes/?fref=ts>). For more information, contact Sara Zimorski at szimorski@wlf.la.gov or 337-536-9400, ext. 4.

11 Juvenile Whooping Cranes Added to Louisiana's Experimental Population

Release Date: 12/04/2015



Dec. 4, 2015 – Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) biologists received a sixth cohort of juvenile whooping cranes at White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA) near Gueydan on Thursday, Dec. 3. The 11 young cranes add to the state's resident population established through an LDWF species restoration project.

With the addition of the eight females and three males, Louisiana's whooping crane population increases to 46.

"We're beginning year six of this project, and I want to continue to encourage the public to support our biologists in our endeavor by observing the cranes from a distance and reporting any sightings of injured birds or anyone attempting to harm them in any way," LDWF Secretary Robert Barham said. "We are blessed to have many private landowners who have assisted us by working with our staff when the cranes roost on their property and we thank them for their help."

The White Lake WCA location in Vermilion Parish provides temporary shelter for the birds before their release into the wild. The cranes, which hatched in early May through mid-June, were raised at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md., and flown to Louisiana by the Windway Capital Corporation.

LDWF continues to work cooperatively with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS, ICF and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to return the species to the state. Project funding comes from LDWF species restoration dedicated funds, federal funds and private/corporate donations, which are facilitated by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation. Major corporate funding support to date has been provided by Chevron and ConocoPhillips.

The whooping cranes in Louisiana are designated as a non-essential, experimental population (NEP) under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act. This designation and its implementing regulation were developed to be more compatible with routine human activities in the reintroduction area. The initial cohort of birds received in 2011 marked the first presence of whooping cranes in the wild in Louisiana since 1950.

Hunters, fishermen and anyone who spends time in the marshes and rice fields of Louisiana are reminded that whooping cranes in Louisiana are still protected under the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and cannot be pursued, harassed, captured or killed.

Waterfowl hunters should be accustomed to seeing large-bodied, white birds with black wing-tips, such as white ibis, white pelicans, and wood storks, which must be distinguished from the legally-hunted snow geese. Mature whooping cranes are equally identifiable as they stand five feet tall and have a wingspan of 7 to 8 feet. Easily identifiable characteristics of whooping cranes in flight include black wing tips and fully extended neck and legs, which extend well beyond the tail.

The LDWF has set up an online reporting form for anyone who sees a whooping crane and encourages the public to share the encounter. That form is available here: <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/webform/whooping-crane-reporting-form>.

Anyone witnessing suspicious activity involving whooping cranes is advised to report that information immediately to LDWF's Enforcement Division by calling 1-800-442-2511 or using the tip411 program, which may offer a cash reward for information leading to arrests or convictions. To use the tip411 program, citizens can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the

"LADWF Tips" iPhone app from the Apple iTunes store free of charge. CitizenObserver, the tip411 provider, uses technology that removes all identifying information before LDWF receives the text so that LDWF cannot identify the sender.

For more information on the re-introduction of whooping cranes to Louisiana, please visit the LDWF website at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes> or the LDWF Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Louisiana-Department-of-Wildlife-and-Fisheries-Whooping-Cranes-733006696805446/?fref=ts>.

LDWF Reminds Waterfowl Hunters to Be Alert for Whooping Cranes

Release Date: 10/29/2015

News Release

**For Immediate Release
October 29, 2015**

Contact: Bo Boehringer
LDWF
(225)765-5115
bboehringer@wlf.la.gov



LDWF Reminds Waterfowl Hunters to Be Alert for Whooping Cranes

As young waterfowl hunters prepare for the Oct. 31-Nov. 1 Youth Waterfowl Weekend in the state's coastal zone, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) is reminding all waterfowl hunters to be alert for whooping cranes in marshes and fields that contain legally hunted game birds.

LDWF's whooping crane reintroduction program has released cranes into the wild from White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area each year since 2011. The birds have dispersed over time to locations that include east Texas, but there are whooping cranes situated in Acadia, Avoyelles, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Rapides and Vermilion parishes.

Anyone encountering whooping cranes in the wild is advised to observe them from a distance and minimize any disturbance. Hunters are cautioned to positively identify their targets as game birds before shooting. Although whooping cranes in Louisiana are considered an "experimental, non-essential population" under the Endangered Species Act, they are still protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and cannot be pursued, harassed, captured or killed.

Waterfowl hunters should be accustomed to seeing large-bodied, white birds with black wing-tips, such as white ibis, white pelicans, and wood storks, which must be distinguished from the legally-hunted snow geese. Whooping cranes are equally identifiable as they stand an impressive 5 feet tall and have a wingspan of 7-8 feet. Easily identifiable characteristics of whooping cranes in flight include fully extended neck and legs, and black wing tips. Photos of the cranes and similar species can be seen on the LDWF website at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/document/whooping-crane-identification-fact...> or in the 2015-16 Louisiana Hunting Regulations pamphlet on page 59.

