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Press Release
For Immediate Release

Sandhill Cranes Economic Impact More Than \$19 Million

CENTRAL NEBRASKA: The Nebraska Flyway Partnership has released a new report developed in cooperation with the University of Nebraska–Lincoln College of Business Administration’s Department of Economics. The report outlines the cultural, economic, and branding significance of the Central Platte River flyway corridor and spring Sandhill Crane migration for communities located there.

The Nebraska Flyway Partnership is a collaborative effort among tourism, conservation, and community organizations working to better understand, protect, and leverage the Platte River flyway as both a natural asset and a defining regional identity. By viewing the flyway as a shared regional resource rather than a single community’s attraction, the partnership aims to encourage cooperation and sustainable growth.

The report estimates total economic impact related to business output during the spring migration season reached **\$28.0 million** in 2025, nearly double the **\$14.3 million** recorded in 2017, representing a **96% increase**. This figure includes direct visitor spending as well as multiplier impacts as spending circulated throughout the regional economy.

Analysis estimated 35,400 unique visitors during the migration season, with an average stay of 3.1 days. This resulted in an estimated 108,686 total visitor days in central Nebraska.

Survey responses indicated that the largest share of visitors to central Nebraska (17.6 percent) originated from Omaha, Lincoln, and other areas of Nebraska outside the central region. Visitors also traveled from nearby states, including Colorado (15.0 percent), Minnesota (9.3 percent), Iowa (7.1 percent), and Wisconsin (5.0 percent). A notable share of visitors also traveled from coastal states, including California, New York and Florida.

Related labor income increased by 55 percent between the 2017 and 2025 migration seasons, exceeding the 29 percent increase in the Midwest Consumer Price Index during the same period. This demonstrates real growth in the annual economic impact over eight years. The report also confirms a 20 percent increase in full-year equivalent employment, a measure not affected by inflation or changes in real hourly wages. In addition, business sales and organizational revenue tied to the migration increased by 96 percent between 2017 and 2025.

The full report and related media are available at [this link \(https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wuHGe7SabTZShl3ILPUvxc7nP3Um7o6B?usp=sharing\)](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wuHGe7SabTZShl3ILPUvxc7nP3Um7o6B?usp=sharing) and through [NebraskaFlyway.com](https://www.NebraskaFlyway.com) partner organizations.

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The Nebraska Flyway Partnership is a regional collaboration focused on elevating awareness, stewardship, and economic understanding of the Platte River flyway and Sandhill Crane migration. Through research, shared storytelling, and coordinated strategies, the partnership works to strengthen communities while protecting one of North America’s most significant wildlife corridors.

Contacts:

Brad Mellema, Grand Island Tourism, director@visitgrandisland.com
Sarah Focke, Visit Kearney, sfocke@visitkearney.org
Lisa Burke, Visit North Platte, lburke@visitnorthplatte.com