

On my April 4th census flight at Aransas, I estimate that as many as 34 whooping cranes have started the migration. Most of these would have departed April 2-3. Still present at Aransas are 140 whooping cranes. Weather forecasts are for excellent migration conditions April 5-7 (winds SE at 20-30 and temperatures in the low 80's), so I expect more cranes to depart at that time. Normally a majority of the cranes leave Aransas between April 5-12. All the 51 known nesting pairs will have migrated by April 21.

I roughly figure it takes whooping cranes a week to get from Aransas to Nebraska. You can use the above information to plan when you might expect whooping crane sightings in your area.

This winter, the peak whooping crane population equalled  $171 + 9$  juveniles = 180. Six birds died at Aransas this winter, leaving the estimated flock at  $167 + 7$  juveniles = 174. This is quite a decline from the 187 present in the spring of 2000.

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