Hunters are encouraged to report whooping crane sightings to assist the department in tracking their movements. Location information can be reported to the White Lake WCA office at 337-536-9400, ext. 4 or szimorski@wlf.la.gov.

LDWF also asks experienced hunters to take the time in the field to educate young hunters and improve their target identification skills to distinguish game birds from non-game birds. A whooping crane sighting can add to the outdoor experience for outdoorsmen and women of all ages and hunter vigilance can assist the department's efforts to restore this unique species in southwestern Louisiana.

Anyone witnessing whooping cranes being pursued, harassed, captured or killed is urged to call the LDWF Enforcement Division's Game Thief hotline at 1-800-442-2511 to report what they've seen.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is charged with managing and protecting Louisiana's abundant natural resources. For more information, visit us at www.wlf.la.gov or www.FishLA.org. To receive recreational or commercial fishing email and text alerts, signup at <http://www.wlf.la.gov/signup>.

Robert Love Receives 2014 Governor's Award for Conservationist of the Year

Release Date: 03/30/2015



March 30, 2015 -- Robert Love, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries division administrator, was honored Saturday by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation with the 2014 Governor's Award for Conservationist of the Year.

Love, who manages the Coastal and Nongame Resources Division at LDWF, was recognized for leading the department's biologist team involved with the reintroduction of the whooping crane to Louisiana.

"Every species recovery success LDWF has managed through the years has had a point person setting goals, directing personnel and handling the administrative duties so the biologist team can focus on the critical field work," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham at the ceremony in Baton Rouge. "Bob Love has taken that lead with whooping cranes and provided the vision to start and sustain the project."

"The vision that awareness leads to appreciation which leads to protection is working; and I'm hopeful that our citizens can take pride in accomplishing yet another major conservation achievement, in restoring this long lost iconic and charismatic wildlife species," said Love. "The vast majority of Louisianans respect, appreciate and support our wildlife resource management efforts."

As Coastal and Nongame Resources Division administrator, Love oversees the division that includes LDWF's Alligator Management Program, furbearer management including the Coast-wide Nutria Control Program, Louisiana's Wildlife Action Plan, the Natural and Scenic Rivers Program, the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program, Oil Spill Response and Natural Resource Damage Assessment, plus Coastal Operations including management of 10 wildlife management areas and refuges, and White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA) in Vermilion Parish -- within the same geographic area in which the cranes had at one time thrived.

Love initially secured approval for the whooping crane reintroduction project to begin by proposing a funding model which has value-added component utilizing privately raised funds. He also led efforts to define the entire boundary of Louisiana as a non-essential, experimental population status with the Department of Interior. This designation allows the experimental population to be treated more like threatened, as opposed to endangered status. It also allows much greater public acceptance of endangered species restoration, as these birds will not impact the normal lifestyle and activities on the Louisiana landscape.

Guiding staff biologists working with the experimental population of whooping cranes that have been in Louisiana since 2011, Love's interaction with US Fish and Wildlife Services, the Whooping Crane Recovery Team, the International Crane Foundation, and the US Geological Survey Research Center in Patuxent, Maryland, and corporate partners have been key.

He established a regular team meeting management approach to the project, integrating staff field biologists, LSU research biologists, LDWF administration, a formal education program, public awareness and outreach program, maintenance staff, as well as veterinary and law enforcement staff to more fully utilize all available resources for derived benefits to the restoration effort.

Relative to project funding, Love has directed fundraising to gather resources, additional to state and federal dollars, to make the project financially stable during the formative years. These fund raising efforts have brought in \$1.5 million since 2011.

Love began his career in 1981 as a wildlife specialist in the Baton Rouge District VII office for the Wildlife Division. Early in his career he worked with many game species, nuisance wildlife species and species of special concern, including alligators.

After working on all state Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) throughout the Florida Parishes, he was promoted through the biologist ranks to serve as biologist program manager for nine years, responsible for purchasing more than 80,000 acres of conservation lands for WMAs and refuges. He served 18 years in the Wildlife Division before serving the last 15 years in what was previously known as the Fur and Refuge Division.

Love received his undergraduate degree in biology from Monmouth College in Monmouth, Illinois in 1975. He received his master's degree in wildlife management in 1981 from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge. His master's degree thesis focused on the food habits of nutria in brackish marshes, with field work on the State Wildlife Refuge in Vermilion Parish.

Over his career, Love has been involved in wildlife groups including the Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, LSU Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries Alumni Association, The Wildlife Society, LA Professional Biologist Association and others. He was honored most recently with the Acadiana Sportsmen's League 2013 Emeritus Award.

