

TRUMPETER SWAN TRANSLOCATION PROJECT 2001-2005 IN IDAHO: SURVIVAL AND MOVEMENT

Darlene Kilpatrick, Fish and Wildlife Resources, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844

Kerry P. Reese, Fish and Wildlife Resources, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844

Laurie Hanauska-Brown, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, 4279 Commerce Circle, Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Tom Hemker, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707

ABSTRACT

After the recovery of Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) from near extinction in the early 20th century, the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) rebounded to over 5,200 birds by 2005. Today the issues for the RMP have changed due to overpopulation in their wintering range. Managers have been attempting to expand the wintering range of the RMP to alleviate impacts on resources for resident breeders, reduce the risk of disease transmission due to the localized population, and establish alternate wintering grounds in areas where weather conditions are less severe. Idaho Department of Fish and Game and other government agencies collaborated to translocate 376 cygnets during the winters of 2001-05. This was the first winter translocation project to relocate only cygnets. For the 2001-05 project, approximately half of the cygnets were released at the capture site (Harriman State Park) as a control group and the other half were translocated over 200 km south to the Bear River drainage in southeast Idaho. Survival of the translocated cygnets was similar or higher than survival of control cygnets (Figures 1-2). Of particular management interest, we summarized if each group showed site fidelity to their release site as cygnets and if they remained faithful as adults. Twenty-four percent of translocated cygnets found as adults remained faithful, for all years sighted, to their translocation area (Table 1). Cygnet behavior did not necessarily determine adult behavior (Table 1). Eighty-two percent of translocated cygnets spent their first winter at their release site, which may have prevented them from establishing site fidelity to Harriman State Park or the core Tristate area. Further analysis of movement and survival will be discussed in more detail in Kilpatrick's thesis which will be available from the University of Idaho early in 2007.

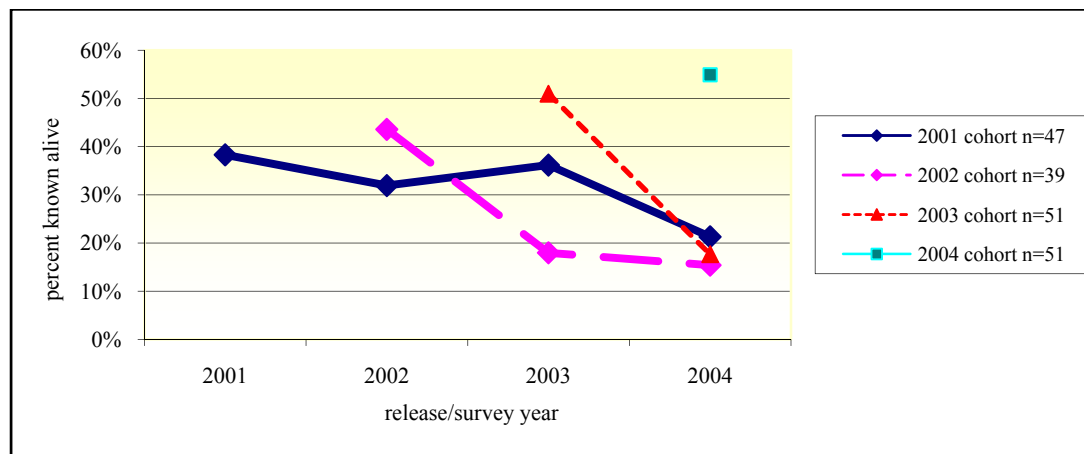


Figure 1. Estimated percent of translocated Trumpeter Swan cygnets known to be alive until end of study in late winter 2004-05. Each curve begins in the year in which the cygnet cohort was translocated.

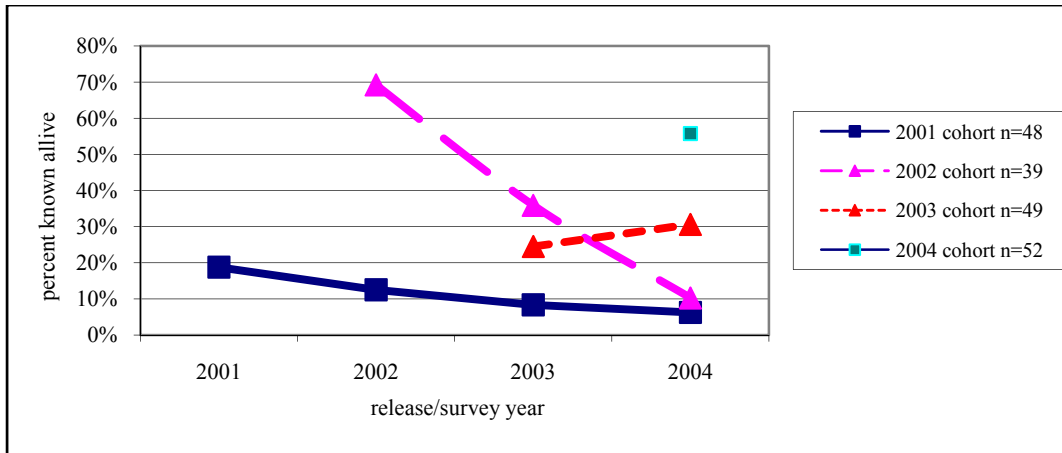


Figure 2. Estimated percent of control Trumpeter Swan cygnets known to be alive until end of study in late winter 2004-05. Each curve begins the year in which the cygnet cohort was marked.

Table 1. Classification (by percentage) of translocated and control Trumpeter Swan cygnets found as adults in four release site fidelity categories.

	Translocated	Control
Displaying site fidelity as a cygnet and adult	24	24
Cygnet not displaying site fidelity but showing site fidelity as adult	0	3
Cygnet showing site fidelity but not as an adult	58	27
Not displaying site fidelity as a cygnet or as an adult	18	46