



TRUMPETINGS

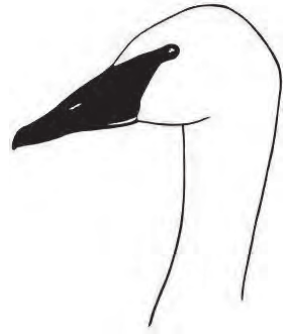
Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society

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Since 1968: Assuring the vitality and welfare of wild Trumpeter Swans

VOL. XXV I No. 1

APRIL 2016

24th Swan Conference to be held November 16-18



*Save the date!
Plan to attend!*

When: November 16-18, 2016

Where: Duncan, British Columbia

Our host: Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society



Duncan, the "City of Totems" extends a hearty welcome for the 24th Swan Conference

Mark your calendars! The 24th Swan Conference of The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS) will be held in Duncan, British Columbia. This Canadian city on Vancouver Island has more than 80 First Nations carvings located throughout town. It is home to the Aboriginal Quw'utsun' Cultural Centre honoring the ancient roots of the Coast Salish in the valley. It will be used for one of the Conference's panel discussion as well as the Friday night Gala. World famous wildlife artist, **Robert Bateman**, will be the Gala's keynote speaker. Stay for the WildWings Festival as Trumpeter Swans and other birds return for winter.

The Swan Conference will look at both the successes and challenges involved with long-term management of Trumpeter Swans. Special attention will also be given to be the status, management, and conservation of Trumpeter Swans in the Pacific Flyway and potential conflicts between swans and agriculture during winter. Declining winter habitat is becoming a critical issue for Pacific Flyway Trumpeter Swans. Trumpeter Swan issues and opportunities across North America will be presented.

You can help! Plan to come. Consider making a presentation. Donate a silent auction item. Be a sponsor. If you are interested in making a presentation or being a sponsor, please contact John Cornely at (johncornely@msn.com), or Jim Hawkings (hawkings@northwestel.net) for additional information, including presentation guidelines and submission dates. Contact Paul Fletcher (paul@fletcherfoto.ca) for silent auction donations. ♦

Photos: Left: *Comox Valley*, Photo by Terry Thormin. Remaining photos: *Somenos Marsh* by Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society

Winston Banko 1920-2016



Trumpeter Swans lost a true champion with the passing of Winston Banko on March 16, 2016.

Born May 22, 1920, Winston Banko had a passion for all wild creatures. He became Refuge Manager of the Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Montana in 1948. After nine years of field and literature research, he authored *The Trumpeter Swan: Its History, Habits and Population in the United States*. This monograph was first published by the Department of Interior in 1960 as No. 63 in the North America Fauna Series. It was reprinted, and later republished by the University of Nebraska Press, and has been available for more than 30 years. It continues to be used by swan managers.

Winston Banko became the first federal field biologist assigned to work exclusively on the preservation of endangered species. His work on the ecology of the birds of Hawaii is legendary. We are so honored to have had him as a member for more than forty years. Winston Banko leaves an amazing legacy of passion, dedication, and an enduring and deep love of nature. His pioneering work on Trumpeter Swans was vitally important in the amazing story of restoration of Trumpeter Swans to North America.

If you would like to send a note or card to the family: Peter Banko, 6243 37th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115.
Peter Banko writes, "Should anyone care to make a donation to TTSS in his name, I'm sure he would be pleased!"

Swan health and habitat

Your support is helping Trumpeter Swan health and habitat!

In the **Pacific Northwest region**, we continued our partnership with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to collect and analyze swan deaths in northern Puget Sound (**Washington**) and the Sumas Prairie (**British Columbia**). The Canadian Wildlife Service reports that of the 374 swans collected and analyzed this wintering season (through March 30, 2016), more than 75% were from lead (54.3%) and powerline collisions (21%). Judson Lake continues to be monitored as well.



Last December, **Minnesota** asked for written comments on a proposed lead shot ban on a portion of its state-owned Wildlife Management Areas. We wrote a letter in support of the proposed ban. There was a very high level of interest in the topic. In March 2016, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources held a public forum for additional comments. Executive Director, Margaret Smith, attended the public forum and spoke briefly about TTSS's support of the ban.

