

# Cranes near end of assisted migration

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A group of 17 young whooping cranes, led by light aircraft, have nearly reached the end of their 1,200-mile migration to the Florida coast.

The cranes arrived at the Halpata-Tastanaki refuge in Florida on the final rest stop Sunday before they reach their destination, the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times reported.

Three months ago, the birds set off from Wisconsin, led by pilots from Operation Migration, the newspaper said, where they will return on their own in the spring, now that they know the way.

This year's trip was the longest of the assisted migrations, which began in 2001, in part because of weather-related delays.

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