



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### CAPTIVE WHOOPING CRANES MAY PROVE CRITICAL IN PRESERVING SPECIES

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross L. Leffler said today he has telegraphed his congratulations to the two men under whose care two whooping crane eggs were incubated and hatched in captivity.

Receiving the Assistant Secretary's messages were George Douglass, superintendent of the Audubon Park Zoo at New Orleans, Louisiana, and George Scott, consulting aviiculturist of the New York Zoological Society who is acting as Fish and Wildlife Service collaborator for the project.

Commenting on the importance of the two young whoopers, Director Daniel H. Janzen of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife pointed out that because of the longer potential period of reproduction possible with captive birds as opposed to their wild cousins, captive birds may prove to be the determining factor in the successful preservation of this rare species. It is known that the mother of the already-famous chicks at New Orleans is at least 18 years old. Biologists say that this is probably much older than the age usually attained by wild cranes.

The successful incubation by the rare whooping cranes, which are on the "endangered species" list, has aroused the interest of millions of bird-loving Americans. Other bird species which are considered near extinction, or already extinct, are the ivory-billed woodpecker, the California condor, the Eskimo curlew, the Hudsonian godwit, and the Puerto Rican parrot.

Concern over vanishing species has become conspicuous in this country, Fish and Wildlife Service officials say. Since that Service has responsibility for preservation of all our migratory birds, there is especial interest among Service ornithologists over prospects of maintaining at least remnant numbers of one of the endangered-bird group.

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