



Michigan Audubon
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POSITION STATEMENT ON SANDHILL CRANE HUNTING IN MICHIGAN Response to SR30 and HR61

April 10, 2019

[Senate Resolution 30](#), introduced by Sen. Dale Zorn (Republican) of Ida on April 9, 2019, and [House Resolution 61](#), introduced by Rep. James Lower (Republican) of Cedar Lake on April 10, 2019, encourage the Michigan Natural Resources Commission to add Sandhill Cranes to the game species list and seeks U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval to establish a hunting season for these birds.

As Michigan's oldest conservation organization dedicated to conservation, education, and research, **Michigan Audubon opposes these resolutions and the designation of the Sandhill Crane as a game species in the state of Michigan.** We believe, based on scientific and wildlife management data, that this species should continue receiving protection from the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The Sandhill Crane's history is a conservation success story and one we need to work to actively support with wise conservation decisions. Just a hundred years ago, the Sandhill Crane population in Michigan hit an all-time low. This species was hunted nearly to extinction and suffered greatly from the loss of suitable wetland habitat throughout the state. Due in large part to the passage and protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Sandhill Crane population today is stable. This bird's eastern population has recovered, and they are now abundant throughout the Mississippi Flyway, a bird migration route that generally follows the Mississippi River in the United States and the Mackenzie River in Canada.



Photo by Gary Grossman

Michigan's healthy Sandhill Crane population is likely a source population for neighboring regions where populations are still recovering. In neighboring states like Ohio, Sandhill Cranes are still considered endangered. Ohio's Sandhill Crane population has grown substantially in the last decade (largely concentrated on the shared state border with Michigan), which is likely attributable to the dispersal of Michigan's robust population. Zeroing in on the Michigan population of Sandhill Cranes is short-sighted and does not account for the bigger ecological picture that requires sound conservation and management decisions. Hunting of this vulnerable population could put this bird at significant risk.

Appreciating, understanding, and protecting these birds and ensuring their welfare into the future is significant to Michigan Audubon's history and mission. Since its inception in 1904, the Michigan Audubon community has consistently supported and fought to protect Sandhill Cranes. We appreciate these birds and the importance of protecting them from short-sighted, misguided management. We are committed to continuing the Sandhill Crane's success story and to supporting scientifically- and ecologically-sound best practices in wildlife management as it relates to wildlife conservation in our state.

Michigan Audubon encourages constituents to make their voices heard in support of best wildlife management practices and help us ensure the Sandhill Crane remains protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather'.

Heather Good
Executive Director

Michigan Audubon connects birds and people for the benefit of both through conservation, education, and research efforts in the state of Michigan.