For more information, contact Bo Boehringer at 225-765-5115 or bboehringer@wlf.la.gov.

*Photo caption: (left to right) LDWF Secretary Robert Barham, Robert "Bob" Love, LWF President Barney Callahan.

Chevron Honored with 2014 Governor's Conservation Achievement Award

Release Date: 03/30/2015



March 30, 2015 -- The Louisiana Wildlife Federation presented Chevron with the Business Conservationist of the Year Award at Saturday's banquet honoring recipients of the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards for 2014.

Chevron was recognized for support provided to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) for stewardship, public education and awareness specific to the department's whooping crane reintroduction project.

"The success of this species recovery project is largely dependent on raising public awareness and appreciation of the whooping cranes' presence once again in our state, and educating our citizens and landowners about the significance of the project," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham at the ceremony in Baton Rouge. "Chevron grant funding to this end is vital in that phase of the project."

"Chevron is proud to partner with the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation and the Department and their work to reintroduce whooping cranes to Louisiana," said Sakari Morrison, Chevron Gulf of Mexico General Manager of Public Affairs. "We recognize the importance of protecting biological diversity through programs like these that protect, sustain a viable habitat, and raise awareness and respect for the endangered species throughout our state and region."

In total, \$400,000 in Chevron grant funding from 2012 through 2014 has provided for satellite transmitter equipment and associated communications costs for tracking the movement of the whooping cranes released from LDWF's White Lake Wetland Conservation Area in Vermilion Parish. Biologists plot the birds' movement, habitat selections and adaptive behavior as they adjust to life in the wild.

Grant funds have additionally been utilized for a public outreach media campaign designed to alert the public that the birds are now on the Louisiana landscape, they should be observed from a distance if spotted and LDWF should be notified if anyone witnesses cranes being harmed. Billboards have been produced, as well as television and radio announcements, to deliver these messages.

A third key component funded by the Chevron donation provides lesson plans and classroom tools that have been made available to Louisiana middle and high school teachers through educational workshops. Teachers then deliver endangered species information to students to foster an appreciation for non-game species and awareness of the significance of LDWF's and its partners' efforts.

Additional project support was provided through Chevron's joint promotional effort with the NBA's New Orleans Pelicans that included home game wildlife awareness efforts for species found in Louisiana such as the alligator, the black bear and the whooping crane; and inclusion in the George Rodrigue Foundation for the Arts 2014 "Student Art Competition" that featured the pelican, the whooping crane, the black bear and the bald cypress tree as images students could select as subjects for their artwork entries.

The Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation coordinated receipt and dispersal of grant funds for stewardship, public outreach and educational purposes.

The whooping crane, a very vulnerable species, was found in south Louisiana until their demise during the late 1800s and early 1900s when little conservation ethic was in existence and conversion of prairies and marsh lands to agriculture acreage became a trend. Since 2011, LDWF has soft

Louisiana, and 40 survive today. Nesting pairs within that experimental population have produced the first eggs in the wild in over 70 years, but no fledglings have resulted as yet.

The recovery plan goal is for Louisiana to reach a subpopulation of 25-30 productive pairs, which translates to about 130 cranes in Louisiana. To learn more about Louisiana's whooping crane population, go to <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/information> . To contribute to the whooping crane project or any LDWF initiative, go to the LWFF website at <http://lawff.org> .

For more information, contact Bo Boehringer at 225-765-5115 or bboehringer@wlf.la.gov .

*Photo caption -- (left to right) LDWF Secretary Robert Barham, Chevron Gulf of Mexico General Manager of Public Affairs Sakari Morrison, Chevron Gulf of Mexico Asset Development General Manager Marcia Houghton and LWF President Barney Callahan.

Zachary Richard Supporting Whooping Crane Public Awareness Effort

Release Date: 02/10/2015

Feb. 10, 2015 -- The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' (LDWF) new whooping crane public awareness television message will feature Louisiana singer-songwriter and environmentalist Zachary Richard.

In the 30-second television message, scheduled for distribution later this month, Richard emphasizes the importance of the whooping cranes' return to Louisiana and advises the public to observe the birds from a distance. The message includes a number to call if anyone sees cranes being harmed -- the toll free 1-800-442-2511 LDWF Enforcement Division's Operation Game Thief hotline.

The television spot announcements were funded by Chevron as part of a grant administered by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation (LWFF). Chevron has provided financial support for the department's whooping crane reintroduction project since 2011.

"Zachary Richard's support for this project is greatly appreciated and we hope his message furthers the department's efforts to protect whooping cranes, especially during these critical early years of the reintroduction project," said Robert Love, LDWF Coastal and Nongame Resources Division administrator. "The Chevron grant funding has been vital in getting this message out to the public."

