

Have you ever seen a whooping crane? If so, it was probably in a zoo. Authorities believe that fewer than sixty whooping cranes exist in the wild. When Europeans first came to America, the whooping cranes in this country numbered 1,500 at most. The population once dipped as low as twenty-two.

Why has the world's population of whooping cranes become so small? The world today contains many hazards for these birds. It is now illegal to kill whooping cranes, but hunters over the years have taken a toll. Marshes and swampy areas where cranes can breed are not as plentiful as they once were. Power lines in the flight path are another peril for cranes, which migrate from Canada to Texas each year. The rate of reproduction has had trouble keeping up with the death rate.

In Texas, whooping cranes can be seen at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is about an hour's drive from Corpus Christi and is located on Aransas Bay.

Other birds at the refuge are herons, pelicans, and flocks of egrets. These birds, together with the long-legged whooping cranes, can be seen from a viewing tower in the refuge. People can also visit this wildlife preserve by boat to catch a glimpse of the rare birds.

Whooping cranes migrate 2,500 miles from Canada to Aransas in October and leave again in April. If you happen to be in Texas during the cranes' stay, you will find them an impressive sight. Cranes are elegant birds with long necks and long legs. The largest ones stand about five feet high. Their wings spread to seven feet or more. A glimpse of this type of bird is really something special.



- A whooping crane is a
 - rare bird.
 - pelican.
 - heron.
 - large duck.
- People can see whooping cranes in
 - most cities in Texas.
 - New York's Central Park.
 - Corpus Christi.
 - a wildlife refuge.
- Many whooping cranes have died from
 - being too large.
 - things people have done.
 - poor treatment in zoos.
 - fighting with other birds.
- A refuge is a
 - safe place.
 - place that's always cold.
 - small bird.
 - large fire.
- At the refuge, you can see cranes
 - in flocks of 100 or more.
 - from a viewing tower.
 - from the windows of a bus.
 - diving under motorboats.
- The rate of reproduction tells
 - how many adults are healthy.
 - which birds are still alive.
 - how many birds are born.
 - the number that need help.
- This selection is mainly about
 - a pelican's way of fishing.
 - boating in Aransas Bay.
 - whooping cranes and their refuge.
 - bird population in earlier days.
- A person who sees a whooping crane
 - should shoot it quickly.
 - is likely to be impressed.
 - will take the bird home.
 - will find it boring.

Time _____ # Correct _____