

Neat facts about whooping cranes...



An average Whooping Crane (WC) egg is 102 mm long (4 inches), and weighs 208 grams (7 ounces).



Whooping crane eggs are incubated, on average, for 30 days.



Egg color varies from a soft blue to a gray-green or tan, usually with tan and brown splotches.



In the wild both parents feed and raise the chick.



The splotchy color of the egg provides natural camouflage against the russet colors of the nest. This helps keep it safe from predators.



Wild female Whooping cranes normally produce 2 eggs but usually only one chick survives.



Whooper chicks have down, not feathers, when they hatch.



Whoopers are born with blue eyes that change color as they grow older. At about three months, their eyes will be a vivid aquamarine color. At approximately six months of age their eyes will be bright gold.



Whooper parents have to teach their chicks to eat and drink. They teach them to eat by catching food for them--insects, small fish and invertebrates, and small mammals like mice or voles.



There is only one remaining flock of wild, migratory whooping cranes. This flock, numbering fewer than 200 birds, migrates annually from Wood Buffalo National Park in northern Canada to the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas Gulf coast. This arduous journey is almost 2700 miles and takes several weeks. They migrate this path with their young-of-the-year chicks, which are usually around 5 months old when the migration begins. It was this flock that once dwindled down to only 15 birds in the early 1940's. Active intervention on the part of the United States government, the Canadian government and numerous conservation groups helped pull this flock from the brink of extinction.