On April 11, the **Wisconsin Conservation Congress** will hold its Spring Hearings to gain public input on a variety of topics. It includes proposals to require non toxic shot on state-managed lands, and non toxic fishing tackle under 1/2 ounce in weight. TTSS's Conservation Committee wrote a letter in support of both proposals. Wisconsin members were notified by email of the April 11 Spring Hearings so they could cast their votes.

Board member, Gary Ivey, attended the **Greater Yellowstone Working Group** in mid-February. He reported on the Oregon Restoration Project and invited participants to partner with TTSS in a new Trumpeter Swan Connectivity Project for the Rocky Mountain Population of the U.S. Flocks. ♦

Oregon Restoration Project featured on Oregon Public TV

The story of the return of Trumpeter Swans to Oregon

We are honored the Oregon Trumpeter Swan Restoration Project was featured on Oregon's Public Television in February. The Restoration Project began in 2009. Partners include TTSS, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The television program showcased the most recent release of Trumpeter cygnets at Oregon's Summer Lake to tell the bigger story of the return of Trumpeter Swans to Oregon.

Since 2009, a total of 94 swans have been released at Summer Lake.

Some other great news! There were 161 Trumpeter Swans observed staging at Summer Lake during their spring migration north in early 2016. ♦

Photo: Two cygnets released last September at Summer Lake, Oregon were seen in February near Chico, California! The arrow points to one of the Oregon green collared cygnets. Photo by Kenneth Sobon



Is there more swan habitat in the Caribou/Targhee National Forest?

Six lakes evaluated in Wyoming's portion of Caribou/Targhee National Forest (CTNF)

We reported the results of an evaluation of six lakes with potential Trumpeter Swan habitat to the Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund. Drew Reed, contractor for TTSS under the supervision of Ruth Shea, visited and evaluated the lakes located between Yellowstone National Park, Jackson Hole, and CTNF in Idaho.

The lakes were evaluated on four characteristics important to swan nesting:

- Little to no human disturbance
- Adequate forage in the form of invertebrates and vegetation
- An island with sufficient nest-building material
- Suitable water levels

None of the lakes successfully met all criteria. However, habitat improvements such as installing artificial nesting islands, protecting important foraging areas including pre-nesting needs, and working with landowners and businesses to manage human disturbance could increase nest site suitability and nesting success. Habitat improvements would also help increase foraging use by non-breeding swans.

The lakes evaluated include Fish Lake, Junco Lake, Loon Lake, Moose Lake, Indian Lake, and Bergman Reservoir. We thank the Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund for funding this research and the assistance provided by CTNF, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the Biodiversity Research Institute, and others who contributed to this project. ♦

“My formal introduction to the majestic Trumpeter Swan”

Member Gary Lewis shares his experience of seeing Trumpeter Swans for the first time in Yellowstone National Park in 1953

My story begins when I was about 10 years old.

The Great Depression and World War II had finally come to an end, and at last people were able to buy cars and gasoline once again. This gave us the opportunity to go on vacation trips again. Our first one was to Yellowstone National Park.

