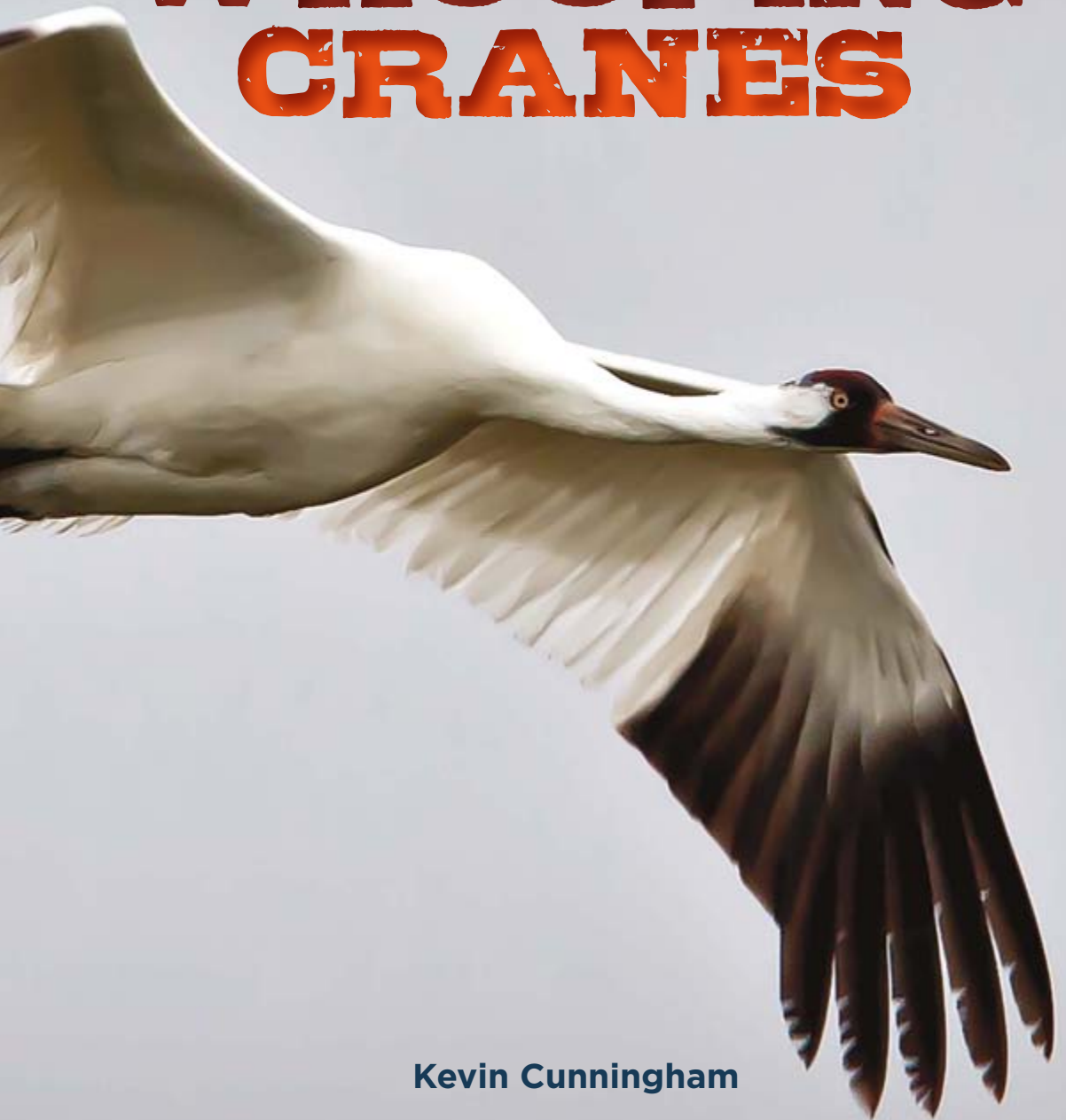


**ANIMALS IN
DANGER**

WHOOPING CRANES



Kevin Cunningham

Mitchell Lane

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CHAPTER
ONE

**CLOSE
CALL**



Hillary Thompson studies whooping cranes. She tracks transmitters worn by whoopers. These transmitters teach researchers about each crane. They also make it easy to count the birds. Scientists closely watch the population. Not long ago, the whooping crane almost died out for good.

CHAPTER ONE

Thompson's research looked at young adult cranes released into the wild. Humans raised these birds. Thompson learned the newcomers often flew away after being released. No one knows why. But scientists accept they must always find more information to answer questions.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists the whooping crane as **endangered**. It is one of the world's rarest large bird species.

Whoopers once flew all over the middle of North America. Experts believe the population numbered between 15,000 and 20,000 birds. By 1941, only 15 or 16 whooping cranes remained alive. Hunting and the loss of **habitat** killed most of the rest.



The U.S. Postal Service put whooping cranes on a stamp in 1957.

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