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Crane Safari

Experience the Great Sandhill Crane Migration on Historic Lands in Nebraska



Welcome to an Ancient Flight of Discovery

They come as they have for thousands of years to this incomparable stretch of the Platte River—an estimated 600,000 cranes in all—to rest, feed and concentrate in astonishing numbers before pushing on to their breeding grounds in the north. Now, as never before, you can experience the wonder of North America's great sandhill crane migration on rare Crane Trust lands in south-central Nebraska. Watch the Crane Trust migration video at <https://cranetrust.org/visit/crane-viewing-tours/overview.html>

Brought to you by



National Geographic
called it one of the
greatest wildlife
phenomena in
North America.

To join our trip please contact: Renee
Bumpus conservation@houstonzoo.org



Crane Safari Itinerary

Day One

You will be greeted upon your arrival in Grand Island, Nebraska at the Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center before 4:00pm and will be escorted to the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch—a natural haven for cranes on 5,500 beautiful acres of rare tall-grass prairie.

Before heading out to your evening Pietrok Family VIP Blind, you'll come together as a group for a orientation and catered dinner at the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch so you can share stories and ask questions of senior Crane Trust staff and guides.

From your viewing blind on the banks of the Platte River, you'll witness one of the largest concentrations of sandhill cranes in the world. Here you'll watch as thousands upon thousands of cranes return from feeding in neighboring fields to gather in front of your blind to spend the night roosting on the river.

After you've put the cranes to bed for the night, you'll return to the Crane Trust for a catered dinner for dessert and video, with time afterward to relax and enjoy the evening sounds of the prairie and, weather permitting, a beautiful starlit sky from the ranch's private outdoor deck.

The Crane Trust's Legacy Cottages offers comfortable and private accommodations. They feature four separate bedrooms each with it's own bathroom, shared commons area and walkout porch. All meals during your stay are provided by the Crane Trust.

Day Two

Your Crane Trust guides, fresh-brewed coffee, and light pastries and fruit will greet you in the pre-dawn hour before heading out to watch the cranes as the sun rises over the beautiful Platte River.

From your heated Pietrok Family VIP Blind on the banks of the Platte River, you'll experience great concentrations of sandhill cranes up close and in the most intimate way possible as they wake up from their river roost just meters away. You'll watch them dance, toss sticks in the air, and display fascinating social behaviors before lifting off in family groups to spend the day resting and feeding in nearby farmlands. Your viewing blind has been specially designed to provide spectacular vistas and photo opportunities of cranes and other wildlife.

Your mid-day program and activities may include a guided nature hike or SUV tour of historic Mormon and Shoemaker islands bordered by the Platte River. This is a great chance for outdoor and wildlife photography, bison viewing, bird-watching and learning about the ecology that makes this one of the rarest of ecosystems in the world.

Before heading out to your evening blind, you'll come together again as a group for a social hour and dinner. After evening viewing on the river, you'll enjoy a delicious dinner, dessert, video and social time back at the Wild Rose Ranch. Afterward, you're free to retire to the cottage or stay up and enjoy the sights and sounds of the evening prairie from the Crane Trust's private prairie deck.



Day Three

You will have one final visit to the Pietrok Family VIP Blind for a morning viewing to enjoy the cranes—and other wildlife. River otters, American bald eagles, coyotes, whitetail deer, and millions of waterfowl share this river habitat day and night. When the cranes have left their river roost and the morning's wildlife display has passed, you'll return to the ranch house for a hearty breakfast and final safari roundup.

Your crane safari concludes around noon.



Your Safari at a Glance

This one-of-a-kind adventure on rare Crane Trust lands includes three days of spectacular crane viewing and related activities, plus two nights lodging at the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch situated on 4,500 beautiful acres of riverine tall-grass prairie. Each safari hosts 6 to 8 couples (12 to 16 adults.)

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: The Houston Zoo

HOST ORGANIZATION: The Crane Trust

DATES: Wednesday March 18 through Friday March 20, 2020

MAIN PROGRAM: \$885 per person, double occupancy for full three-day experience

LOCATION: Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch (6611 W Whooping Crane Dr., Wood River, Nebraska 68883).

The Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch is a smoke-free environment.

