

Whoop It Up!



Fish and Wildlife Association

Whooping Crane

Whooping Crane

Scientists have been teaching whooping cranes to fly south.

Dressed in a white costume, scientist Joe Duff pretended to be a whooping crane. He might have looked silly, but he had an important job to do. Duff trained a flock of whooping crane chicks in Wisconsin to think he was their mother. "It's like becoming a bird yourself," he told *Weekly Reader*.

Joe Duff is the team leader of a group called Operation Migration. Members have been teaching "whoopers" to **migrate** to Florida since 2001. When animals migrate, they move from one place to another.

Operation Migration workers train young whoopers to follow **ultralight** aircraft, or very lightweight airplanes. Each aircraft is flown by a pilot in a whooping crane costume. In six months, the birds would be ready to follow the aircraft and migrate to Florida for the winter.

Bringing Back the Whoopers

The whooping crane is an endangered bird. In 1941, only one flock of whooping cranes lived

naturally in the wild. Those birds migrated between Canada and Texas. The Canadian and United States governments have protected these birds to help save them. The population increased slowly, but scientists decided that having more than one flock would keep the whooping cranes from dying out.

Whooping cranes trained by Operation Migration in the past have remembered the route. They return to Wisconsin each spring and fly back to Florida in the fall.

"We want our birds to pay attention to us for the first year, until we get them down to Florida," said Duff. "After that, we hope they communicate with wild birds and become wild birds themselves."

Migration Route

Every October since 2001, pilots have been leading the new flock of whoopers south for the winter. The migration route takes them over seven states: Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and finally, Florida.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why do you think Duff wanted the chicks to think that he was their mother?

- A. He wanted the birds to live with him.
- B. Duff was going to take them to the zoo.
- C. He wanted them to follow him south for the winter.
- D. He wanted to teach them how to fly.

2. Why do you think this section's heading is "Bringing Back the Whoopers"?

- A. Duff will let some of the whoopers fly in his plane.
- B. Duff is going to bring the birds back to the north.
- C. More whoopers will survive if they fly south.
- D. Duff plans on living with the whoopers in the south.

3. Based on the article, you can predict that Whoopers will

- A. multiply and migrate on their own.
- B. die out quickly.
- C. always live in the south.
- D. follow Duff wherever he goes.

4. In the 6th paragraph, in the phrase "they return to Wisconsin", *they* refers to

- A. whooping cranes.
- B. pilots.
- C. scientists.
- D. ultralights.

5. Would you like to lead Whoopers to the south like Duff has done? Why or why not?
