

# GUIDE FOR EVALUATION OF WHOOPING CRANE SIGHTING LOCATIONS

## Introduction

The primary objective of this form is to provide guidance related to the kinds of data which are needed from locations where whooping cranes have been sighted. A whooping crane sighting or report of a sighting should first be recorded on the attached form, Whooping Crane Sighting Record. Once that form is completed, the following information should be obtained for each sighting location. Please be as detailed as possible in recording data. Attach the two forms securely together. Daily or other periodic observations should use additional forms.

- I. **Describe Location:** Record location of sighting as exact as possible (Mileage on specific roads, names and numbers of townships and sections, etc.).
- II. **Photograph Location:** Obtain a good quality photograph showing an overall view of sighting location.
- III. **Describe Habitat:** If a wetland, describe, if possible, on basis of Cowardin, et al, 1976, Interim Classification of Wetlands Aquatic Habitats of the United States. *Proceedings National Wetland Classification and Inventory Workshop*.

The following information should also be recorded.

- A. Describe water where crane(s) observed.
  1. Depth
  2. Quality (clear, turbid, salinity, etc.)
  3. Bottom Characteristics (soft, mud, sand, etc.)
- B. Describe aquatic plant community where cranes observed.
  1. Dominant species
  2. Sub-dominant species
  3. Density of vegetation (scattered, dense, choked, etc.)
  4. Density of vegetation immediately surrounding sighting area (pond surrounded by grass fringe 3 feet high, marshy meadow with grass and sedges less than 12 inches high, etc.)
- C. Describe surrounding upland habitat types (wheat and corn fields, sandhills, with native grass, etc.)
- D. Describe the abundance of potential whooping crane food (scattered waste grain, abundant nutgrass tubers, numerous frogs, crayfish or snails, etc.)
- E. Give an idea of numbers and species of other migrating wildlife utilizing the same area (sandhill cranes, waterfowl, etc.)
- F. Describe stability and security of habitat type and any nearby activities which could threaten the site or the cranes (perennial cultivated cropland, marsh slated for drainage, wet meadow threatened by dame construction, etc.).

- G. What is the extent of similar habitats in surrounding areas (within 10 mile radius)?
- H. What is the ownership of the area where the cranes were observed (federal, private, state, etc.)?

IV. **Details of Whooping Crane Use:**

- A. How manage, wet meadow threatened by dame construction, etc.).
- B. Describe behavior of cranes while under observation (feeding in water, feeding along shoreline, roosting on sandbar, etc.). If cranes were observed feeding, what were they believed to be eating?
- C. Describe any other observations which may be of interest (such as any interaction between whooping cranes and other wildlife or humans, flight patterns observed etc.).