



Dane County Humane Society Board of Directors Position Statement Hunting Sandhill Cranes

Date Last Modified: March 14, 2022

Hunting Sandhill Cranes

Dane County Humane Society specifically opposes the hunting of sandhill cranes in Wisconsin. Sandhill cranes are a species with a slow reproductive rate due to multiple factors: their age to maturity, which for breeding individuals is estimated at 3-8 years, small annual clutch sizes, and monogamous pair bonding activity.¹ Removal of monogamous mates through new hunting practices is not ethical and this species cannot rebound quickly in the event of unsustainable harvest due to these unique traits. DCHS believes there is not enough significant research completed in Wisconsin to support a sustainable harvest for sandhill cranes in order to maintain a healthy breeding population. Furthermore, if nuisance animal concerns are a primary factor for a proposed hunt there are additional humane deterrent strategies that can be promoted.

While DCHS recognizes Wisconsin's continued hunting traditions, we are opposed to any hunting and trapping practices that may incur significant harm, present or future, to individual wildlife animals, species, or populations and that would otherwise conflict with their ability to effectively persist. Our reasoning is primarily based on ethics and is supported by known academic research, natural history, and animal biology.

Additionally, Wisconsin hosts an experimental population of the federally endangered whooping crane. This population of whooping cranes is at risk of incidental take during any authorized sandhill crane hunting season due to their similar appearance. Whooping cranes have similar reproductive strategies to sandhill cranes and are similarly slow to reproduce.² Any loss of genetic material in this endangered species puts their recovery at risk. DCHS believes any loss of the endangered whooping crane due to a sandhill crane harvest is unacceptable and a sandhill crane hunt should not be authorized in Wisconsin.

References:

1. Gerber, B. D., J. F. Dwyer, S. A. Nesbitt, R. C. Drewien, C. D. Littlefield, T. C. Tacha, and P. A. Vohs (2020). Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (A. F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.sancra.01>
2. Urbanek, R. P. and J. C. Lewis (2020). Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*), version 1.0. In *Birds of the World* (A. F. Poole, Editor). Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY, USA. <https://doi.org/10.2173/bow.whocra.01>