



© 2007 Journey North
<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/>

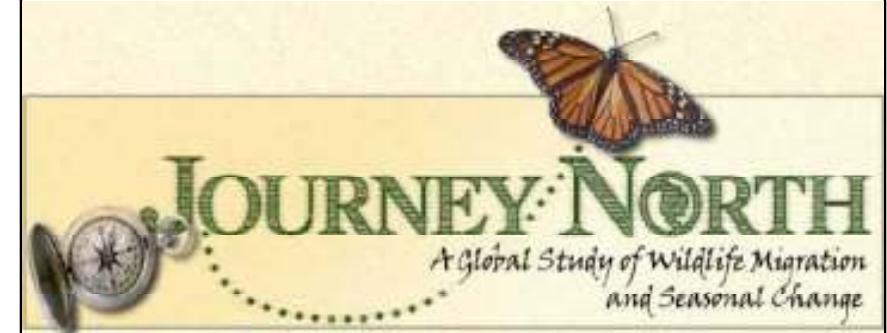


Photo © Marianne Wellington

Captive Cranes: Two Chicks Get a New Home

by Mark Chenoweth

A New Life for Two Whooping Crane Chicks

Sometimes a player doesn't make the team. It's the same for Whooping Cranes. This is a story about two chicks that were raised to be set free in fall 2006 to follow older Whoopers south. But crane experts kept them back when the birds had leg problems. They wanted to choose birds that are less at risk of injury.

What happened to these two when they were taken off the team? They became famous another way!

They went to live in a Florida zoo. Now people can see their beauty and size up close. The chicks will show zoo visitors how amazing Whooping Cranes are. And best of all, in captivity they will be well cared for and free of the threat of predators. These two should live long, healthy lives despite their leg problems.

Meet Bode and Ohno

Ohno, a female, is in front. Do you see her white cheeks? Bode, a male, is in back. After hatching, they were named after two athletes who won Olympic medals.

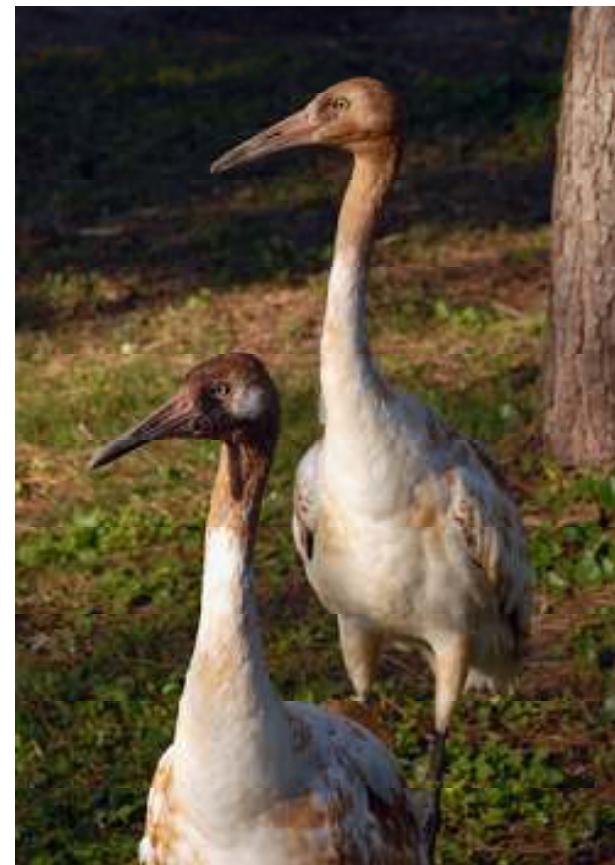


Photo © Mark Chenoweth

On October 6, 2006, Bode (below) and Ohno were flown to the Jacksonville Zoo in Florida. They traveled from Wisconsin in special crates aboard a large airplane. Imagine all those strange sights and sounds! How do you think the birds felt?

