

Ohio Sandhill Crane Count 2022 – Saturday April 9, 2022

Volunteer Guide and Protocol Using eBird

Coordinated by the International Crane Foundation (ICF), Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative (OBCI), and Ohio Division of Wildlife (ODW)

Objectives:

- 1) Improve knowledge of breeding sandhill crane (state threatened species) abundance and distribution in Ohio
- 2) Raise awareness of sandhill cranes and their presence in Ohio
- 3) Provide additional occurrence and abundance data for other Ohio breeding species using eBird

County Coordinator Responsibilities:

1) Pre-survey:

-  Oversee volunteer recruitment (recruit volunteers – goal: 10 survey blocks per county) and assignments to survey blocks.
 - Minimum Effort Per Survey Block: 1-2 volunteers/1 vehicle
 - Prioritize blocks assignments in this order 1) red, 2) green, 3) blue
 - Advise volunteers on areas within their block assignment that may have potential habitat for Sandhill Cranes
-  Attend training meeting for county coordinators in early March, and
-  Assist organizers with volunteer education/training in mid-late March. (5-10 hour total time commitment)
-  Help to answer pre-survey questions of volunteers prior to the survey.
-  If observers are not able to use E-bird and will have assistance in submitting sightings, review what's required for the Annual Midwest Crane Count Data Entry Form (see separate Protocol "Standard Data Entry")

2) Day of Survey:

-  Participate in the count on April 9, 2022 (2-5 hour time commitment)

3) Post-Survey:

-  Assist organizers with data collection (2-5 hour time commitment)
-  With the use of eBird, we expect there to be minimal work for coordinators on the data collection side.

Volunteer Responsibilities (5-10 hours):

- 1) Pre-survey: Attend training webinar (mid-late March) and review training material prior to survey (3 hours):
 -  Learn how to identify sandhill cranes by sound and sight prior to survey See: <https://www.savingcranes.org/species-field-guide/sandhill-crane/>
https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Sandhill_Crane/id
 -  Observers are encouraged to create/have a free eBird account* <https://ebird.org>
*Note: observers not using E-bird should consult their County Coordinator for the separate protocol for “Standard Data Entry Form”
 -  Download and learn how to use the eBird mobile app, or the web data uploading portal <https://ebird.org/submit>
 -  If time allows, scout your area sometime prior to the survey to become familiar with potential sandhill crane habitats, identify safe roadside pull-off areas for survey, etc. (2-4 hours)

- 2) Day of Survey: Survey assigned block for the 2 hours (630-830 AM) on the day of the count (April 9, 2022)

- 3) Post-survey: Submit data via eBird (1 hour) or Crane Count Data Entry Form (see separate protocol)

Safety Precautions:

- Please take appropriate COVID-19 safety precautions when interacting with others.
- **Hunting Seasons:** In some areas, turkey hunting season will be open. Although you will be along roads and theoretically out of harm’s way, do wear hunter/safety orange vests or clothing as an extra precaution.
- Please dress appropriately for the weather.
- Work in pairs if possible. It’s safer and improves detectability rates of the birds.

Crane Count Etiquette - <https://savingcranes.org/counter-information/>

- Please give cranes the respect and distance they need and do not approach birds on foot within 200 yards. If you are in a vehicle, remain in your vehicle and do not approach any closer than 100 yards.

- Please remain concealed and do not speak loudly enough that the birds can hear you.

- Finally, do not trespass on private property in an attempt to view or count cranes. *Thank you!*

Survey Protocol:

Be within the survey block and ready to survey by 6:30 AM (prior to sunrise at 6:45 AM)

Stay along roadways and respect private property boundaries

Visit areas with potential crane breeding habitat within the survey block (10 square miles; the same blocks used for the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas projects) and period between 6:30 – 8:30 AM. You may survey longer, but note that on the data sheet/include that time in an eBird checklist.

At each area/stop, record locations and counts of sandhill cranes within the survey area.

- Estimate distance and direction from your survey location
- Use the Midwest Crane Count datasheet if you want to write observations on paper:
https://www.savingcranes.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/annual_midwest_crane_count_data_sheet_2016_2.pdf

Keep track of any other birds detected by sight and sound, including numbers and breeding codes. Use eBird Mobile with the following protocols:

- Please enter counts of individuals, and breeding codes, for as many species as possible. For sandhill cranes, remember to include estimated distance and direction from your survey location.
- Use the stationary count protocol (you will have multiple stationary checklists for each block).
 - Spend a minimum of 5 minutes at locations where you suspect you will detect cranes. You may spend more time at the site if you have not yet detected any cranes (budget your time accordingly to try and hit sites in the block where cranes are likely to be present).
- Select a hotspot if appropriate, otherwise create a new location
- Enter 2 for the number of observers if in a pair, 1 if alone
- In the checklist notes field, enter “Ohio Crane Count” along with the full name of both observers. In addition, enter the ID number of your survey block.
- If possible, please submit **a complete checklist** with all of the species detected during the count.
- Add photos and/or sound recordings for each species (especially cranes!) as applicable
- You can share your checklist with your birding partner(s) – only 1 person in the birding pair needs to submit the checklist, but please “share” the checklist with your birding partners
- Once submitted, please share the checklist with the following email address:
icf_ebird@savingcranes.org using the “share” button.
- All observers need to fill out the Google Form at <https://obcinet.org/get-involved/ohio-crane-count>

If you see a banded sandhill crane on the day of survey, please do your best to identify the alphanumeric code and any colors of markers. If possible, take a photograph of the bird. Please report to Laura Kearns at laura.kearns@dnr.ohio.gov.

Ohio's survey will differ from ICF's typical Midwest Crane Count in that:

- 1) We will be using Breeding Bird Atlas Survey Blocks as our survey units. We are only visiting sites with known or probable sandhill crane breeding habitat. Archived Atlas materials can be found here: <http://ohiobirds.org/obba2/> in case you are interested in the survey block design.
- 2) We will also be contributing our data to eBird as much as possible
- 3) Maps of Ohio's survey locations will be available at <https://obcinet.org/get-involved/ohio-crane-count/>
- 4) For additional information see <https://obcinet.org/get-involved/ohio-crane-count/> and <https://www.savingcranes.org/county-coordinator-resources/>

Please work with your county coordinator if you have questions. Thank you for helping to survey Ohio's sandhill cranes!