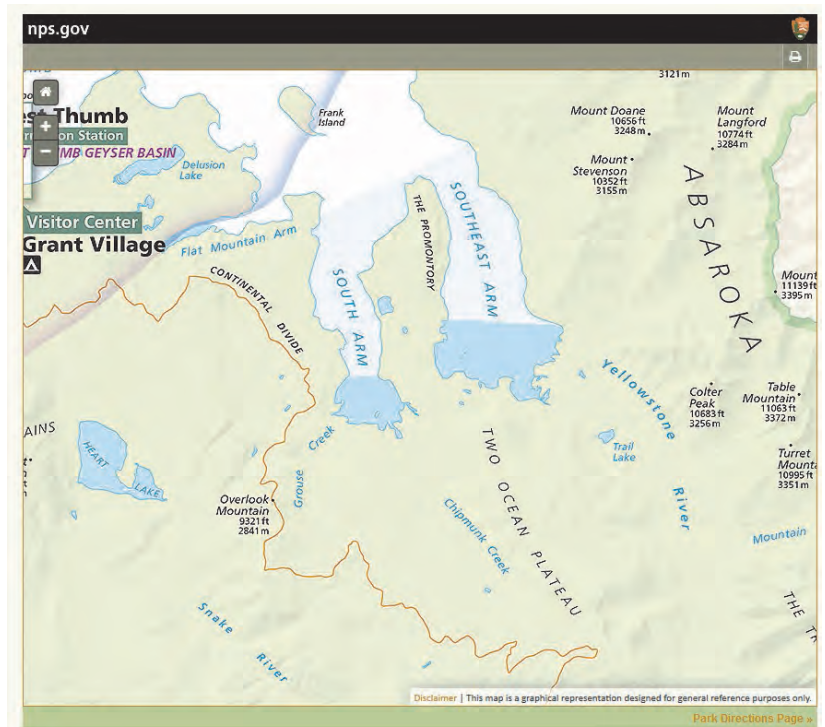
For me, it was love at first sight. I found on later trips that the love was growing and I became determined to work there some day. That day finally came in 1952 when I exaggerated my age just slightly and was hired by the Yellowstone Park Company as a pot-washer in the cafeteria at Old Faithful and worked my way up to head floorboy.

In 1953, I was hired by the National Park Service as a seasonal employee in the Blister Rust Control program where I was a crew leader. Our other job was fire suppression when called.

The summer season was about over when, on August 24, the entire crew was sent to fight the Chipmunk Creek fire in the area of Two Ocean Plateau. To get there we rode in a Park Service launch from Yellowstone Lake to the end of the South Arm. We hiked several miles to the fire and camped on the shore of a shallow lake. I don't know the name of the lake but because it was full of leeches, we just called it “leech lake.”

The fire lasted seven or eight days. After suppression and mop-up, I went with the ranger in charge and we hiked the perimeter of the fire to make sure there were no remaining hot spots and to map the fire area.

As we were hiking, we came around a small rise and the ranger quietly signaled for me to get down and be quiet.



by Gary Lewis

We slowly moved in a little further. In front of us was a small lake or pond. Peaceably gliding across its surface were two of the most beautiful majestic birds I had ever seen. I recognized them as swans but that was all I knew.

It was my good fortune, or maybe just dumb luck, that this particular ranger seemed to have an encyclopedic knowledge of everything nature related. After watching the swans for probably thirty minutes, we retreated and quietly left them behind.

It was such a contrast to see something that beautiful surrounded by the grim, burned-out area surrounding them.

“Peaceably gliding across its surface were two of the most beautiful majestic birds I had ever seen.”



It was then the ranger excitedly explained to me they were Trumpeter Swans, why they were so special and how close to extinction they had been. He explained that we were lucky to have seen them.

I later looked up records which showed the Park Biologist at that time had taken a census from a Fish and Game service plane just two or three weeks before we saw the swans and counted a total of 61 adults and 10 cygnets within the park boundary. They also counted an additional 41 adults and 16 cygnets outside the park boundaries.

In the many years since, I have had a love for Trumpeters. In 2003, I went to a presentation by TTSS and joined the next day. It has been a great source to follow the trends and know about the great things that are being done by dedicated people. ♦



Photos courtesy of Gary Lewis, with his descriptions below:

Pg. 4, top. “...the picture of the crew in the water shows how shallow ‘leech lake’ was and you can see the cook tent in the background.”

Pg. 4, bottom. *National Park Service map of Yellowstone area in the story.*

Pg. 5, top. “...you will immediately notice the lack of yellow clothes, safety helmets or other safety equipment. This was about the time they were just revamping their firefighting agenda and a lot of safety and science followed.”

Pg. 5, left. “One of my favorite pictures is the one of the packer bringing in supplies on mule back.”

Gary Lewis shared his story with Margaret Smith and gave permission to share it with you.

Yellowstone National Park's Trumpeter Swans today

Yellowstone National Park had two swan nesting pairs in 2015

On page 5, Gary Lewis recounts that an aerial survey in August 1953 reported 61 Trumpeter Swan adults and 10 cygnets in Yellowstone National Park (YNP).

