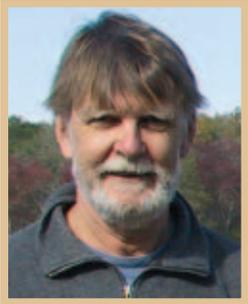


# 2004–2005 Annual Report

## Message from the Chair



All over the world, non-profit organizations are the engines of environmental and social change. In most cases, as with Operation Migration, a non-profit begins with just an idea—a small seed—then, with a few people committed to nurturing that seed, it grows and blossoms. We can be proud of how far Operation Migration has come since its inception, and of the success the Whooping crane project has achieved in just under five years.

The first half of this decade has been characterized by financial uncertainty and political turbulence. The resulting economic slump has not only increased and intensified reliance on non-profits, it has resulted in far fewer funds coming through their doors—Operation Migration's included.

Though this has made the past fiscal year even more challenging, in many respects, OM has emerged stronger for its hardships, sacrifices, and tough decisions.

But difficult times are still the right times for planning and nurturing new initiatives, and for strengthening the organization for the long haul. Our future success lies in our ability to remain confident; on becoming increasingly inventive and resourceful; to enthuse and mobilize a greater workforce of volunteers, and to demand more of ourselves.

It has been my privilege to serve as your Board Chair, and I want to say thank you to all for standing side-by-side with us this past year, for the past 10 years, and hopefully for the years to come as we continue our work to preserve and safeguard endangered species.

As always, we welcome your suggestions, comments, questions, criticisms and ideas for how we can be better at advancing our essential work.

*With gratitude,*

BILL LISHMAN, 2004–2005 Board Chair

## Message from the C.E.O.



Reviewing the past year in preparation for drafting this message meant taking a step back from OM's main focus, our Whooping crane project, and over-flying the organization's entire operation in order to capture a snapshot of what, and where, 2004 has brought us.

Operation Migration has experienced many challenges over the past few years. It has weathered economic uncertainty, staffing dilemmas, and has had to work tirelessly to gain the confidence and support of public institutions, funders, and corporate allies. While fulfilling our obligations to the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership we have had to be responsive to our Membership, the media and the general public. It has been neither a smooth, nor an easy road to tread.

In 2004, as is inevitable with most non-profits, Operation Migration had its ups and downs. Sometimes we soared high on an achievement based thermal, and sometimes we were grounded financially. Overall however, OM managed to hold its own, and is as strong and vibrant as ever.

Partnerships and alliances play a crucial role in the success of Operation Migration. We are enormously grateful for the help and support we have received from our funders, corporate partners, and donors. While available space for this report does not allow for recognition by name, we say a heartfelt thank you to each of you. We look forward to your continued commitment and working together to further the mission of Operation Migration, and ensuring the survival of Whooping cranes.

Staff and volunteers are vital to our ability to fulfill OM's obligations to the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. Each staff member and volunteer plays an integral role, and we appreciate your

### 2004–2005 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Lishman, *Chair*  
Mark Woolgar, *Secretary/Treasurer*  
Joseph Duff, *C.E.O.*  
George Archibald  
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Alicia Craig  
Jane Dana  
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## 2004–2005 ANNUAL REPORT



*“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor is it the most intelligent; it is the one most responsive to change.”*

—CHARLES DARWIN

invaluable contributions. We are indebted to you for your caring, and the selfless giving of your time. You are the soul of Operation Migration. Please accept heartfelt thanks.

One focus of an Annual Report is a review of the year past, the other is the year ahead. So at this juncture, I thought I would talk about where we are going. In order to be responsive to both internal and external needs, the staff as a team is striving to develop new action plans and procedures. As our Whooping crane project has precedence, it will have significant impact on all our planning processes and outcomes.

While it was gratifying to reflect on the advances we’ve made with respect to our Whooping crane project, it was sobering to see how little Operation Migration as an organization has progressed comparatively speaking. We recognize that the events of recent years have understandably skewed North American’s attention, as well as altered the continental economy.

To avoid any decline, it is essential that OM react to this change by making adjustments aimed at maintaining Operation Migration’s high profile, most especially in the eyes of our financial supporters. This means our strategies and approaches need to be re-thought, updated, and made more appealing, if not irresistible to the changed consciousness of individual and corporate North Americans.

As C.E.O. I know that good leadership requires keeping one eye on the horizon and one eye on the bottom line. An important issue we must face head on in 2005 is our financial health. We need to develop strategies that will enable us to grow, and to make advances both in terms of our current project, and our future conservation and preservation work. We continue to struggle with issues of cash flow, and need to put procedures in place that will allow us to continue to operate effectively through the cyclical financial dry periods.

