

# JOHN J. LYNCH

## AND THE RETURN OF THE GREAT WHITE BIRD

*The Story of John J. Lynch, the conservation maverick  
who helped bring the Whooping Crane back from extinction.*

**Format:** 300-page hardcover book with photographs, illustrations and maps

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### Synopsis

John J. Lynch was an American biologist, instrumental in bringing North America's tallest and one of its most magnificent birds—the Whooping Crane—back from the brink of extinction.

Born in Newport, Rhode Island, to Irish immigrant parents in 1914, John Lynch began his conservation career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the East coast before he was loaned to the State of Louisiana to study the coastal marshes. The region was very much uncharted territory nearly a Century ago so one of Lynch's first jobs was to study the marshes and their wildlife and to map out potential refuges, not an easy task without GPS, mobile phones, computers, or even maps in many cases. It was this work that sparked Lynch's interest in migratory birds, and it was one bird in particular that caught his attention and spurred his life-long passion: The Whooping Crane (*Grus Americana*) or "whooper" to the locals.

It all began as a rumor that the species had been seen at White Lake, Louisiana, fifty miles south of Lafayette, near the Gulf of Mexico. It would be months before Lynch could confirm the sightings and embark on one of his life's greatest missions to change the downward trajectory of one of North America's most iconic bird species.

This is a journey through 20<sup>th</sup> Century conservation history and the legacy of John J. Lynch, one of the original employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a pioneer in early migratory bird conservation, a man with a passion for the survival of the Whooping Crane. This is not only the history of saving this iconic species, but a journey through a time when patience and perseverance drove scientific vision and exploration across the vast and largely uncharted American landscape. It was a time when all communications was via typed letters routed through the U.S. Postal Service, often taking days or weeks to arrive, and even longer for a return. Lynch was a meticulous record keeper and saved all of his letters during his decades-long career so much of the story is told through his own writing with his unique style of wit, wisdom, and scientific observation.

*When Lynch began his career, there were about 35 Whooping Cranes on the planet. As of 2023, there are 536 birds, including 88 juveniles. This is the story of John J. Lynch and the comeback of the Great White Bird.*