Inclusions

- Ground transportation during the safari
- Accommodations in the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch Legacy Cottages with comfortable private bedrooms, a private bathroom for each bedroom, commons area, and patio
- All meals and non-alcoholic beverages on the safari from arrival to departure
- Wine and beer during your welcome orientation, evening meals, and social hours
- Fresh fruit and snacks in the cottage for the duration of the safari
- 3 days/2 nights at the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch
- Guided crane viewing in the Crane Trust's premier VIP Pietrok Family blinds in the evenings and mornings
- Guided Crane Trust habitat/property tour

- Afternoon nature activity on day two and three: Guided nature hike, SUV Tour, or Farmland Crane Tour providing opportunities for photography, birding, natural history, and American bison viewing
- Services of Crane Trust staff, guides and naturalists throughout the safari (guides may vary for different days/activities)
- Complimentary 2020 crane season photo book
- Round trip transportation from Grand Island, Nebraska

Exclusions

- Airfare or travel from home city to Grand Island, NE
- Meals and beverages other than specified

Your Surroundings and Accommodations

The Crane Trust Wild Rose Ranch

The Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch is located in south-central Nebraska on 5,500 continuous acres of riverine tall-grass prairie that are owned and managed by the Crane Trust. This rare ecosystem includes an uninterrupted seven-mile stretch of the historic Platte River, which has been preserved by the Crane Trust to mirror the unique habitat that has been used by the endangered whooping crane and two sub-species of sandhill cranes for millennia.

The Wild Rose Ranch is a working ranch for crane habitat. The main ranch facility includes the Crane Trust headquarters, cottages, research laboratory, bunkhouse, premium meeting/dining facilities, and outdoor deck and observation platform with breathtaking views of the tall-grass prairie and Platte River waterway. Your VIP crane-viewing blinds are within ½ mile of the campus.

Crane Trust Nature & Visitor Center

The Crane Trust is also home to a beautiful nature and visitor center that welcomes guests to the Crane Trust's rare, protected lands year round—and to the great sandhill crane migration in the spring. You'll have full access to the center and roughly 10 miles of nature trails along the Platte River. Here you'll find an impressive array of wildlife art and photography in the Hornady Art Gallery as well as a gift shop. And when you venture outside, you may encounter our herd of over 100 genetically pure American bison depending on where they're roaming the prairie at the time.

How to Dress

The weather in Nebraska in March is unpredictable and can change rapidly. It's important to be prepared for cold and changing conditions. Your river blind is heated and protected from the weather outside, but you will need to walk approximately 1/4 mile over uneven ground to reach the blind. For outdoor activities, always dress in layers, with warm boots, coat, gloves and hat close at hand. Rain gear may be desirable in wet weather. You are encouraged to check the weather prior to your arrival.



Legacy Cottages

Private accommodations in the Crane Trust Legacy Cottages include four separate bedrooms (double bed or two twin beds) each with it's own bathroom, all connected by a commons area and walkout patio.



Equipment to Bring

Be sure to bring your camera, binoculars or video equipment if you have them. Monopods are allowed and may be useful for longer lenses. For best results, a telephoto lens is recommended for photographing cranes and other wildlife. Tripods are not allowed.

Conditions of Travel

HOW TO BOOK: Fill out and submit the reservation form to the Houston Zoo, Attn: Conservation, 1513 Cambridge, Houston, TX 77030, together with a deposit of \$200. To place credit card payments over the phone, please call 713-533-6707. Upon receipt of your signed reservation form and deposit, we will, subject to availability, reserve your place on the safari.

When your confirmation invoice is received for the balance of the safari, your booking is confirmed. Final payment is due no later than 60 days prior to departure. Crane Safari cost: \$885 per person, double occupancy for the full weekend.

GROUP SIZE: Your crane safari group is limited in size to a maximum 16 adults. The cottages are designed with for double occupancy

AGE & PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS: Guests must be adults (21 years of age or older) and physically able to keep up with the group and walk over uneven grassland terrain to reach their crane viewing blind on the river.

AIR & GROUND TRANSPORTATION: Safari guests are responsible for air and/or ground travel to and from Grand Island, Nebraska arriving before 4:00pm on day one and departing after 11:00am on day three.

The Crane Trust will provide all ground transportation for the safari group from time of arrival in Grand Island, Nebraska to time of departure.