The whooping crane, a very vulnerable species, was found in south Louisiana until their decline during the late 1800s and early 1900s when little conservation ethic was in existence and conversion of prairies and marsh lands to agriculture acreage became a trend. Since 2011, LDWF has soft released 64 isolation-reared, juvenile cranes provided by the US Geological Survey Research Center in Patuxent, Md., into rural southwest Louisiana, and 40 survive today. Cranes in the experimental population that have not survived include those lost to disease, predator species and six birds killed in random shooting incidents.

In 2014, a breeding pair in Louisiana produced eggs in the wild for the first time in over 60 years. No chicks resulted in 2014, but project biologists are optimistic for 2015 since the mating pair has matured.

The recovery plan goal is for Louisiana to reach a subpopulation of 25-30 productive pairs, which translates to about 130 cranes in Louisiana. This process could take 15 to 20 years. To learn more about Louisiana's whooping crane population and view the Zachary Richard public awareness message, go to <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-cranes> . To contribute to the whooping crane project or any LDWF initiative, go to the LWFF website at <http://lawff.org> .

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is charged with managing and protecting Louisiana's abundant natural resources. For more information, visit us at www.wlf.louisiana.gov, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ldwffb or follow us on Twitter @LDWF.

For additional information, contact Bo Boehringer at 225-765-5115 or bboehringer@wlf.la.gov .

\$10,000 Reward Offered for Information on Shooting of Endangered Whooping Crane in Vermilion Parish

Release Date: 01/21/2015

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) Enforcement Division agents are looking for leads regarding an endangered whooping crane that was found shot in Vermilion Parish.

The crane was found just south of Zaunbrecher Road and north of Gueydan on Nov. 2 with an apparent bullet wound to her upper left leg. The bird was transported to the LSU Vet School where she was euthanized on Nov. 3. A necropsy result received on Jan. 8 confirmed that the crane was shot in the leg.

Up to \$10,000 is being offered by various groups for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the illegal killing of this whooping crane. LDWF's Operation Game Thief program and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation are each offering a reward of \$1,000; The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and The Humane Society Wildlife Land Trust are offering up to \$5,000; and the department secured \$3,000 from anonymous donors.

"Anytime we lose one of these cranes it sets us back in our efforts to restore the whooping crane population to its historic levels in Louisiana," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "These cranes were once native birds to Louisiana and the department would like to see them thrive again in the future with a sustainable population."

Julia Breaux, Louisiana state director for The HSUS, said: "Killing a whooping crane is a serious crime. We are grateful to LDWF Enforcement Division agents for their critical work to stop the poaching of these birds, which undermines the agency's efforts to restore and protect whooping cranes in Louisiana. We urge anyone with information to step forward so the offender may be brought to justice."

Anyone with information regarding this illegal killing should call the Louisiana Operation Game Thief hotline at 1-800-442-2511 or use LDWF's tip411 program. To use the tip411 program, residents can text LADWF and their tip to 847411 or download the "LADWF Tips" iPhone and Android app from the Apple App Store or Google Play free of charge. The hotline and the tip411 are monitored 24 hours a day. Upon request, informants can remain anonymous.

LDWF has released 64 whooping cranes since 2011 and are currently tracking 40 whooping cranes. The crane in this case had been released in January of 2014 and represents the sixth whooping crane found shot since the birds were released.

The re-introduced whooping cranes came from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md., and they were placed in the coastal marsh of Vermilion Parish within LDWF's White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area (WCA). This re-introduced population marked the first presence of whooping cranes in the wild in Louisiana since 1950.

LDWF is working cooperatively with the USFWS, USGS, the International Crane Foundation and the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to bring the species back to the state. This non-migratory flock of whooping cranes is designated as a non-essential, experimental population but is protected under state law, the Endangered Species Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Whooping cranes, the most endangered of all of the world's crane species, were first added to the federal status of an endangered species on March 11, 1967.

Historically, both resident and migratory populations of whooping cranes were present in Louisiana through the early 1940s. Whooping cranes inhabited the marshes and ridges of the state's southwest Chenier Coastal Plain, as well as the uplands of prairie terrace habitat to the north. Within this area, whooping cranes used three major habitats: tall grass prairie, freshwater marsh, and brackish/salt marsh. The Louisiana crane population was not able to withstand the pressure of human encroachment, primarily the conversion of nesting habitat to agricultural acreage, as well as hunting and specimen collection, which also occurred across North America. The last bird in southwest Louisiana was removed to a sanctuary in 1950.

For more information, contact Adam Einck at aeinck@wlf.la.gov or 225-765-2465.

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
PO BOX 98000
2000 QUAIL DRIVE
BATON ROUGE, LA 70898
800.256.2749
225.765.2800
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