

**ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION
CRISIS IN THE ENVIRONMENT**



THREAT TO THE WHOOPING CRANE



**Susan Sales Harkins and
William H. Harkins**



Copyright © 2009 by Mitchell Lane Publishers. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Printing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

A Robbie Reader/On the Verge of Extinction: Crisis in the Environment

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Frogs in Danger | Threat to the Giant Panda |
| Polar Bears on the Hudson Bay | Threat to the Leatherback Turtle |
| The Snows of Kilimanjaro | Threat to the Monarch Butterfly |
| Threat to Ancient Egyptian Treasures | Threat to the Spotted Owl |
| Threat to Haiti | Threat to the Whooping Crane |
| Threat to the Bengal Tiger | Threat to the Yangtze River Dolphin |

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Harkins, Susan Sales.

Threat to the whooping crane / by Susan Sales Harkins and William H. Harkins.

p. cm. — (On the verge of extinction)

“A Robbie Reader.”

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-58415-685-7 (library bound)

1. Whooping crane—Juvenile literature. 2. Birds—Conservation—Juvenile literature.
3. Endangered species—Juvenile literature. I. Harkins, William H. II. Title.

QL696.G84H36 2008

598.3'2—dc22

2008008037

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Susan and William Harkins live in Kentucky, where they enjoy writing together for children. Susan has written many books for adults and children. William is a history buff. In addition to writing, he is a member of the Air National Guard.

PHOTO CREDITS: Cover, pp. 3, 7, 8, 13—Earl Nottingham/Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; pp. 1, 4, 11, 12, 18, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27—U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, Patuxent Wildlife Refuge Research Center, Laurel, Maryland; pp. 1 (small picture), 14—International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, Wisconsin.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: The facts on which this story is based have been thoroughly researched. While every possible effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the publisher will not assume liability for damages caused by inaccuracies in the data, and makes no warranty on the accuracy of the information contained herein.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	5
Dancers in the Sky	
Chapter Two	9
Whooping Crane Life	
Chapter Three	15
Delicate Balance	
Chapter Four	19
The People Factor	
Chapter Five	23
Past Solutions and Future Hopes	
What You Can Do	29
Find Out More	30
Works Consulted	30
Glossary	31
Index	32

Words in **bold** type can be found in the glossary.



Chapter One

1



DANCERS IN THE SKY

In October, **arctic** winds sweep across Canada. The days grow short. In a chilled **marsh**, whooping cranes raise their red heads to greet the cold wind.

It's time to fly south to the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. When the wind is strong enough, the huge cranes leap into the air and leave the cold marsh behind.

After many days of flying, the air grows balmy. Gracefully, the cranes glide down to their winter home. The Texas air is calm and the sun is gentle. Whooping cranes feast on crabs, snails, and small fish. With full bellies,

they fall asleep under the autumn moon. When they wake, they call softly to one another. *Ker-LOOOOO. Ker-LOOOOO.*

A single crane bows its head and flaps its wings. Then it leaps into the air and throws its head back. Its beak reaches for the sky.

Others join the dance. Some dance alone. Some dance in pairs. Sometimes, the whole **flock** dances together.

Across the marsh, red heads bob. Cranes leap and stretch toward the starry sky. White feathers flash in the moonlight. All winter, they eat, rest, and dance.

In April, the whooping cranes fly north to Canada. There, a single crane bows to its mate. The dance begins again. The crane flaps its wings and leaps into the air. Its mate returns the bow, flaps its wings, and runs toward the leaping bird.

When the spring dance is over, the cranes pair off to build nests. For a while, the dancing stops. They are too busy babysitting to dance.





When whoopers are young, they need the right food and plenty of exercise to build strong legs and wings. At five months old, chicks must be strong enough to fly from Canada to Texas.

The chicks spend the summer eating and growing. In late summer, the crane families gather once more. As a group, they begin to bow and leap. The nearly grown chicks flap, jump, and stretch. Soon, the entire flock is bowing, leaping, and stretching. Even before the chicks learn to fly, they learn to dance.

You've Just Finished your Free Sample

Enjoyed the preview?

Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>