

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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WHOOPING CRANE POPULATION GROWS TO RECORD 57

The world's population of wild whooping cranes has increased to a record 57, one more than last year, the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife reported today.

An aerial survey at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, where the rare birds winter after spending summer in the Canadian wilds, revealed 51 adult and 6 young whoopers on the refuge grounds and adjacent Matagorda Island.

This tops last year's record of 56 which consisted of 48 adults and 8 young. Wild whoopers numbered just 15 in 1941, exceeded 30 in 1947 and topped 40 in 1964.

In addition to the wild whoopers, 19 of these majestic cranes, North America's tallest birds, are held in captivity--14 at the Bureau's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center near Laurel, Md., 3 at Audubon Park Zoo in New Orleans, and 2 at San Antonio Zoo.

Of Patuxent's total, 12 have resulted from whooping crane egg pickups in Canada in recent years. The eggs, in danger of abandonment by their parents, were brought to help build up breeding stock for future years.

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