As we continue to live up to our reputation of being “The biggest little non-profit in North America”, our vision and values remain unchanged. We will continue to do our best to save the world’s endangered fauna—one species at a time—and all our resources will continue to be focused on doing just that.

There will soon come a time when we must begin to contemplate potential future directions for OM, and to make known OM’s interest, willingness, and capability to become a platform for the launch of new ventures designed to ‘rescue’ other species, whether within or beyond our traditional borders. We need to leverage and build upon our existing notoriety and modest sphere of influence, to position Operation Migration as a champion for other/all endangered species.

Operation Migration is a mere fledgling relative to many non-profit organizations, and especially when compared to such environmental icons, as the World Wildlife Fund. Yet, though not having reached its teenage years, OM’s potential to be a leading force for the preservation of endangered species is so gigantic, it is almost unimaginable. Bill Lishman is perhaps the epitome of Walt Disney’s credo, “If you can dream it, you can do it.” Our very own ‘Father Goose’ is living testament to the fact that imagination, determination, and perseverance are equally as important as science.

There is no doubt that Bill’s innovative genius, driven by his dream of flying with birds will one day culminate in history being made and the removal of Whooping cranes from the endangered species list. And what a celebration that will be! Even hard-bitten cynics and the harshest of detractors will be lining up for invitations to that party.

Charles Darwin said, “It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor is it the most intelligent; it is the one most responsive to change.” This precept expresses the basic theory behind OM’s work with endangered Whooping cranes.

Perhaps adopting Darwin’s creed as its guiding principle corporately, will provoke the development of plans and strategies to respond to the changing non-profit environment—those impacting the institutions, corporations, and individuals already supporting OM; as well as those we need to entice into our flock.

To this end, in 2005 and going forward, OM’s plans, and their methods of execution will incorporate a ‘response to change’ component, to not only ensure the organization’s survival, but that it emerges as a healthy corporate entity, and a respected advocate and sought after activist on behalf of endangered species.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
JOE DUFF, C.E.O.

## Message from the Whooping Crane Project Leader

### HALF WAY THERE...MAYBE

They say that once you crest the hill, you begin to accelerate on the down slope. Or maybe it is just that time flies when you are having fun. Whatever the explanation, this season has slipped by so fast the edges are blurry. It seems like only last year when we first led Sandhill cranes to Florida, and now here we are in our fifth season and almost half way to our goal.

Before we began this study, Tom Stehn, co-chair of the Whooping Crane Recovery Team, commented that an introduction of any species could not be properly evaluated for at least five years. He noted that luck, good or bad, could influence any one season, and that sample sizes would simply be too small to provide an accurate prediction of the outcome. In his diplomatic way he was asking if OM was prepared for that commitment. I told him we had already spent 10 years developing the technique and that we would be involved as long as it took—all we needed to do was find the funding.

With luck, this year we will add 20 more birds to the 42 that already migrate between Wisconsin and Florida. This could bring the population to 60 Whooping cranes, four times the number that existed in the early 1940's, and half way to the Recovery Team's goal of 125 individuals or 25 breeding pairs.

The Direct Autumn Release (DAR) program began this year with 5 birds, and we hope to have wild hatched chicks in the next few seasons. Both occurrences should speed the increase in numbers. But the factors that really dictate how quickly this population will expand are the survival rate (currently at just under 80%), and the number of birds that can be produced by the captive breeding centres.

The non-migratory flock released into the Kissimmee Prairie in Florida beginning in 1993 has experienced high losses and low fertility in recent years. Until the cause can be evaluated, The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission postponed new releases. As a result, no birds were allotted to that program in 2005. In fact, that is the reason we have so many chicks this year. The Florida flock's fertility problems may be a result of limited genetic material, and we may face the same issue as our birds begin to breed. This could also have a limiting effect on our population growth.

All of this begs the oft-asked question of how long we will be at this. How many more generations will it take and how many more summers will we spend in Wisconsin before this job is done. The answer, I'm afraid, is as vague as our migration schedule. If our survival rate remains high, and if the birds begin to breed early; if fertility is not a concern, and if the Direct Autumn Release program is successful...maybe 4 more years, or maybe 5. You will notice there were a number of ifs and maybes in that statement.

The Recovery Team's plan to safeguard the species requires that three discrete populations exist. There is our flock migrating between Wisconsin and Florida; the only naturally occurring population that nests in Wood Buffalo National Park and winters in Aransas National Wildlife Refuge; and, the non-migratory birds in Florida. However if the poor reproduction and high mortality continue in Florida, that flock may have to be considered non-viable. I told you the answer was vague.

