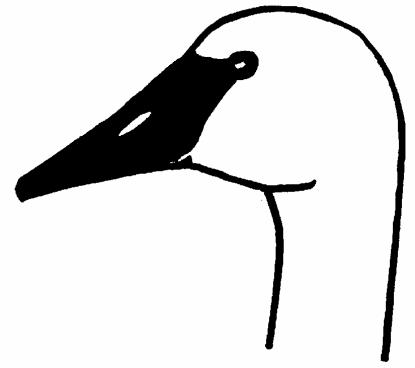


TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE PRESIDENT - In this brief note to TTSS members, I want to emphasize two activities covered in further detail in this issue of *Trumpetings* that are important to all of us and encourage your participation.

The 19th TTSS Conference is scheduled for February 5-8, 2003, in British Columbia. This is a unique opportunity for members to participate in affairs of the Society and to learn more about swan research and management across North America. Plan to join us.

TTSS is launching a strategic planning process to reexamine organizational goals and objectives, and to better define program needs and resources required to accomplish our mission during the next 10 years. This effort will require active participation by all members. It is your opportunity to provide meaningful input into the process. I urge you to let Director Mary Maj know about your special interests. If you have expertise in strategic planning, she will welcome your assistance. Please contact Mary through the TTSS office in Minnesota.

Harvey K. Nelson

19th TTSS CONFERENCE - Mark your calendar now! Come join us at the 19th Trumpeter Swan Society Conference, February 5-8, 2003, in beautiful Richmond, British Columbia, just a few minutes south of Vancouver. This area provides important winter habitat for Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, as well as year-round habitat for an expanding feral Mute Swan population. Focusing on the theme "Working Together to Conserve Our Native Swans", we are working with Canadian and U.S. agencies, other Non-Government Organizations, educators, and our member volunteers to develop an agenda that will help advance swan conservation and management in North America. Details on Conference registration and travel arrangements will be on our website by mid-August and the registration brochure will be sent to members with the fall issue of *Trumpetings*. If you would like to submit a paper or volunteer to work at the Conference, please contact Executive Director Ruth Shea (ruthshea@srv.net; 208-574-2455).

NEXT TTSS BOARD ELECTION - The 19th Trumpeter Swan Society Conference is approaching quickly. That means it is time to consider the election of Board members and Officers for the Society. Their terms expire at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Membership, which is held in conjunction with the Conference. According to Society Bylaws, the slate of candidates shall be submitted to the Membership by written ballot in time for the results to be announced at the regular meeting. The official ballot will be included in the November *Trumpetings*. A three-person nominating committee, consisting of Board members Larry Gillette (763-476-4663, lgillette@threeriversparkdistrict.org), Sally Shanks (staten@citlink.net) and Dave Weaver (dweaver242@aol.com), is responsible for developing a slate of candidates to be submitted to the Membership. If you would like to be considered for inclusion on the slate, please contact one of the committee members to express your interest. Board and officer positions are unpaid, but may be reimbursed for qualifying expenses.

There is always work to do. We are constantly looking for volunteers. It is a good way to learn more about the Society and Trumpeter Swan management, and it could prepare you for future participation on the Board. Please contact Ruth Shea (ruthshea@srv.net).

TO ALL TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY MEMBERS - In 1991, The Trumpeter Swan Society stopped to take a close look at itself through a comprehensive organizational assessment and feasibility study. The outcome of this effort, known as the Scanlon Report, provided specific recommendations to the Society related to organizational elements such as mission, goals, leadership objectives, staffing, marketing and governance. This effort has been the guiding hand that has kept us focused on mission, clear in our objectives, and intent on growth and improvement.

Well, time doesn't stand still and 11 years later we again focus a scrutinizing eye inward. Our simple intention is to create a road map or Strategic Plan that will position and direct us in meeting our organizational objectives. We will ask tough, but honest questions of ourselves, and our Membership. No topic is sacred including our role, mission, goals and objectives. Based on the responses of our inquiry, we will define a strategy for

carrying out our objectives and identifying the resources needed to accomplish our mission.

