





Nancy W. Rodgers
R.D. 1 Box 267 RRR Ranch
Volant, PA 16156

412 533 4236

248-01-1993

PENNSYLVANIA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS PROJECT
* * * SPECIAL SPECIES REPORT * * *

Details are needed for all species that are rare or of uncertain breeding status in Pennsylvania (those marked with an asterisk on the field card and handbook). These supporting data are essential for the records to be used in the project and will improve our knowledge of the species. If you discover one of these birds, notify your Regional Coordinator immediately. Thank you for your cooperation.

SPECIES: Sandhill Crane (Grus canadensis) OBSERVER: Nancy W. Rodgers
LOCATION - QUAD NAME: Harlansburg ADDRESS: R.D. 1 Box 267 RRR Ranch
QUAD #: 4 1 0 8 0 1 BLOCK #: 4 Volant, PA 16156
REGION #: 28 COUNTY Lawrence PHONE #: (412) 533 4236

EXACT LOCATION: (Distance and directions from nearest town or crossroads):
The cranes were seen 2.2 miles north of Rte. 108 on SR 1013, Plain Grove Road, or 1060 feet south of T-547, Grange Hall Road, on SR 1013. The three were very close together east of the road a distance of 150 feet; they were feeding and walking slowly southward until they saw the van stop. They turned east and began walking quickly away. We left then, not wanting to frighten them. Just knowing they hatched a baby was such a thrill.
SIGHTING DATES: 4 and 10 August 1993

Was bird unsuccessfully searched for at a later date? Yes No When? I will probably continue looking for them daily. Four others have seen them after our first sighting.
HABITAT - Describe the general area and specific location: Plain Grove and Washington Twp. are farmlands with mostly deciduous woods; there are also many wetlands. Specifically, the cranes were in a pasture with a grove of very large, old trees. East of the trees is an area of tall, dead grass and beyond that more groves and pasture. August 10 they were in a wet area of pasture with reeds and near a grove of very large trees about 1 mile from the first sighting.

NEST SITE HABITAT (Height, plant species, etc): Presumed to be in Celery Swamp as per Gene Wilhelm. Gene has reports of early spring sightings this year at Celery Swamp.

HIGHEST BREEDING CODE USED: FL

FEEDING BEHAVIOR - Give details that indicate this species is breeding.
Indicate dates of confirmed breeding sightings. The cranes were in our area last year and were seen in the mating dance then as well as this spring. On 29 March Greg Coates saw them fly over Rte 19 at the RRR Ranch. On 4 August 1993 Lois Cooper & I saw the 2 adults and an immature. Lois Cooper, Gene Wilhelm, Barb & George Dean, Harriet Bauer and I have seen the three cranes within the last week. I will continue to watch them when I can find them. More details with identification.

SIGHTING CONDITIONS - Distance, length of time, light, weather, optics, etc.
On 4 August the rain had stopped about ten minutes when we found them. There were clouds but the light was pretty good. At 150 feet we could see the two red crowns and the one without red on its crown, we also used my Leitz Trinovid 10 x 25 binocular. They were feeding and walking slowly south but when I stopped the van they turned east and began walking faster. They are so wary; we only watched about 2 minutes and left, not wanting them to be any more frightened. It was about 10:45 a.m. EDT.

Continued on other side...

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EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: Lois Cooper had seen the cranes in Plain Grove last summer. I have seen countless Sandhill Cranes in Florida on birding trips in ranchlands (see below).
IDENTIFICATION - Describe plumage, song, call notes, size, shape and all diagnostic characteristics. Report only what was actually seen in the field. All three of the cranes are about the same size, a bit smaller than the Great Blue Heron and different in shape. Standing the cranes' backs slope and the tail droops; they keep their necks pretty straight. The legs are black and long. The bill of the adults is black. The bill of the immature is much the same as its plumage, reddish rust. The adults I've seen in Florida have always been gray and in 1992 when I saw them in Plain Grove Twp. they were gray but this summer the adults and the immature are all very reddish rust. (See below)
Sex and age: M F Immature Adult Undetermined (circle all plumages)

OTHER OBSERVERS: Lois Cooper of R.D. 1 Volant, PA 16156, phone 412 533 4316, Gene Wilhelm, Barb & George Dean, Harriett Bauer

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS OBSERVED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-9, 10-20, 21-50, 50-100, > 100, unknown. (circle).

Is this an exact count or estimate? Exact count

OTHER DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED: Used nest _____
Photographs _____
Other - explain _____

SIGNATURE (Observer) Nancy W. Rodgers DATE OF REPORT: 10 Aug 1993

SIGNATURE (Regional Coordinator) _____ DATE: _____

Thank you for taking the time to document this significant sighting. This information will increase our knowledge of this uncommon species. Additional details may be written below. Regional Coordinator - forward this report to:

Daniel Brauning, Pennsylvania Breeding Bird Atlas Project, The Academy of Natural Sciences, 19th and The Parkway, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

EXPERIENCE WITH SPECIES: and I also saw these cranes in Plain Grove Twp. in summer 1992.

IDENTIFICATION The adults have gray on about 6 to 8 inches of the upper neck and the forehead or crown is a deep American Beauty Rose red. The crown of the immature is rust colored, matching the rest of the plumage. The area above and below the eye is pale in both the adults and the immature; it gives the young one a gawky expression. Even though the birds stand out well from the green reeds, grass or trees, they still are able to lie down among the reeds with only head and a little neck showing and virtually disappear.

