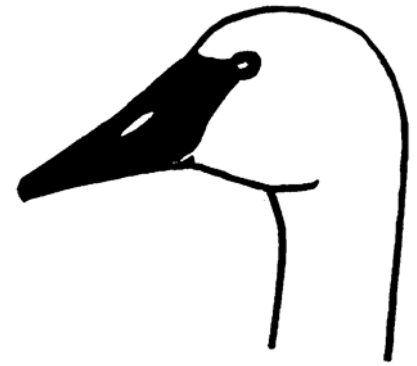




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - *Transition to home offices* - The economy affects nearly everyone and it is difficult on nonprofit organizations as well. A combination of legal and budget issues will result in the Society significantly changing the over 40 year-relationship with Three Rivers Park District. By the end of 2009, all TTSS staff will be working from home offices as the Executive Director currently does. The history of the Park District and TTSS are intimately related and it will be a sad day when we close the main office. However, the good news is that we will become more efficient and will continue our important conservation work. We have been working on the transition for several months and some of the transition will begin as early as this summer. Some of you may be surprised to learn that we have the equivalent of less than 1 full-time employee. Much of what we do is accomplished by volunteers or through special project contracts.

Membership/Outreach Coordinator - We are using funds from special grants to contract with Peg Abbott of Portal, Arizona, to help increase membership and do targeted outreach. A look at the new member list in this issue shows how effective she has been in a short period of time. Even with Peg's effort, we are still just shy of 500 members. We need everyone's help to grow. Peg helped develop a new membership brochure that can be sent electronically or mailed to those of you who would like to be part of our outreach effort.

Business Memberships - TTSS has new membership categories for businesses. All business members are entitled to have their logo and a link to their website on the TTSS website. Depending on their membership level, there are a number of other benefits each business may receive. Details are on the TTSS website and in our new membership brochure.

TTSS has a new blog - If you interested in current news of the Society, please log on to: <http://trumpeterswansociety.wordpress.com/>. Board members and staff will be profiled in upcoming blog pieces. TTSS is also developing an E-News capability. If you would like to receive E-News, we need to hear from you with your e-mail address. We do not share e-mail addresses.

Thank you Wiancko Family! TTSS received a generous donation from the Wiancko Family Donor Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The Wianckos have been one of our

most stalwart supporters and we can not thank them enough.

Thanks for your donations to the Annual Appeal and the 40th Anniversary Campaign - Many of you give beyond your membership every year. Without those donations we would have greatly reduced operations. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Red Rocks Lakes National Wildlife Refuge planning - TTSS had very serious concerns with the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Red Rock Lakes NWR in Montana. Although no additional public comment period is planned before the final plan is released, TTSS has been informed that significant revisions are being made based on the many comments received including ours. The final plan will contain Trumpeter Swan objectives.

Flyway Meetings - Staff and Board members attended selected meetings of the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyway Council and Technical Committees. It is through these meetings that important coordination of migratory management and regulation setting occurs. This year we encouraged the Atlantic Flyway Council to draft a Trumpeter Swan Management Plan for the first time. In the Mississippi Flyway, efforts to encourage more swans to migrate south were discussed. The Pacific Flyway Council passed a recommendation that will allow Trumpeter Swans to be released in central and eastern Oregon to enhance a declining nesting population. All Flyway Councils and the National Flyway Council were reminded that 2010 is the next 5-year range-wide Trumpeter Swan Survey coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with assistance from numerous State, Federal, and private partners throughout the United States and Canada.

Annual Report - Enclosed with this issue is our 2008 Annual Report and financial summary. These reports will become part of the 1st issue of *Trumpetings* each year.

As you can see, your Society is actively involved in many aspects of swan conservation. As always, I want to hear from you. E-mail me, write me the old-fashioned way, or call me with your ideas, questions, comments or concerns.

John Cornely, johncornely@trumpeterswansociety.org
(303) 933-9861

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS

Update from the International Swan Lead Team —

Following is a brief summary from the Team's 2008-2009 Progress Report. Representatives from the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the USFWS, The Trumpeter Swan Society and the Washington Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit/University of Washington have been working together since 2001 to minimize swan mortalities caused primarily by the ingestion of lead shot pellets in northwestern Washington and southwestern British Columbia. Swans generally forage in farm fields, but roost on small lakes or in fields with standing water. As reported in previous *Trumpetings*, trumpeters have been fitted with radio or satellite transmitters and many carcasses have been collected. Of 2,062 carcasses collected 2000-2008, 77% died from lead. A total of 4,506 core samples have been taken from fields and Judson Lake (a ~40 ha lake spanning the US-Canada border and a common roost site) in a grid pattern.

Results indicate that the U.S. side of Judson Lake contained the highest lead shot density. Hazing of swans from Judson Lake was begun in winter 2006/07 and has continued each winter. This past winter, weekly swan surveys in Whatcom County, Washington, and Sumas Prairie, British Columbia, core sampling, and monitoring mortality were all conducted. In addition, there was monitoring of roost sites further south in Skagit and Snohomish Counties, Washington. Hazing appears to have resulted in a 50% reduction in lead mortality. Options for effective medium-term strategies, long-term management, and the restoration of Judson Lake are all being discussed by the Team. Funding for any proposed restoration work will be a significant challenge.

To read the complete 2008-2009 progress report, visit the link on the TTSS website under *What's New*.

Mystery of the toxic swans - This original 1-hour documentary explores the lead mortality among swans along the British Columbia-Washington State border. A co-production of Raincoast Storylines, Ltd. and Omni Film Productions Limited, the documentary premiered in January 2009 on Canadian TV and Discovery HD and received excellent reviews. It follows a team of scientists in their search for the causes of lead mortality and examines political and legal implications. The footage includes interviews held with swan experts at the TTSS 21st Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

To date, the program has only aired in Canada, but TTSS will be advised when DVDs will be available to the public and if broadcast in U.S. television network will occur. We will keep TTSS members posted via our website or next *Trumpetings*.

Trumpeter Swans overwintering in the Yukon Territory

- TTSS member Bruce Bennett of the Yukon Wildlife Viewing Program reported observers seeing 5 swans overwintering on the Teslin River in the southern Yukon. This is the second year that Trumpeter Swans

have been documented overwintering in the Yukon Territory. Perhaps as a result of Global Warming, the river has been staying open throughout the winter and the birds appear to be finding natural food.

Good news from Washington State - After lead mortality in the Pacific Northwest, Camano Island Wildlife Services and TTSS Director Martha Jordan are happy to report on a swan successfully rehabbed and released back to the wild. A swan was illegally shot and wounded by two unlicensed youth at Crescent Lake Wildlife Area in Monroe, Washington, on January 18th. After being rehabbed at the Camano Island Wildlife Services, the swan recovered enough to be banded M84 and released on March 4th at Lake Terrell in Whatcom County. TTSS helped in reporting and catching the injured bird and provided partial funding for its care. Camano Veterinary Clinic staff time and facilities were all donated to make this rehabilitation a success.



The release of M84 in Washington. Photo by Sue and Mike Murphy.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION NEWS

Trumpeter Swan Fall 2008 Survey – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's annual Fall survey counted 459 swans (adults and cygnets) in September 2008. This count of the US breeding segment of the RMP was 13 % lower than the count of 527 swans in Fall 2007. The number of adults held steady, but cygnets declined by 58%, the lowest since 1993. Poor reproduction and survival were likely due to the spring's cold and snowy weather. The number of swans at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon, was similar to 2007, but no swans were observed at Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area, Oregon, and vicinity for the 2nd year in a row.

TTSS to coordinate Idaho's nest monitoring in 2009

- As part of a partnership program involving TTSS, the Caribou-Targhee National Forest (NF), U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Idaho Department of Fish and Game, TTSS Director Ruth Shea will be heading the effort to monitor all of Idaho's historic nesting territories this summer. The effort includes aerial and ground monitoring to locate all active nests, and to determine hatching and fledging success. As part of a Challenge Cost Share program, the Caribou-Targhee NF is

contributing \$5,000 to fund this work and has been most helpful in efforts to improve swan habitat on its lands in eastern Idaho.

INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS

Minnesota – The Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program, the U. S Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3, Three Rivers Park District, and The Trumpeter Swan Society met in March to evaluate last winter's experiment to encourage migration. Biologists had agreed previously it would be beneficial for the birds to establish multiple wintering sites. The Minnesota DNR had asked the public to delay feeding swans until January 1, 2009, to encourage more trumpeters to explore habitat further south. Feeding resumed, however, on 22 December, after several weeks of ideal conditions to induce migration. It was believed that if birds were to head south, they would have done so by then and to hold off longer might increase mortality.

Aerial surveys in January 2009 revealed there were about 2,900 trumpeters wintering in Minnesota, mainly on the Mississippi, Otter Tail and Pelican Rivers and other smaller areas of open water or river flowages. One banded swan (most swans in Minnesota are now unbanded) that had wintered in Monticello the previous winter, migrated this winter to a private ranch in Arkansas. Each year, there are always a few more swans that attempt migration. Numbers of wintering swans increased slightly in Arkansas and Missouri, and more than usual in southern Illinois, but there is no evidence that any Minnesota swans have gone to the Illinois site. Almost double the number of swans, mainly cygnets, was brought into the Minnesota Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (www.wrcmn.org) for power line injuries, lead poisoning, and general weakness than were brought in last year. Swans may have been moving around more in search of food and thus were more vulnerable, but there are no data to help evaluate indirect influences on mortality. The Committee that coordinated the effort believes that the experiment did not encourage a sufficient number of swans to migrate to justify being repeated. Other options are being considered.

Iowa to Arkansas migration experiment - 2nd winter release – On February 17, 2009, Ron Andrews and Dave Hoffman, Iowa DNR Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program, along with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) and the National Park Service released four full-winged cygnets at the Buffalo River National Park and 11 cygnets at the Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge in northern Arkansas. This was the 2nd year of a planned 3-year release. The events were well attended by many local swan enthusiasts and media. Thanks to AGFC's Karen Rowe, Buffalo River Manager Mark Depot and Holla Bend NWR's Durwin Carter and Carla Mitchell for a warm welcome for the swans.

As in 2008, the hope is these cygnets will migrate back to Iowa by early summer, molt in Iowa, and return to

winter in Arkansas. The swans were marked with green collars, green leg bands, and USFWS bands. Iowa hopes to release ~ 30 Iowa trumpeters in Arkansas in winter 2009/10 for the final year of the translocation experiment. At the time of this year's release, seven additional unmarked Trumpeter Swans were observed near Holla Bend NWR. It is promising that other trumpeters are being attracted to more wintering locations. Ron and Dave gave a seminar on swans at the Arkansas Technical College and were knighted as official *Arkansas Travelers*, receiving certificates signed by Arkansas Governor and Secretary of State.

Ron Andrews, Iowa Restoration Coordinator



Newly banded trumpeter cygnets being released in Arkansas.
Photo by Bridget Carroll

TTSS Director Harry Lumsden awarded Ontario's Distinguished Ornithologist Award – On behalf of the Ontario Field Ornithologists, Kenneth Abraham awarded Harry this honor in October 2008 at its Annual Convention and Banquet in Hamilton, Ontario. Most of Harry's extensive efforts to restore the Trumpeter Swan to Ontario came after his retirement in 1988 from Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources. In 2007, after 25 years of much hard work, the Ontario population of trumpeters was declared self-sustaining and included on the official list of Ontario's breeding bird species. The December 2008 (26:3) issue of *Ontario Birds* has a wonderful article paying tribute to Harry's long and distinguished ornithological career. His diverse contributions range from extensive museum collections to authoring more than 150 publications and numerous species accounts for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas. For a copy of the article, visit Ontario Field Ornithologists website at www.ofo.ca or contact the TTSS office. Congratulations, and very well deserved, Harry!

The Swan Research Program (SRP) is celebrating its 40th anniversary - Founded in 1969 by William (Bill) Sladen, the SRP's mission is to encourage the conservation of wetlands and their habitants, both flora and fauna, especially swans and other water birds worldwide. SRP has pioneered in radio-telemetry and international methods of capture and marking, having worked closely with Wetlands International's Swan Specialist Group. It has published over 60 scientific

papers. In the 1990s, SRP was responsible, with Canadian aviator William Lishman, for developing the Ultralight technique to teach geese, cranes and swans migration routes as fictionalized in the popular movie *Fly Away Home*, a technique now being used for Whooping Cranes over a 1,200-mile migration Wisconsin to Florida.

SRP, with its partners, works on long-term, self-sustaining projects including:

- Following the migrations of the Eastern Tundra Swan over its 8,000-mile round-trip between Alaska's North Slope oilfields and wintering along the mid-Atlantic Coast.
- Researching cheaper and safer techniques in teaching Trumpeter Swans migration routes.
- Researching hybridization between Trumpeter and Tundra Swans by molecular and taxonomic methods. The Boreal Forest (trumpeter habitat) is moving north into the Tundra Swan's tundra habitat due to Global Warming.
- Promoting non-lethal methods of controlling the invasive non-native Mute Swan.

SRP's large collection of 70 captive swans of eight taxa (including hybrids) in good wetland habitat is vital for testing new methods of marking, capture, and behavior. For more information and publications, please contact Dr. William Sladen, President, SRP, P. O. Box 3432, Warrenton, VA 20188. Visit www.swanmigration.org or (540)-340-1493; wjsladen@aol.com.

Ohio to Virginia Trumpeter Swan migration – a potential migration technique being explored by Swan Research Program (SRP), Virginia – SRP Biologists John Whissel and Bill Sladen are developing a new approach to teaching migration to young Trumpeter Swans based on the behavior of a young Trumpeter Swan that found its way to Airlie, Virginia. A subadult male, Trumpeter Swan Ohio yellow collar 0A4, released in Warren, Ohio, first arrived at the Airlie swan collection in Warrenton, Virginia, in November 2005 in the company of 12 wild Tundra Swans. The wild Tundra Swans kept separate from the captive Airlie birds on the 56-acre lake, but 0A4 stayed all winter with the captive Trumpeter Swans. 0A4 departed in early March 2006 as did the Tundra Swans.

In November 2006, 0A4 returned to Airlie again with wild Tundra Swans, but this time also in the company of an unmarked female trumpeter. SRP staff captured the female and fitted her with a neckband-mounted satellite transmitter from which the pair's route north and summering location in Ohio were identified, 250 miles from Virginia. 0A4 returned a third time to Airlie in November 2007 with another unmarked partner. However, during the winter, 0A4 paired with Z628, a female Trumpeter Swan of Alaskan heritage in the SRP captive collection. 0A4 remained at Airlie with Z628 in June, missing the usual migration period. SRP biologists obtained the necessary permits to move 0A4, Z628 and two other young trumpeter pairs from the captive collection to 0A4's summer home in Ohio. By

January 2009, eight trumpeters had returned to Airlie, including 0A4 and Z628 and Z599 and another Ohio-collared bird that had mated with the satellite-banded female along with their one cygnet.

Trumpeters learn migration routes from their parents and inexperienced birds suffer greater mortality until they learn safe routes. SRP believes that the evidence that 0A4 first learned his migration from wild Tundra Swans justifies developing a restoration technique relying on wild migratory birds to teach released young Trumpeter Swans. SRP will be forming an advisory group to consider the best actions based on the Ohio-Virginia migration experience. Please feel free to contact SRP at 1-888-2MIGRATE or at www.swanmigration.org for information and comments.

John Whissel and Dr. Bill JL Sladen

Attending Alaska's Birds - A Wildlife Pilot's Story - In July 2008, TTSS Director James (Jim) King published a very engaging book chronicling his 50 years of adventure with bird biology and conservation in Alaska. As a wildlife biologist and pilot, Jim has participated in numerous swan surveys and has long been an advocate for the Trumpeter Swan in the Northwest. With a forward by Jim Rearden, Jim's book is available in paperback either online at www.amazon.com or at Trafford.com/07-1764 (Trafford Publishing, Victoria, British Columbia. Toll-free: 1-888-232-4444). A great and informative read for all swan enthusiasts!

Good used birding scopes wanted for Russian swan observers – John Ø Albertsen, Swan Specialist Group Coordinator, recently sent out a notice that Dmitrijs Boiko, swan banding project coordinator in Latvia, is looking for bird scope donations. Many Russian swan enthusiasts observe banded Whooper and Bewick's swans, but lack any optics to read collars. If you have an unneeded scope you would be willing to donate, please contact John at swanspecialistgroup@gmail.com

Grande Prairie, Alberta, swan festival - The 11th annual swan festival sponsored by the Friends of Saskatoon Island and Alberta Parks will celebrate the annual return of the swans to the Peace Country April 25-26, 2009. For more information on speakers, the many colorful events and birding field trips, visit either the link on the TTSS Website or call Grande Prairie at (780) 538-5603 or e-mail margot.hervieux@gov.ab.ca.

Celebration of Swans April 18-26, 2009 in the Yukon – Welcome thousands of returning swans and other water birds to Marsh Lake, Tagish, Teslin, Carcross, Whitehorse and Burwash Landing in the Yukon Territory! Enjoy the many free birding events and visit the Swan Haven Interpretation Centre. For more details, visit the website at www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca and click on Celebration of Swans.

Duck Stamp dollars making a difference! Interior Secretary Ken Salazar recently announced \$11.5 million in Duck Stamp refuge acquisitions for the National Wildlife Refuge System throughout the United States. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird

Hunting and Conservation stamp is celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 2008-2009. Everyone who appreciates waterfowl and nongame species alike can help acquire and protect their habitat by simply purchasing a stamp.



Trumpeter Swans for sale – Two 2008-hatch females (1 clipped, 1 pinioned). DNA sexed. Parent-reared; reasonable priced. Contact TTSS member Carolyn McDowell, New York, at (585)593-3766 or e-mail cmcdowell@roadrunner.com

PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
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