



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release OCTOBER 6, 1948.

TRUMPETER SWAN POPULATION REACHES NEW HIGH IN U. S.

Census figures on the rare trumpeter swan, released today by the Fish and Wildlife Service, indicate that Government wildlife management has carried another endangered species past the point of complete extinction in the United States, and on to probable survival.

Albert M. Day, the Service's Director, reported a total of 418 trumpeter swans counted this summer on their only known U.S. habitat, the Northwest's Red Rock Lakes - Yellowstone Park region. This is an increase of 68 birds over the 1947 count, and the highest figure recorded since 1935, when the U.S. trumpeter swan population was 73.

North America's largest wild fowl, the majestic-looking, pure white-plumaged trumpeter swan weighs as much as 36 lbs. and has a wingspread of eight feet. Its chief U.S. nesting and wintering ground is the 26,600-acre Red Rock Lakes Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, in southwestern Montana, established in 1935 as a Federal sanctuary for the perpetuation of the almost extinct species.

Red Rock Lakes Refuge biologists counted 266 trumpeter swans this summer, including 78 cygnets (young swans). Seventy-four birds were counted on the nearby Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming, 17 of them cygnets. Examination of Montana and Idaho lakes and reservoirs located near the Red Rock Lakes Refuge disclosed 34 additional trumpeter swans.

Thirteen birds were counted on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, in southeastern Oregon; 11 on the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge, in eastern Nevada; and 10 on the National Elk Refuge, south of Yellowstone National Park, in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The trumpeter swans had been previously placed on these three Federal wildlife refuges to widen the species' breeding range, after the Red Rock Lakes and Yellowstone areas had apparently reached their population limits for trumpeters.

According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the moves also met the possible threat of extinction of the rare species by epidemic or other catastrophe that might have resulted from its limited U. S. distribution.

Airplanes were used to count the 418 trumpeter swans. Approximately one-third of the birds located were reported to be cygnets.

There is little or no migration of trumpeter swans from their breeding grounds. Warm springs in the Red Rock Lakes - Yellowstone Park region enable the birds to winter within range of their nesting areas.

The only other known flock of trumpeter swans nests and winters in British Columbia and Alberta, in western Canada. The Dominion's Department of Mines and Resources reported about 900 trumpeters early this year. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel in Southeasterns Alaska revealed in April that trumpeter swans were sighted in the Ketchikan district, Barnes Lake, Sweet Lake, Thorne River, and other nearby marsh areas.

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