Your involvement is important. This is one of the critical junctures, when, as a member, you can really guide and influence the vision and effectiveness of the Society. We will engage the membership through a series of questions on issues related to the Society, and on organizational strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. Look for a questionnaire as a special insert in the fall *Trumpetings*. If you have interest and/or expertise in strategic planning, please contact us. If your interest is not along this line, please still take the time to answer a few, but critical questions that will help us draw our road map. Stay tuned, as we will report on our planning efforts at the 2003 Trumpeter Swan Society Conference.

Mary Maj

DIRECTOR HARRY LUMSDEN HONORED IN ONTARIO - The Friends of Wye Marsh held their 15th Annual Art Auction and Dinner to raise funds for environmental and wildlife programs on April 27, 2002. Wye Marsh in Midland, Ontario, is the focus for the reintroduction Program for the Trumpeter Swan in Ontario. TTSS member Beverly Kingdon presented Director Harry Lumsden with a TTSS plaque of appreciation and gift. It was thought that the gift would go to fund a new pair of chestwaders for his field work, but Harry preferred to donate TTSS' gift to help support the Ontario Trumpeter Swan Program. Harry received a standing ovation and, in his honor, Wye Marsh has started an annual tradition of recognizing others who contribute to wildlife. Congratulations, Harry, on fine work done over many years to bring the Trumpeter Swan back to Ontario!

NEWS FROM THE NORTHWEST

WASHINGTON AND CANADA SWAN DIE-OFF - During the past 3 winters, over 750 Trumpeter Swans have died of poisoning from ingestion of spent lead shot in Whatcom County, Washington, and the Sumas Prairie area of British Columbia. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and the British Columbia Provincial Wildlife Service have been monitoring the situation and are working to prevent more swans from dying of lead poisoning.

In winter 2001/2002, 326 swans were documented to have died of lead poisoning, 250 on the U.S. side, and 76 in Canada. Research during the winter was conducted by WDFW and CWS. Twenty-six swans were radio tagged to locate potentially contaminated feeding areas. Progress is being made, but no solid answers have yet been found. Research is being planned for the 2002-2003 season. TTSS is continuing its efforts to assist with this project, including fund raising.

For a second year in a row, the U.S. swans were necropsied by a team of veterinary students led by Dr. Laurel Degernes from North Carolina State University.

The event was coordinated by Martha Jordan of TTSS, and involved more than 30 volunteers, including two local veterinarians. We want to give special thanks to Western Washington University for providing their Environmental Laboratory facilities, the staff and volunteers from the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association, Mike and Sue Murphy, and volunteer veterinarians, Dr. Dan Coombs and Dr. Elizabeth Riggs.

HINES MARSH, WASHINGTON - TTSS has received a \$50,000 North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to restore 30 acres of Hines Marsh to open water that will once again provide quality habitat for wintering Trumpeter Swans. This is TTSS' second NAWCA grant for the marsh, which is located on Long Beach Peninsula in southwest Washington. The first grant paid for a new water control structure in the marsh. Washington Parks and Recreation Commission's Southwest Regional Director, Paul Malmberg, has been taking the lead on this project. It will take much hard work, but the team of partners is dedicated to bringing back Trumpeters to this large interdunal wetland system along our Pacific Coast.

BEND, OREGON, TRUMPETER PROJECT SUCCESS

- The City of Bend in central Oregon has supported a large flock of Mute Swans in its parks along the Deschutes River. This population of Mutes grew large, creating problems for park visitors and neighbors and was on the verge of becoming a feral flock, potentially threatening efforts to restore Trumpeter Swans to Oregon. A plan was devised in 1995 (see *North American Swans* 29(1):115-117) to reduce the Mute flock and replace them with Trumpeters whose progeny might be used for further restoration in Oregon. The first Trumpeters were introduced to Bend in May 1998, with more birds added in subsequent years to total eight Trumpeters in 2001. The first successful breeding occurred this summer. Two pairs nested, hatching seven cygnets. Currently, five cygnets are still alive and well, giving the Bend Project hope for a productive future.

