SYMPOSIUM 'REINTRODUCING MIGRATORY BIRDS'
LINCOLN PARK ZOO | CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA
NOVEMBER 17, 2018

Culture shapes movements in a reintroduced migratory bird

Sarah CONVERSE | U.S. Geological Survey, Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Washington

The unique challenge of reintroducing a migratory species is re-establishing migratory pathways and behaviors. For species in which migratory behavior is socially transmitted, the challenge is substantial. Study of migration in reintroduced species has the potential to inform fundamental questions in migration ecology. Furthermore, an understanding of forces shaping migration is key to developing optimal strategies for reintroducing migratory species. We review lessons we have learned through evaluation of the movements of reintroduced Whooping Cranes that migrate between the northcentral and southeastern United States. Specifically, we review (1) the relative effects of individual learning, social learning, and endogenous programs on migratory efficiency; (2) forces influencing emergence of a short-stopping behavior that is novel for this species; (3) the relative effects of early training programs vs. social learning on selection of overwintering sites; and (4) fundamental differences in movements between reintroduced and relict populations of this species. Several themes emerge from our work, including that Whooping Cranes as a species are extremely plastic in their migratory behaviors, while at the same time, cultural transmission of knowledge has a large effect on shaping these behaviors within a population.

With 50% contribution of the LIFE financial instrument of the European Union
(LIFE+12-BIO_AT_000143, LIFE Northern Bald Ibis).