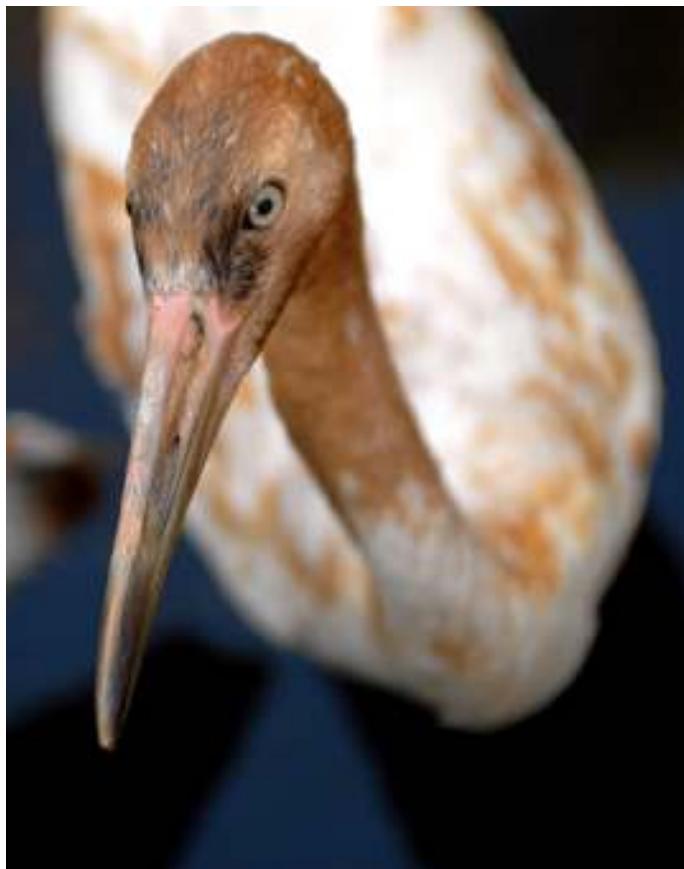


Photo © Mark Chenoweth

Bode and Ohno lived apart from the other birds for many days. It kept them from getting or giving germs that might make them or other birds sick. It gave the zoo time to build a special habitat that would be Bode and Ohno's new home.



Photo © Mark Chenoweth

"The two chicks got their first view of us as we pulled them out of the crates when they arrived at the Zoo," said Donna Bear-Hull at the zoo. "They both just walked to the far side, pretty calm. I was very surprised."

The chicks arrived and explored their private pen. Which is which? Remember, the female (Ohno) has white cheeks.



Photo © Mark Chenoweth

The chicks were in the quarantine pen longer than expected because it took longer than planned to get their new habitat ready. They lost weight due to their confinement, but changes in their diet helped fix that.

Finally their new habitat was ready! Ohno (left) and Bode (right) were introduced to their special new home on February 5, 2007, four months after they got to the zoo.



Photo © Mark Chenoweth

At first Bode and Ohno were scared of anything that rolled. That included electric carts, the train that passes behind their habitat, and people moving things with wheels. Some local animals, including a bunny, also spooked them.

Bode and Ohno have adapted well to all the changes they've gone through. Now they ignore the people. The train is no longer a problem. They like other birds and bunnies they see.



Photo © Mark Chenoweth

Watching Bode and Ohno, I felt privileged to be so close as they cavorted, foraged and interacted. When other birds, such as wood storks and herons or Ibises land in their area, Bode and Ohno stop and look as though they want to approach and play.

Thanks to the folks at the zoo, Bode and Ohno will live in a splendid location where you can visit and see them!

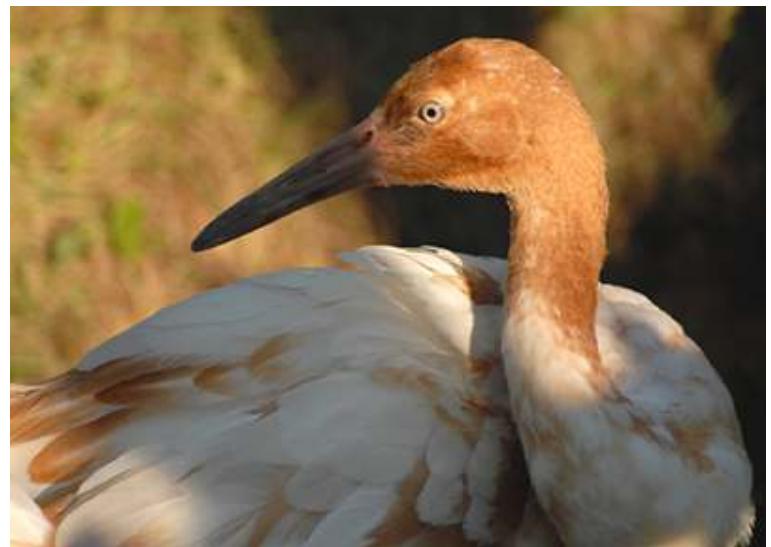


Photo © Mark Chenoweth

Bode and Ohno live in the Wildlife Florida Exhibit at the Jacksonville Zoo. By giving these two birds a new home, this Zoo shows its continued devotion to public education and preservation of a species. Bode and Ohno represent hope for the future, thanks to the diligent efforts of so many that have done so much to preserve this species and keep it as a part of our world.