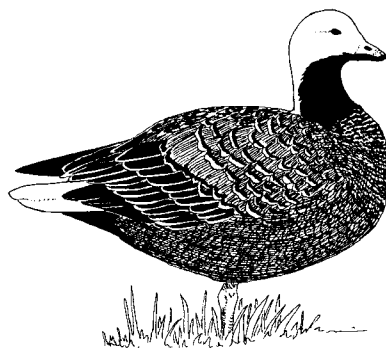


(52) MIGRATION CHRONOLOGY, ROUTES, AND DISTRIBUTION OF PACIFIC FLYWAY POPULATION
LESSER SANDHILL CRANES

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Managers of migratory game birds require increasingly more information about bird movements to delineate populations, protect important habitats, and regulate harvest. Detailed information describing movements of Sandhill Cranes belonging to the Pacific Flyway Population (PFP) are lacking. We used satellite telemetry to monitor movements of PFP Lesser Sandhill Cranes captured in the upper Cook Inlet and Bristol Bay regions of Alaska. Satellite transmitters were deployed on 19 flightless young (colts) and 3 adults over a 3-year period (2000–2002). Chronology, routes, and frequently used stopping and staging areas were identified for the fall and spring migration periods. On average, cranes took 27 days (range 13–44 days) to travel from summer range to wintering areas in the Central Valley of California. Winter locations were concentrated in the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta and the East Grasslands (Merced County) regions. On average, cranes took 56 days (range 45–64 days) to travel from wintering areas to summer range in Alaska. Most cranes (70%) staged at the Potholes Reservoir region in central Washington during the spring. PFP cranes that summer in Cook Inlet and Bristol Bay used identical migration routes and wintering areas. Cranes captured as colts showed varying degrees of philopatry to natal sites in their second summer. PFP cranes monitored with satellite transmitters did not mix with cranes from the Mid-Continent Population or with “western segment” PFP cranes.



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