Christopher G. Carey

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS –

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRUMPETER SWAN MIGRATION PROJECT

- As *Trumpetings* went to press, TTSS member Rod Drewien had just returned from the Yukon where he helped capture and place radio transmitters on five Trumpeter Swans. Their locations will be tracked by Argos satellites. USFWS Pilot-biologist and former TTSS Director Bruce Conant expertly piloted the floatplane used to capture the birds. Nancy Hughes, Canadian Wildlife Service, Whitehorse, also assisted. Ten additional swans were captured and marked with neckbands. Feathers and blood were collected from the swans for USFWS genetic studies. The project goal is to identify the wintering areas and migration routes of Trumpeters from various Canadian nesting areas. If some swans are found to be using currently unknown wintering sites outside of the Greater Yellowstone area, these areas could become important in management efforts to expand the winter distribution of Rocky Mountain Trumpeters. The swans' movements will be tracked on the "Shadow-A-Swan" website www.uen.org/swans/. We are most grateful to the Y2Y Conservation Initiative and Wilburforce Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Canadian Wildlife Service, and Dr. Arnie Fredrickson for helping to support this research, and to Brandon Thacker, at the Educational Technology Center of the Davis County, Utah, school system for making it possible for school children to study and follow the swans on the internet.

Ruth Shea

CENTENNIAL VALLEY SUMMER SURVEYS

- Summer surveys of nesting Trumpeter Swans in Montana's Centennial Valley, including Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (RRLNWR), have yielded a decline in the number of Trumpeter Swans after this past winter. A survey in May 2002 found 55 birds compared to 68 in May 2001. A survey in July 2002 found 50 total Trumpeters compared to 75 in July 2001. It is possible that a handful of swans may be molting elsewhere, such as near Harriman State Park in Idaho (R. Shea, pers. comm.). While water conditions in the Centennial Valley are better than in other nearby areas, the drought continues to have adverse impacts. Without supplemental winter feed, reduced over-winter survival and/or poorer nutrition may be factors as well, exacerbated by a lack of migration to more temperate climates.

Breeding territories remain plentiful, but unoccupied due to a lack of breeding swans, although the Centennial Valley still provides some of the highest quality Trumpeter Swan breeding habitat and wetland conditions in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Last summer, seven nests were located, but only three hatched, possibly due to diminishing wetland conditions as the drought effects progressed. This year, only three nests have been confirmed with 12 cygnets alive to date. The Centennial Valley commonly had over 30 nests when supplemental winter feed was provided at RRLNWR. After supplemental feeding was terminated,

the number of nests has mostly ranged from 10 - 15, with highs of 22 nests in 1996 and 21 in 1998. Refuge staff is assimilating the results from last year's pilot project where six satellite transmitters were placed on Trumpeter Swans. One satellite-marked Trumpeter is known to have died in Wyoming this spring. Two transmitters are still transmitting signals, and the other three are as yet unaccounted for.

Daniel Gomez

TRUMPETER SWANS RELEASED ON FLATHEAD INDIAN RESERVATION IN MONTANA

- As a component of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Project, Wildlife Biologists from the Tribal Wildlife Management Program and the USFWS released 34 Trumpeter Swans at five locations on July 3, 2002. This project is being conducted as part of the Tribes' wildlife and fisheries program for mitigation of impacts of Kerr Dam, and is consistent with the USFWS strategy to achieve swan management goals and address restoration of the Rocky Mountain Population of Trumpeters through the use of National Wildlife Refuge System lands. Other partners on the project are the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Trumpeter Swan Fund, the Lower Flathead Valley Community Foundation, and several local cooperating landowners.

Trumpeters once nested in northwestern Montana. An entry in the journal of Father Jean DeSmet mentioned the presence of nesting swans on Flathead Lake. Trumpeters became locally extirpated due to over-shooting and habitat loss. Dale Becker, Tribal Wildlife Program Manager, noted that the Tribal Wildlife Management Program initiated the Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Project in 1996. Initial restoration attempts were hampered by limited availability of swans for use in the project. The Tribes contracted with the Trumpeter Swan Fund of Jackson, Wyoming, in 2000 to initiate a captive propagation program. The Trumpeter Swan Fund has been successful in establishing several new nesting pairs in western Wyoming.

The swans were released on the Reservation at five undisclosed locations, including private properties that provided the proper degree of seclusion, stable water levels, adequate aquatic vegetation, and limited hazards such as power lines, spent lead shot, and fishing sinkers. The swans are currently flightless due to molting, but will be flying by mid-August. The swans may migrate from the Reservation or may stay through the winter, if local conditions are favorable. It is hoped that surviving birds will return to the Reservation to nest in subsequent years. Each of the swans has been fitted with a red neck band with a white code with the alpha T plus two numerals and a leg band with the alpha F plus two numerals. In addition, radio transmitters are attached to 15 of the neckbands. Observations of the marked birds should be reported to the Tribal Wildlife Management Program at (406) 883-2888, extension 7278.

STATUS OF THE TRUMPETER SWAN IN ALBERTA, CANADA - In 2001, Alberta's Endangered Species Conservation Committee recommended to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Development that the Trumpeter Swan be listed as a threatened species within the Province. The minister agreed with this assessment. The species was listed as threatened because the population is a very small population (fewer than 1,000 breeding individuals), the sustainability of this population is highly dependent on human activities and management, and there are continuing concerns about wintering habitat. In the near future, Alberta will organize a Recovery Team that will develop a Recovery Plan with the goal of removing the Trumpeter Swan from Alberta's list of species at risk. The target for completion of the Recovery Plan is 2003.

2002 MIDWEST RESTORATION NEWS –

OHIO - Dave Sherman reports that Ohio had its best production year yet. There are 21 pairs of Trumpeters in Ohio and, of these, 12 nested. Eleven nests were successful in hatching 46 cygnets, which is 15 more than the previous record of 31 cygnets in 2001. Heavy rains during the spring caused some flooding, destroying one nest, and possibly another. Ohio had hoped to be a little closer to its goal of 15 breeding pairs this year, but certainly should still make it by its deadline of 2006.

UPPER PENINSULA, MICHIGAN – Tracy Casselman, Project Leader at Seney National Wildlife Refuge, in Seney, Michigan, reported that there were 13 nesting pairs of Trumpeter Swans and 90 subadults on the Refuge in early June.

WISCONSIN – So far this nesting season, Wisconsin has recorded 51 known nesting pairs of Trumpeter Swans. Sumner Matteson of the Wisconsin Bureau of Endangered Resources gives a preliminary count of 127 cygnets. The majority of the nests are located in Burnett County (18) and Polk County (13), both in northwestern Wisconsin.

MINNESOTA – Three Rivers Park District has nine nesting pairs within its parks with 31 cygnets still alive as of July. In greater Minnesota, most reports are not in yet, but of note is the report from Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge in Becker County. A record eight nesting pairs have produced 40 cygnets on the Refuge. On June 1, the Minnesota DNR Nongame Program and the Minnesota Zoo released eight Trumpeters at Wolf Lake in the Heron Lake Watershed, Cottonwood County, in

southern Minnesota. The release was done in cooperation with the North Heron Lake Game Producers Association. It is estimated that more than 115 pairs hatched more than 350 cygnets throughout Minnesota in 2001.

IOWA – Ron Andrews reports that, despite significant mortality from poaching and power line collisions this past winter, Iowa now has 10 wild Trumpeter Swan nests (up one from 2001) with a total of 42 cygnets. The first modern day nest on the Iowa side of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge was recorded and two other Iowa-banded pairs hatched young on the Wisconsin side. See note below. Also, two 2-year-old males produced young with older females which is quite unusual. Iowa's initial Project goal was 15 wild nesting pairs by 2003. Ron hopes that with a little luck and less mortality of adults, Iowa might still reach that goal.

IOWA DNR AND USFWS RESCUE NESTING

TRUMPETERS - Trumpeter Swans nesting on the Mississippi River face challenges because of spring runoff creating fluctuating water levels. However, this year three nests of Iowa banded swans hatched along the Upper Mississippi River. In an extra effort to save one nest from flooding out near Bagley, Wisconsin, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources teamed up with Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge personnel. A swimming/diving platform was floated out to the swan nest and an antique two-man tree saw was used to cut the nest at the surface of the water. The nest was then scooped up with a large refuge sign and placed on the platform. The male and female were close by during this operation and the male made some effort to fend us off. We candled the four eggs, three of which were fertile, but embryonic death had occurred. A week later the pen was still on the nest, so we added an egg that was a couple days from hatch. It hatched successfully and was still alive 10 days later. Another interesting aspect of this story was that the female was only 2 years old. In order to achieve some nesting success on the Mississippi River, extra monitoring and extra measures will have to take place. Although the effort was very laborious, Trumpeter Swans always provide many rewards.

Ron Andrews

TRUMPETER REPORTS INCREASE IN PENNSYLVANIA IN 2001

- Thanks to Paul Hess, a birder from Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania, for keeping TTSS informed of Trumpeters wintering and migrating through Pennsylvania. Paul cited records from the journal *Pennsylvania Birds* as well as from his own observations since 1995. One pair of particular interest is a male Trumpeter banded by Ohio that has paired with a female swan banded in Ontario. There are several reports of this pair wintering in Virginia, stopping in Butler County, Pennsylvania, and then going north to Ontario to nest. Winter sightings of Trumpeters by the public are very valuable in monitoring the establishment of migratory traditions and protecting stopover sites.

TRUMPETER SWAN MYTHS – In the early days of the restoration of Trumpeter Swans to the Midwest, there were a number of myths often repeated by various wildlife officials. In 1986, I had heard the argument that Michigan should not attempt to restore Trumpeter Swans, because they were really birds of high altitudes and northern wildernesses. I countered that Michigan historically had Trumpeter Swans and that Trumpeters were birds of the wilderness only because settlement and civilization had isolated them there, as it had the American Elk and Grizzly Bear. Michigan's Trumpeter Swan restoration has gone well. Michigan had a fall flight of over 400 Trumpeter Swans in 2001. Trumpeter Swans transferred from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge at about 6,000 feet elevation in Montana's Centennial Mountains to Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge, South Dakota, matured a year earlier, nested earlier, laid more eggs, hatched larger clutches, and fledged more cygnets at about 2,500 feet elevation in the High Plains Region.

Harold H. Burgess

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY REPORT – TTSS is a member of the Policy Council of the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) based in The Plains, Virginia. TTSS Director Dave Weaver and member Donna Houchin are the Society's two delegates to the Council. ABC recently released a new report on seabird deaths from longlines. Society members are urged to visit the ABC website (www.ABCBIRDS.ORG) to learn about this very serious threat to hundreds of thousands of seabirds. Twenty-three species of seabirds are in danger of extinction mainly due to mortality from longline fishing. Birds such as albatrosses are attracted to the baited hooks, get dragged under and drown. ABC is calling on the U. S. and other nations to require simple and inexpensive changes in fishing practices, such as the use of bird-scaring lines. You can make a difference by being informed and making your concern known to your Congressperson and local conservation groups.

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION - The Ontario Trumpeter Swan Project recently awarded a Certificate of Appreciation to Angela Coxon who assisted in the care of the Trumpeter Swans at Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre in Midland, Ontario. Ontario Project Coordinator Harry Lumsden would like to thank Angela for being such an outstanding swan keeper over the past year.

MIDWEST TRUMPETER SWAN RESTORATION HIGHLIGHTED IN NATIONAL WILDLIFE – TTSS members should check out the June/July 2002 issue of the National Wildlife Federation's magazine. An informative article written by Gayle Worland is accompanied by excellent photos and summarizes the successes and challenges of Trumpeter Swan restoration in America's Heartland.

A FEW COPIES OF SKYLAR HANSEN'S BOOK AVAILABLE – Although now out of print, TTSS has been able to obtain a few used (but in good condition) copies of Skylar Hansen's *The Trumpeter Swan A White Perfection*. Several members had asked for copies back when TTSS ran out of new copies for sale several years ago. The books are in paper back, with stunning color photos. If you are interested in a copy, please contact Madeleine at the TTSS office for details on costs and shipping.

TRUMPETER BLUES VIDEO FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES – Thanks to the generosity of the family of the late Amos D. Faux-Burhans III of Maryland, TTSS still has *Trumpeter Blues* available free to school libraries. If you know of a school that would like an award winning film about Trumpeter Swans in the Greater Yellowstone Region, please have their librarian or principal request a copy. The 24-minute film was produced by Trailwood Films and long-time TTSS member Bob Landis,

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WELCOME ALL!

SWANS FOR SALE? – Please let us know if you have swans for sale. The TTSS office frequently receives inquiries, especially by e-mail, about where swans can be purchased. Since we promote the Trumpeter Swan, we encourage hobbyists to consider keeping Trumpeters. Please include, age, wing condition, and asking price.