

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Local Count of Sandhill Cranes Hits Record High

A record high number of Sandhill Cranes was recorded in Stephenson County on Saturday, April 18 when 28 members of the Northwest Illinois Audubon Society participated in the 34th Annual Midwest Crane Count. Included in the count of 31 cranes were 7 nesting pairs.

Counting conditions were ideal according to Stephenson County Crane Count Coordinator Mary Blackmore, with calm winds and fair weather. “We were very pleased with the results for Stephenson County,” said Blackmore.

Twelve sites were monitored from 5:30 – 7:30 AM, the official county time. Seven of those sites included wetlands along Richland Creek, three were near the Pecatonica River and two were in wetlands along smaller streams. All of the Richland Creek sites had cranes.

Sandhill Cranes once experienced severe population declines in the late 1800s to early 1900s in the Upper Midwest, but have recovered successfully. Cranes have been counted in Stephenson County since 1995 when 3 cranes were observed. It’s very encouraging to see the Sandhill Crane population increasing locally,” said Blackmore.

The Annual Midwest Crane Count takes place in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa and is sponsored by the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The Count is used to monitor the general population trend of Sandhill Cranes in the Upper Midwest, as well as to promote awareness of cranes and wetland conservation throughout the count area.

For more information contact Mary Blackmore at 815-938-3204, or visit the local Audubon Chapter’s website at nwilaudubon.org.

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