



# Audubon IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS

*Linking local, regional, national, and international efforts to better conserve birds and habitats...*



Michael Forsberg

## ***Lillian Annette Rowe Sanctuary, a Global Important Bird Area providing key habitat for migrating Whooping and Sandhill Crane***

*Owned and managed by the National Audubon Society since 1974, the 1,447-acre Lillian Annette Rowe Sanctuary encompasses 2.5 miles of river channel, wet meadows, and some agricultural fields. Every year from mid-February to early April, the Platte River in central Nebraska is the destination for more than 500,000 Sandhill Cranes during their northward migration, roughly 80 percent of the world's population. At the height of the migration in late March, Rowe Sanctuary can host as many as 70,000 cranes nightly. This is one of the highest concentrations of cranes in the world. In addition, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surveys have reported groups of globally threatened Whooping Crane, stopping over at this site for several days on their migration routes. Rowe's prairie and wet meadow habitats also are important in providing habitat for grassland birds of state concern such as Bobolink, Northern Harrier, and Dickcissel.*

*More about Rowe as an Important Bird Area...*

*"IBAs have the unique power to unite people, communities, and organizations in proactive bird conservation, one place at a time"*

*- Frank Gill, Former Chief Ornithologist, National Audubon Society*



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### **Rowe as an Important Bird Area...**

*Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites that provide essential habitat for one or more bird species. With Rowe supporting up to 70,000 cranes in migration nightly in peak migration, and over 500,000 across the entire season, the site stands out among others for its significance in hosting such high concentrations. Furthermore, Rowe has consistently served as stopover habitat for the globally threatened Whooping Crane.*

### **Protecting Birds through Focused Conservation...**

*Through identifying a network of places, such as Rowe, that serve as key habitat for at-risk species or high concentrations of species, we can focus conservation activities, to counter threats and improve conditions at these sites, to better protect these species across their range. As is the case at other IBAs across the country, the preservation of habitat and protection of birds at Rowe does require attention.*

*At Rowe, conservation issues include the maintenance of the wide river channel for the cranes through inhibiting the encroachment of trees, the associated prevention of disease, and the threat of wetlands conversion to agriculture or residential development. Educational opportunities available through the Iain Nicolson Audubon Center, located within the Sanctuary, have served as an excellent resource to educate the public about the unique ecosystem here, providing them with a firsthand understanding of the value of this site to birds and people. Understanding the site's uniqueness and sharing that with others is one step in engaging people in protecting these sites.*

### **What You Can Do to Help ...**

*Anyone can make a difference in protecting birds and habitats at these important places. Whether it's through volunteering your time in doing restoration work, advocating for the protection of a site, educating the community about a site's significance, or through direct contributions to the program, your efforts can help. For more on what you can do at Rowe and other Important Bird Areas throughout the country, contact your state coordinator. Visit [www.audubon.org/bird/iba/state\\_coords.html](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/state_coords.html)*



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**Visit Rowe Sanctuary**  
[www.rowsanctuary.org](http://www.rowsanctuary.org)

**Learn more about the Important Bird Areas Program**  
[www.audubon.org/bird/iba](http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba)