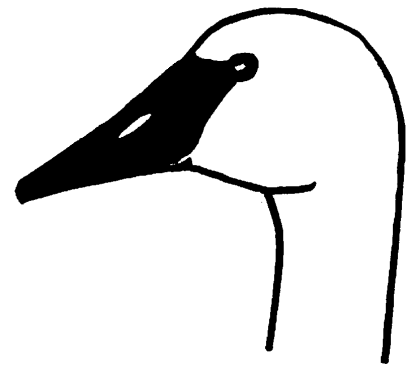


TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
3800 County Road 24
Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359
Phone 763-476-4663
E-Mail: ttss@threeiversparkdistrict.org



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TTSS ELECTIONS - Thanks to all members who took the time to vote. We are a small organization, so we are delighted that 110 members returned ballots. According to the Bylaws, the Board shall consist of not less than 10 or more than 15 members composed of the President, Vice President and immediate Past President of the Society and at least six members elected from the membership of the Society at large. Congratulations to Sally Shanks, our new President. Sally is the business manager of a 9,200 acre-ranch that was recently acquired by The Nature Conservancy in central California. Gary Ivey will continue to serve as Vice President. A self-employed wildlife biologist, Gary has spent the past few months banding Sandhill Cranes and writing a waterbird conservation plan for the Intermountain West Region. We welcome new Board member, Joe Johnson, wildlife biologist and long-time Coordinator of Michigan's Trumpeter Restoration Program. Returning to the Board are Directors Dale Becker, Ron Cordes, Larry Gillette, Jim Hawkings, Martha Jordan, Harry Lumsden, Mary Maj, Harvey Nelson, and Dave Weaver. Rick McKelvey, a former TTSS President and currently manager of the Pacific Wildlife Research Center for Canadian Wildlife Service, has been appointed by the Board as a Director-at-Large. The Board appreciates the membership's endorsement. Suggestions for future Board members are always welcome.

19TH TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE

- Over 80 swan enthusiasts gathered for the 19th Society Conference in Richmond, British Columbia, February 5 - 8, 2003. There were 3 days of presentations, covering such diverse topics as Trumpeter Swan wintering habitat issues, lead poisoning mortality, satellite tracking of Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, Trumpeter restoration updates from Idaho to Ontario, the status of Mute Swans in the U. S. as well as Canada, and innovative projects involving students and dairymen working to benefit swans and their habitat. The all day field trip hosted by Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service toured the Fraser River Delta, an estuary that supports the largest

concentration of wintering waterbirds and raptors in Canada. Once the fog lifted, several hundred Trumpeters were seen feeding and loafing on agricultural fields. There was time to explore the Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary and enjoy a lunch served at historic Minnehada Lodge.

The Conference ended with a lively raffle and banquet. Markus Merkens, of the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust, presented slides of wintering waterfowl habitat and local efforts to preserve threatened wintering swan habitat. The Trumpeter Swan Society presented outgoing President Harvey K. Nelson with a plaque of appreciation for his many years of expertise, selflessness, and energy in support of the Society. Congratulations and thank you, Harvey!



Director Dave Weaver (left) presenting award of appreciation to Harvey K. Nelson (right) at the 19th Conference Banquet. Photo by Jim Hawkings.

TTSS RESPONDS TO 90-DAY FINDING ON THE TRI-STATE TRUMPETER SWAN POPULATION -

On 28 January, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a 90-day Finding in response to the August 2000 petition by the Biodiversity Legal Foundation and Fund for Animals to designate the Tri-state (or Greater Yellowstone) Population of Trumpeter Swans as a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) and list it as threatened or endangered. This is the only breeding population of Trumpeter Swans that escaped extirpation in the lower 48 states. TTSS did not join in the listing petition and continues to believe that this important and

imperiled population can be saved without invoking the Endangered Species Act, which could hinder essential cooperation from private landowners and states.

The Finding concluded that the Tri-state Population is not a separate biological population, is not significant to the overall evolutionary welfare of the species, and that DPS designation was not appropriate. TTSS has written the FWS that it believes they made a credible argument that the Tri-state Population does not pass the significance test, in the technical sense of significance to the taxon, which is specifically required for DPS designation. We agree that FWS might reasonably deny DPS status on that basis.

However, TTSS strongly disagreed with the Finding's conclusion that the Tri-state Population is not a separate biological population. We believe that this conclusion was based upon numerous errors and omissions in the Finding, and fear that the FWS' failure to recognize that the Tri-state Trumpeters are discrete from other breeding populations will damage efforts to securely restore this important group of swans. Our complete letter, including our specific concerns about the biological errors, can be found on our website at www.taiga.net/swans/index.html.

Ruth Shea, Executive
Director

SUBSISTENCE HUNT FOR ALASKAN TRUMPETER SWANS?

- A proposal to legalize the spring and summer subsistence hunting of almost all species of birds in Alaska may be adopted by the USFWS this month. All residents of certain rural areas would be able to participate. Currently FWS is accepting comment on the proposed hunt, and specifically asking the public whether the season should remain closed for Trumpeter Swans and other sensitive species. TTSS has submitted comments asking the Service to keep the season closed on Alaskan Trumpeter Swans. Our reasons for this request included the apparent recent slowing of population growth, increasing mortality from lead poisoning on the winter range, loss of winter habitat, and vulnerability to mortality and nest failure on the nesting areas. Our complete letter is posted on the TTSS website.

LEAD POISONING UPDATE IN THE NORTHWEST

-Laurie Wilson, a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), has been issuing updates on the lead poisoning crisis along the Canada/Washington border. This winter, most of the swans roosted and foraged on the U. S. side. Swans were slow to arrive on the wintering grounds due to mild weather. Very low water levels

meant fewer flooded fields and changing use of fields by the swans. Once again, volunteers conducted population surveys twice a week. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WADFW) trapped swans for 6 days in November and December and fitted 20 Trumpeters with radio collars. Preliminary counts of retrieved carcasses indicated a total of 183 swans died of lead poisoning this winter: 33 in Canada and 150 in Washington (Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties). Only one radio-collared swan was found dead of lead poisoning. Mortality appeared to end by 11 March. Necropsies are being conducted and a final count will be provided upon completion. With such a large area used by the swans, it was hoped that radio tracking would lead CWS and WADFW biologists to the main areas of lead contamination. But, once again, it has been difficult to determine the source of lead. Environment Canada maintains a website on the status of Pacific Coast swans which is found at www.ecoinfo.org/env_ind/region/swan/swan_e.cfm.

For other web sites relating to the lead poisoning issue, visit www.swansociety.org; www.monikas.com (a wildlife shelter), and www.judsonlaketrumpeterswans.ca.

SWANS HAVE COME HOME TO HINES MARSH –

After an absence of more than 40 years, Trumpeter Swans have returned to Hines Marsh on the Long Beach Peninsula in southwest Washington State. TTSS has been instrumental in helping to protect and restore this 700-acre interdunal wetland. This winter, work to remove dead willow stumps from the marsh created about 15 acres of open water. We cleared it and they came. The high count of 11 Trumpeters was made on 4 February 2003. We want to thank Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission for their assistance in helping get this project started. The project has been a unique partnership of federal and state agencies, and private groups. This coming summer, we hope that another 20-25 acres will be cleared. The funds have come from a North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant TTSS received last year.

Martha Jordan, Director

NEWS FROM MICHIGAN TRUMPETER SWAN RESTORATION AND INTERIOR POPULATION ESTIMATE

- Joe Johnson reports that Michigan tallied 478 Trumpeter Swans in September 2002. Statewide, it has become increasingly difficult to get an accurate count of breeding pairs, but at least 34 known broods were located with a total of

128 cygnets (3.76 young per pair). The major success story in Michigan is the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Thirty-six Alaskan-origin swans were released there back in 1991-92 and now the population is estimated to be 218 birds. Michigan reached its Population Goal of 200 swans in 1998 and Nesting Pair goal of 30 nesting pairs in 2000.

Michigan birders conducting the 2002 Christmas Bird Count located 40 Trumpeters wintering on the Au Sable River on the Northeast Lower Peninsula. The Au Sable is an excellent trout stream and the birds seemed to be feeding on aquatic vegetation. About 40 Trumpeters return to the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary to winter, but most of Michigan's Trumpeters spend the winter on the larger rivers within the state. The birding public can be of great assistance in reporting wintering swans. Joe Johnson welcomes any and all observations at (269) 671-2511.

Most restoration projects within the Midwest are finding it difficult to accurately survey their swans as more and more of the birds are unmarked and spreading out to more remote areas. The Interior Population (IP) of Trumpeter Swans is estimated to have had a 2002 Fall Flight of 3,414. Two hundred ninety-two successful pairs produced 1,036 cygnets in the wild. A total of 186 swans was released in 2002. The IP Population covers an area from South Dakota to Ohio and Ontario.

THANK YOU TO ALL FOR ANNUAL APPEAL CONTRIBUTIONS! The Trumpeter Swan Society may be a small organization, but its members are very dedicated and generous! Thanks to all of you who donated above and beyond your membership dues. It is never too late to make a donation!

Joyce Anderson
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Eugene Stroops
Bob Uhl
David K. Weaver
Debbie Whitney

CELEBRATION OF SWANS IN THE YUKON 12-20 April – Since 1994, a celebration of the swans festival has been held in April when thousands of Trumpeter and Tundra Swans gather in the southern Yukon on their way to northern breeding grounds. Jim Hawkings, TTSS Director from Whitehorse, will kick off the events with a presentation on April 10. The festival features lectures, social events, guided walks, and many opportunities to view swans at the Swan Haven Interpretation Centre. For more information, contact Libby Gunn at (867) 667-8291 or e-mail Libby.Gunn@gov.yk.ca. Come and discover the waterfowl of M'Clintock Bay!

brendavb@iastate.edu or (515) 233-1803.

19TH CONFERENCE SWEATSHIRTS- Attendees at the recent swan conference in British Columbia were very excited about the First Nation design. The shirts are a gray sweat, cotton – polyester blend with the image of a swan in white, black, terra cotta, and turquoise. Sizes include S and M (limited numbers), and L, XL, and XXL. The artist is Shele O'Hollaren. If you would like to purchase one, please send a check or money order to TTSS for \$26.00 (US Funds). Price includes shipping.

SWAN FESTIVAL AT SASKATOON ISLAND PROVINCIAL PARK, ALBERTA – The 5th annual swan festival celebrating the return of the swans to Grande Prairie and the Peace Country will be held Saturday, April 26th at Centre 2000 and Sunday, April 27th, at the Saskatoon Island Park at 12:30 p.m. Visit the festival website at www.swanfestival.fanweb.ca for more details.



REPRINTS AVAILABLE- If you would like a copy of *Restoration of Trumpeter Swans: A Century of Progress and Challenges* by R. E. Shea, H. K. Nelson, L. N. Gillette, J. G. King, and D. K. Weaver from *Waterbirds* 25 (Special Publication 1) 2002, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the TTSS office.

IOWA TRUMPETER SWAN BANQUET APRIL 26, 2003 – All Trumpeter Swan enthusiasts are invited to attend the annual Trumpeter Swan Banquet at Scheman Building, Iowa State Center in Ames, Iowa, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Proceeds from the event will be used to fund the statewide Trumpeter Swan restoration program. The fundraising event is hosted by the Iowa State University Trumpeter Swan Restoration Committee. Banquet speakers will be Ron Andrews, Iowa Trumpeter Swan Restoration Coordinator, and Dave Hoffman, Iowa DNR Wildlife Technician. Questions? Contact Brenda at

IN MEMORIAM – Mary M. Kinard of Columbia, South Carolina, recently made a donation in memory of her dear friend, Joseph L. Gunter of Albany, Oregon. Mr. Gunter was a long-time swan volunteer who provided numerous observations of wintering swans to the Society's Washington Working Group.

WANT TO BE A MEMBER? NEED TO RENEW? GIFT SUGGESTION?

Student/Retired__\$15 Regular__\$25 Family__\$30 Organization__\$50 Supporting__\$100 Life Member__ \$500

Make check/money order payable to TTSS (Canadians please write "in US funds" on personal checks). Mail to:
The Trumpeter Swan Society, 3800 County Road 24, Maple Plain, Minnesota 55359

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WELCOME ALL!

TRUMPETERS FOR SALE – Five 2002-hatch full-winged, parent-reared, 50% Alaskan stock. Asking \$500/bird, but will reduce price for one buyer. Call Dean Johnson in Wisconsin at (262) 537-2173 or e-mail dkjohnsn@execpc.com.

Eight 2002-hatch pinioned, parent-raised Trumpeters, including two unrelated pairs. Asking \$500/bird, but will negotiate. Call Blake Rossow in Minnesota at (507)-662-6204 or e-mail twostick@frontiernet.net.

Joe Johnson, Michigan, has several Trumpeters for

GOT FARMS? GOT SWANS! The Washington State Dairy Federation has a bumper sticker available that promotes the importance of dairy farms as wintering swan habitat in the Northwest. As dairy farms are sold to developers, swans migrating down from Alaska and northern Canada find less and less habitat. To learn more about how to support the local dairy farmers and the swans, contact Jay Gordon at (360) 482-3485 or e-mail

Visit TTSS' World Wide Web site at www.taiga.net/swans/index.html