

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



# News Release

## *Midwest Region*

### *External Affairs Office*

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## **With Anonymous Contribution, Reward for Information on Shooting of Whooping Crane in Indiana Reaches \$10,000**

A private citizen has pledged an additional \$2,500 to the reward offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who shot a whooping crane near Cayuga, Ind., between Nov. 28 and Dec. 1, 2009. With that contribution, the total reward now stands at up to \$10,000.

The citizen, who asked to remain anonymous, expressed sadness and frustration with the loss of the crane and said that the offer is an effort to help wildlife law enforcement officers find the perpetrator.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is offering \$2,500 for information leading to an arrest and conviction. On Dec. 15, Defenders of Wildlife and the Indiana Turn in a Poacher or a Polluter Program (TIP) pledged \$2,500 each toward the reward.

Wildlife law enforcement agents with the Service and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are investigating the shooting of the crane. The crane was last observed by an International Crane Foundation staff member on Saturday, Nov. 28. An ICF volunteer found the carcass on and Tuesday, Dec. 1, along West County Road 310 North, just west of North County Road 225 West.

The crane was identified by a leg band, and determined to be the seven-year old mother of "Wild-1," the only whooping crane chick successfully hatched (in 2006) and migrated from captivity.

There are approximately 500 whooping cranes left in the world. The crane and its mate were among 19 whooping cranes migrating from their summer grounds in Wisconsin to their wintering grounds in Florida.

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Observations reported by the public play a key role in solving wildlife crime, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Buddy Shapp. “People who live in an area notice details that can tell us a lot,” Shapp said. “They sometimes see something or hear something that strikes them as unusual but not necessarily criminal. People might not realize that their observation is significant.”

Anyone with information should call the Indiana Department of Natural Resources 24-hour hotline at: 1-800 TIP IDNR (800-847-4367), or the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at 317-346-7016. Callers can remain anonymous.

In addition to the Endangered Species Act, whooping cranes are protected by state laws and the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The Indiana DNR is the guardian of the state’s fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. More information about the Indiana DNR is available at:  
<http://www.in.gov/dnr>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.