

Whooping cranes make a strong comeback

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The yearly migration of the whooping cranes has returned them to Texas's Aransas National Wildlife refuge with 237 of the birds returning.

These numbers combined with the number of birds currently in captivity brings the total population of the birds to a record 518, making it the first time in 100 years that their population has totaled more than 500, The Washington Post reported.

The whooping crane is the tallest bird in North America and was on the brink of extinction 70 years ago when they numbered 20.

U.S. wildlife officials call the birds' new population a comeback story that shows has a good conservation effort can save a species.

"The whooping crane continues to mirror the success of endangered species recovery when man sets his mind to it," said Tom Stehn, the national whooping crane coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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