If the DAR program proves successful, it could perhaps be used to continue increasing the number of our birds that winter in Florida. Then we could use the ultralight method to begin leading new cohorts to Louisiana. So far all of this is mostly dreams and speculation—we could be at it for a while yet.

Sincerely,  
JOE DUFF  
Whooping Crane Project Leader



**We wish to acknowledge and thank those organizations and individuals who so generously supported OM this past fiscal year. It is you who makes our work to safeguard the endangered Whooping crane possible.**

#### GRANTORS

The Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund  
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation  
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
WWF Canada, Endangered Species Recovery Fund

#### MAJOR DONORS

##### (\$10,000+)

Deke Clark (In Kind)  
Hooper Foundation  
Don & Deb Smith  
Jane Stedman (In Kind)  
George Weston Limited

##### (\$5,000–\$9,000)

Cell Signaling Technology, Inc  
The Community Foundation for the National Capitol Region  
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation  
Sandy & Jerry Ulrikson  
Edward & Viola White

##### (\$2,000–\$4,999)

Adventure Canada  
Attractor Investment  
Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation  
Michael Curley  
Executive Homes  
Priscilla Hafner  
Keith Heefner  
Hume Foundation  
Kris Johnson/Denville Secondary School  
H. B. Henson Fund  
David Morton  
Barbara Waaland  
Whooping Crane Conservation Association  
Wild Bird Center  
Fox River Grove, IL  
(David & Suzanne Johnson)

**MAJOR DONORS** *(continued)*

**(\$1,000-\$1,999)**

- Bill & Sue Bastian
- Lisa & William Bauer
- Sandra Blakeney
- Kevin & Sami Burns
- Charitable Gift Fund
- Cinergy Corporation
- Bill & Barb Clouse
- Judy Collins
- Rusty & Barbara de Leon
- Jane Duden
- Elizabeth Evanson
- Donald Finney
- Richard Ford
- Arnold Fredrickson
- Patricia Friday
- Nancy Heiden
- Janusz Jaworski
- Elizabeth Livermore
- Greg & Dara Matters
- Howard (Scott) McCue
- Kay McElrath
- Wendy Paulson
- John Perry
- Ralph & Aileen Petty
- Steve Pittman
- Port Aransas Chamber of Commerce
- Ray & Ramona Rice
- Rose Rudd
- Gregory Silver
- Gordon Tillman
- Wilbur & Janet Tyner
- Margaret van Alstyne
- Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program
- Bruce Warning
- Ellen Whitaker

*Note: Despite our desire to do so, space limitations prevent us from recognizing each and every OM Supporter here. MileMaker sponsors are listed on our website however, and as part of our new Donor Recognition program under development, we are working to design a website page that will enable us to acknowledge Members, and each and every gift we receive. In the interim, we hope you will appreciate and understand our dilemma. Also, because we are in the throes of a technology system change, some names that should have been shown above may have been missed. Our apologies to you should this be the case. Please let us know, and we will rectify this in our next issue.*

# OPERATION MIGRATION

## Abbreviated Combined Financial Statements

**BALANCE SHEET** *as at March 31, 2005*

**Assets**

**Current**

Cash .....	\$25,592
Accounts Receivable.....	16,108
Inventory .....	29,659
Prepaid Expenses.....	408
	<b>\$71,767</b>

**Fixed**

Aircraft Equipment .....	84,872
Automotive Equipment .....	74,002
Computer Equipment.....	15,875
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment.....	19,344
Less Accumulated Depreciation .....	(101,007)
	<b>113,837</b>
	<b>\$164,764</b>

**Liabilities**

Accounts payable and accrued charges.....	\$30,232
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**Net Assets**

Net assets invested in fixed assets.....	92,996
Unrestricted net assets .....	41,535
	<b>134,532</b>
	<b>\$164,764</b>

**STATEMENT OF REVENUE & EXPENSE**

*(for the 12 month period ended March 31, 2005)*

**Revenue**

Donations, Grants, Memberships .....	\$479,381
Other.....	53,038
	<b>\$532,419</b>

**Expenses**

Audit & Legal.....	12,817
Bank Charges & Interest .....	1,564
Field Supplies & Materials .....	37,060
Depreciation .....	34,658
Insurance .....	4,952
Fundraising.....	24,254
Project & Migration Travel.....	141,215
Office & General .....	26,982
Rent.....	11,733
Communications .....	9,999
Salaries, Benefits, Labor Contracts.....	138,590
Field Wages .....	99,929
	<b>\$543,753</b>

(Deficiency) Excess of Revenue over Expense.....	<b>(\$11,333)</b>
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