ACCOMMODATIONS: You will stay at the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch. The main ranch facility includes the headquarters office, research laboratory, Legacy Cottages, premium meeting/dining facilities, and outdoor deck and observation platform. Private accommodations in the Legacy Cottages include comfortable lodging with private bedrooms (queen bed or two twin beds), private bathrooms and commons area. Laundry facility available upon request. Your exclusive viewing blinds on the Platte River are approximately ½ mile from the cottages.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: Single accommodations are not guaranteed. The single room accommodation pays for privacy, not better accommodations. For travelers who are traveling alone and wish to share a room with another safari member, we will do our best to provide a roommate.

MEALS: All meals and beverages, including wine and beer, are included while on safari.

TIPS: Gratuities are not applicable or accepted during your crane safari. Guests who wish to make a tax-deductible gift or donation to support the Crane Trust mission to protect and maintain critical habitat for cranes and other migratory birds are welcome to do so.

SAFARI INFORMATION: Upon receipt of your application, instructions will be sent to you concerning all aspects of your trip, such as itinerary, photographic equipment, clothing, etc. Final room arrangements, activity schedule and other instructions will be sent to you approximately two weeks prior to departure.

INVOICING: Final invoicing of your safari will be done approximately ten weeks prior to departure. Final payment is due two months prior to departure.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$200 must be submitted with each application. Deposits may be paid by check or charged to VISA, MasterCard or Discover. Final balance is payable by check or credit card and is due no later December 15, 2019.

CANCELLATIONS: Cancellations are only effective on receipt of written notification. The following cancellation fees are applicable for this safari:

Up to 60 days prior to departure: Forfeit reservation deposit

30-59 days prior to departure: 50% of tour cost

Less than 30 days prior to departure: 75% of tour cost

Reservation deposit is non-refundable

RESPONSIBILITY: Neither the Crane Trust (hereinafter "Host") nor any person or agent acting for, through or on behalf of Host, shall be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising from any cause whatsoever and without restricting the generality of the foregoing shall particularly not be responsible for loss or damage arising from any errors or omissions contained in its brochure or other literature, loss or damage caused by delays, sickness, theft, injury or death.

In addition, Host shall have the right at any time at its discretion to cancel any tour or the remainder thereof or make any alteration in route, accommodation, price or other details and, in the event of any tour being rendered impossible, illegal or inadvisable by weather, strike, war, government or interference or any other cause whatsoever, the extra expense incurred as a

result thereof shall be the responsibility of the guest. Host may at its discretion and without liability or cost to itself at any time cancel or terminate the guest's booking and in particular without limiting the generality of the foregoing it shall be entitled to do so in the event of the illness or the illegal or incompatible behavior of the guest, who shall in such circumstances not be entitled to any refund.

The person making any booking will, by the making of such booking, warrant that he or she has the authority to enter into a contract on behalf of the other person included in such a booking and in the event of the failure of any or all of the other persons so included to make payment, the person making the booking shall by his/her signature therefore assume personal liability for the total price of all bookings made by him/her.

Houston Zoo DISCLAIMER: Houston Zoo (hereafter "Zoo") is not the tour operator. Zoo is not responsible for changes of flight times, fare changes, dishonor of airline, hotel or car rental reservations, delays, losses, injuries, inconveniences, cessation of operations, airline or tour operator bankruptcies, acts of nature or any other event beyond Zoo's control.

Zoo acts only as agent for participants with respect to travel services, and it shall not be responsible for changes of flight times, fare changes, dishonor of airline, hotel or other reservations, injury, damage, loss of baggage, accidents or for the acts or defaults of any person or entity engaged in conveying participants or in carrying out other arrangements of the tour. Further, Zoo shall not be responsible for losses or additional expenses of any participants due to sickness, weather, strike, civil unrest, acts of terrorism, quarantine, acts of God, or other causes beyond its control.

Zoo shall not be responsible for alteration of the itinerary as deemed necessary for carrying out the tour and the right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar quality. The right is further reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure; in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on Zoo's part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of the tour should such person's health, actions or general deportment in the opinion of Zoo impede the operation of the tour or the rights or welfare of the other participants. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour.

Applicants for participation in this tour accept in full all the conditions set forth above.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Host reserves the right without further notice to make use of any photography or film taken on the tour by its photographers without payment or permission. Host guarantees that no photographs of a compromising nature will be used.

