

Crane Congregations FAQ

Is the Crane Congregations event kid friendly? The program starts with a 30 minute presentation about crane biology and behavior and is followed by an hour of viewing in the crane blind. For the best viewing experience we need to keep loud disturbances to a minimum to make sure the cranes stay on the roost and do not get scared away. You know your child best – will sitting or standing quietly for 1.5 hours be a challenge? If yes, consider how that will affect the viewing experience for others and opt for our “express” weeknight tours.

How far is the walk? We will provide transportation from a parking area along Levee Road with our wagon that has cushioned benches and is pulled by a tractor. Participants will then need to walk 50 yards on a mowed trail to the blind. It is recommended that participants wear sturdy shoes to keep warm and make that walk as comfortable as possible.

Is the blind handicap accessible? If transport out to the blind in our wagon is not feasible, we also have the ability to transport individuals with limited mobility in an off road vehicle.

What should I wear? Dress for the weather. That means you should wear good insulating layers and consider bringing a hat and gloves. Darker colored outer clothing is preferable to bright colors or whites. While viewing takes place in the shelter of a blind, it is not heated and you will be exposed to the elements getting to and from its location.

Can I take pictures? Yes, please bring your camera. However, we ask that you do not use a flash. Camera flashes can spook the birds, scaring the entire flock away. Also, to be considerate of space and other participants, we prefer participants with large cameras to use a monopod instead of a tripod inside the blind.

Are there chairs? There is a bench inside the blind along the back wall that is a nice place to sit. There are also several stools, but there is not enough seating capacity for everyone to sit in the blind at the same time. There is also room to stand outside in an area adjacent to the blind that is shielded from the birds' view.

Should I bring my own binoculars? Yes, this is the best way to see the birds up close. Binoculars will help you to observe the birds when they come in to land and to catch some of their spectacular dancing.

How many people will be on the tour with me? Each viewing will be capped at 25 people, plus the expert tour guide and support staff.

What happens if it is raining or snowing? As long as there is no thunder or lightning, we will plan on running the program. The cranes are pretty hardy. Participants will be protected from the

elements while viewing the birds in the blind; however, the ride in the wagon will be open air so it is important that all visitors dress appropriately. The ride lasts approximately 20 minutes.

Are there always cranes? The cranes are wild animals. Wind, river depth, and crane preference can all affect where they choose to roost any given night. One thing we can promise is that any night spent down on the Wisconsin River is always special, and a knowledgeable guide will provide a rich educational experience that you won't soon forget.

Should I bring a flashlight? It will be dark when the program is over. If you like, you may bring a small flashlight to help light your way back to your car. We do ask that you be careful of where you shine it, as it might scare the birds. If you have a red light (sometimes an option on headlamps) we recommend this as the best choice, since cranes can't see red light. Please do not bring a large flashlight.

When is the best time to come to see the cranes? The cranes are wild animals, so their numbers vary season to season and day to day. During a typical fall, the birds are slightly less numerous at the start of the season when we have longer daylight and warmer temperatures. They tend to increase in numbers as the season goes on and we get cooler weather.

Are there bathrooms? The program will start at the Leopold Center and there will be ample time to use the restrooms before heading to the blind. There will also be a portable toilet at the blind site. We will spend about an hour at the viewing area and then transport you back to your vehicle.

Where is the blind? The blind is just west of the Leopold Center along the Wisconsin River. We will provide transport out to the blind from the parking area along the road.

Can I visit the blind on my own? No, unaccompanied visitation to the blind is not permitted.

What else can I do in the area? There is plenty to do in the Baraboo area, from visiting some of the popular [state parks](#) in the area to buffing up on your [circus history](#). For more ideas visit the Baraboo Chamber of Commerce [website](#) to get started.

Where can I stay in the area? There are several great places to stay in the Baraboo area. You can check out the listings from the [Baraboo Chamber of Commerce](#) to find a place to stay.