Both on the 4th and 10th of August when we saw them the view was unobstructed. The first day this year when Lois Cooper spotted them we saw them from about 150 feet. The next time I saw them the distance was from 100 to 300 feet as they stayed in the same area and I viewed them for more than an hour. Both days My Leitz Trinovid 10 x 25 binocular was used. The light was better on the second day and they were not always under trees.

On 10 August one adult caught a small animal and slowly killed it by beating it on the ground and stabbing it with its bill. When the animal was finally dead and lay on the grass, the other adult ate it. There was no protest from either the immature or the other adult. The cranes stayed for at least 4 hours in the wet reeded area of the Rodgers Road pasture feeding, resting, and preening. Barb & George Dean saw all three take off from a hayfield and fly.

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Dear Birders

On 4 August 1993 Lois Cooper and I saw two adult Sandhill Cranes and one young crane in Plain Grove Twp., Lawrence County, PA.

Enclosed is a Breeding Bird Atlas Project Special Species Report used at the suggestion of Gene Wilhelm. I am also enclosing a portion of the Harlansburg Quadrangle Map marked to indicate the location where the three birds were first seen. If there are any questions, you may contact me at any time.

Sincerely

Nancy W. Rodgers

Nancy W. Rodgers

Dear Dan

If I see any interesting behavior among the crane family I will write it up. Last evening I was out on Bonanni Rd. when a resident there pulled up and asked, "Have you seen those Sandhill Cranes this year?"

I'm sure he's not a birder but he, too, has been waiting to see them again. They are easy to see if you can find their location. We have a number of hot spots & checking them all I drive about 20 to 30 miles or more each trip. It's great fun when I arrive at the right place at the right time.

I'm free to escort birders to search for the cranes.

n

Sandhill Cranes of Lawrence County

by
Nancy W. Rodgers
R.D. 1 Box 267 RRR Ranch
Volant, PA 16156
412 533 4236

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On the evening of May 9, 1992 my husband and I saw two Sandhill Cranes land in Celery Swamp. Later in the summer Barb Dean told me that there were cranes in Plain Grove Twp. My friend, Lois Cooper, and I saw them two or three times in different locations.

On March 29, 1993 Greg Coates, our son-in-law, saw two tan cranes fly over Rte. 19 and the RRR Ranch, our home. I began to search in earnest around mid July. I heard a PBS program report the young cranes fly 60 days after hatching.

On the 4th of August Lois Cooper and I were looking for the Sandhill Cranes. It had rained and was still cloudy but light enough at 10:45 a.m. to see well. We were driving south on the Plain Grove Road when Lois spotted them. I turned around and went back to the spot. There were three Sandhill Cranes in the pasturefield near the very large old trees. We could see the red on the heads of the two adults and the third one had a rust colored head with light area above and below the eye. They were feeding as they walked south but after we stopped they turned and began walking quickly east. They were evading us and we left after about 2 minutes hoping not to frighten them more.

The adult Sandhill Cranes I've seen in Florida over the years have always been gray and in 1992 when I saw them in Plain Grove Twp. they were gray. Greg described them as sort of tan when he saw them in March but this summer the adults and the immature are all a very reddish rust color. The adults have gray on about 6 to 8 inches of their upper necks and the forehead or crown is a deep American Beauty Rose red. The crown of the immature is rust colored, matching the rest of the plumage. The area above and below the eye is pale in both the adults and the immature; it gives the young one a gawky expression. Even though the birds stand out well from the green reeds, grass and trees, they are still able to lie down among the reeds with their heads & necks showing and virtually disappear.

On the second day I saw them the cranes were about a mile southeast of the first location, again in a pasturefield. This field had a stream and a wet area with reeds. They were from 100 to 300 feet away and down over a tall bank from the road; they were still very alert but content to stay and feed. One adult caught a small animal and slowly killed it by beating it on the ground and stabbing it with its bill. When the animal finally died and lay on the grass, the second adult ate it. There was no protest from either the first adult or the immature. The cranes stayed at least four hours on the 10th of August and were again reported at the same spot by Harriett Bauer on August 11, 1993. They spend their time feeding, resting, and preening. Barb and George Dean reported them in a hayfield on Plain Grove Road earlier and they watched as the crane family took flight.

Last summer when we learned that the Sandhill Cranes were here and had also been here in 1991, Gene Wilhelm thought it was possible that they might return to breed and nest. It was almost too much to hope for. I searched and searched as I said earlier and finding them has been the most exciting birding find Lois Cooper and I have had since we saw the first three eaglets at the Glades in Butler Co. I feel Lois and I are part of birding history in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation - Round # 1 of

Species: Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*)
 Date of Sighting: 4 August 1993 to 12 October 1993
 Location: PLAIN GROVE TWP
 County: LAWRENCE
 Observer(s): Nancy Rodgers
 Gene Wilhelm
 Date of Submission: 1993
 Submitted by: Nancy Rodgers; Gene Wilhelm
 Written Description: YES Photo: YES Specimen: NO
 Recording: NONE

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V			Abstain
					A	B	C	
F. Haas	X							
N. Pulcinella	X							
E. Kwater	X							
R. Ickes	X							
G. McWilliams	X							
P. Schwalbe	X							
J. Skinner	X							
TOTALS	7							
DECISION	X							

Comments:

Signature (Secretary):

F. C. Haas

Date:

9-25-94