CHANGES OF SCHEDULE: Although every effort will be made to adhere to the activity schedule, Host reserves the right to change the activity schedule as may be dictated by changing conditions, i.e. inclement weather.

REFUNDS: While Host will endeavor to ensure that all anticipated accommodations are available as planned, there shall be no claim whatsoever against Host for a refund, either in the whole or part, if any accommodation or activity is unavailable and a reasonable alternative is not found.

CONSENT: The payment of the deposit OR any other partial payment for a reservation on the safari constitutes consent by all guests covered by that payment to all provisions of the conditions and general information contained in this brochure, whether the guest has signed the reservation form or not. The terms, under which you agree to take this safari, cannot be changed or amended except in writing by an authorized representative of the Host.

INSURANCE: It is the condition of booking that the sole responsibility lies with the guest to ensure that he or she carry the correct comprehensive travel and medical insurance to cover him or herself for the duration of the trip.

Crane Safari Registration Form

Please complete and return this form to the address at the bottom in order to hold your place(s) on the Crane Safari Adventure with the Houston Zoo, arriving in Grand Island, Nebraska, March 18, 2020 and departing Grand Island, March 20, 2020.

By completing this form, you agree you are at least 21 years of age or older and keep up with the group walking approximately 1/3 of a mile over uneven grassland terrain to reach your crane viewing blind on the Platte River. Each guest, whether making a reservation as a couple or as a single, must complete and submit a reservation form.

Number of Guests

____ I am submitting my reservation form with deposit for myself only

____ I am submitting my reservation form with deposits for myself and for the persons listed below:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

____ I am submitting my reservation form, but my deposit is being/has been submitted with a separate reservation form by (name): _____

Method of Payment

____ I enclosed my check for the total deposit amount of \$_____ (\$200 per adult couple or single) to hold ____ place(s) on the Crane Safari Adventure with the Houston Zoo. (Please make check payable to "the Houston Zoo")

____ I authorize the Houston Zoo to charge my credit card* below for the total deposit amount of \$_____ (\$200 per person) to hold ____ place(s) on the Crane Safari Adventure with the Houston Zoo.

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Card Verification Number (3-digit code): _____

Name as it Appears on Card: _____

Billing Address of Credit Card: _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-mail Address: _____

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Final payment is due December 15, 2019

**To place credit card payments over the phone, please call 713-533-6707.*

MAIL TO:

Houston Zoo
Attn: Conservation
1513 Cambridge
Houston, TX 77030

emails can be sent to
conservation@houstonzoo.org



Crane Safari Registration Form

Guest Information - *Each Person Must Complete and Submit a Separate Reservation Form*

1) Name: Mr. ___ Mrs. ___ Ms. ___ Last First

Street Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phones: (Home) (Office) (Mobile)

E-Mail Address:

Please initial:

2) ___ I certify that I have not recently been treated for, nor am I aware of, any physical or other condition or liability that would create a hazard to myself or the other members of this tour.

3) ___ I am sharing a room with (name)_____ whose Reservation Form is either enclosed or being sent separately. (Skip if not applicable).

4) ___ I would like, where possible, a room with TWO twin beds. Default room has a double bed. First come, first served.

5) ___ I desire single accommodations, if available.

6) ___ I understand that I am responsible for making arrangements for my transportation to arrive in Grand Island, Nebraska, by 4:00pm on March 18, where my safari group will be met and transported to the Crane Trust's Wild Rose Ranch if needed. I further understand that my safari will conclude at 11:00am on March 20.

7) Do you have any health or medical conditions that could limit your ability to walk approximately 1/4 mile over uneven grassland terrain to the viewing blind? No ___
Yes ___ Please explain. _____

8) List any vegetarian/vegan preferences that we need to accommodate for your meals: _____

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Cancellation up to 60 days prior to departure: Refund 100% of tour cost LESS reservation deposit

Cancellation 30-59 days prior to departure: Refund 50% of tour cost

Less than 30 days prior to departure: Refund 25% refund of tour cost

Reservation deposit is non-refundable

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print: _____

Please return your completed Reservation Form to the address below. Include the reservation deposit if paying by check.

**Houston Zoo
Attn: Conservation
1513 Cambridge
Houston, TX 77030**

**emails can be sent to
conservation@houstonzoo.org**