Douglas Smith, Senior Wildlife Biologist at YNP, reported that in August 2015, sixty-two years later, there were 23 swans in the Park, with 17 adults and 6 cygnets. The Park had two nesting pairs of swans in 2015. Of the six cygnets, three hatched in YNP, and three were released as part of a reintroduction program. YNP's goal is to get one or two more Trumpeter Swan territories established in the next two to four years to have a more secure nesting population.

In August 2015, Executive Director Margaret Smith photographed a swan family of two adults and two cygnets that hatched at one of YNP's lakes. Another lake, with YNP's other nesting pair, was closed to protect the swans from human disturbance. Human disturbance makes swans more vulnerable to Bald Eagle disturbance and predation of the cygnets.

In early October 2015, TTSS member, Patricia Healy, photographed two Yellowstone Trumpeters that hatched in YNP in 2012 and continue to thrive there. ♦



Top left: *Spotting scope view of one of the swan parents and its cygnets that hatched in YNP in 2015.* Photo courtesy of Yellowstone National Park

Top right: *By late August, 2015, the cygnets (circled) have grown.* Photo by Margaret Smith



Left: *Two Trumpeters, hatched and raised in YNP in 2012, were seen in the Hayden Valley area of YNP in 2015. Hayden Valley swans are easily seen by the public.* Photo by Patricia Healy

A very productive year for Trumpeter Swans in northwestern Montana

Original restoration goals surpassed by Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes



Success! Seventy-two cygnets fledged in 2015. Nesting pairs continue to disperse outside of the Flathead Indian Reservation into nearby areas.

The 2015 nesting season for Trumpeter Swans in northwestern Montana began with forecasts for a dry summer, with a decrease in the number of wetlands. Little rainfall during the spring and summer added to the concern for nesting success.

By September though, nesting and productivity surveys by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) Wildlife Management Program and their cooperators showed very good productivity.

The CSKT began restoration of Trumpeter Swans in 1996. There has been steady growth and expansion of breeding Trumpeters since 2004. There has also been a gradual dispersal of nesting pairs outside of the Flathead Indian Reservation into nearby areas of northwestern Montana.

In 2015, 33 nesting pairs were documented, with 24 pairs nesting. Twenty-one of those nests resulted in 78 cygnets, of which 72 fledged in September. Pairs that failed to produce cygnets were either new pairs or former nesting pairs that are expected to nest again in 2016.

The CSKT Trumpeter Swan Restoration Project has achieved and surpassed its original goals. It is now scaling down its release of captive-reared Trumpeter Swans. However nine yearling Trumpeters were

released in July 2015. Unfortunately, two of these birds were later illegally shot by hunters after migrating to southern Idaho.

The CSKT Wildlife Management Program is also working on a cooperative population viability analysis with the University of Idaho. This will help CSKT determine the appropriate course of future swan restoration activity for this sub-population. ♦

*Dale Becker, Tribal Wildlife Manager
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes*



Photos: Two of the 2015 broods on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Photos by Dale Becker

Getting to meet you

Swan Soiree in Des Moines, Iowa

An estimated 500 people of all ages participated in Des Moines' first Swan Soiree! It was a fantastic and fun time. Not only was there a live Trumpeter Swan for everyone to see, there were also wonderful presentations on a variety of topics from wetland restoration, to photographing wildlife, healing through nature, and how the Trumpeter Swan is being restored to Iowa. Enthusiastic Americorps volunteers led craft activities for kids of all ages.

It was an honor to participate in this wonderful event thanks to generous sponsorships from Keller Williams Realty and Christian Photo, Inc. It was a great day! ♦

Top right: *A Trumpeter Swan injured by a powerline and being rehabilitated for release in May, was the star of the Soiree!*

Middle left: *Dave Hoffman, TTSS Vice President, showed the swan's wingspan to the capacity crowd.*

Middle right: *TTSS member Holly Welch shared her moving personal story in "Healing through Nature."*

Bottom right: *Americorps volunteers led craft activities for children throughout the day. Photos by Margaret Smith*



Swan Day at Bear River Migratory Bird National Wildlife Refuge in Utah

More than 400 people participated in Utah's Swan Day held in March at Bear River Migratory Bird National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is a haven for migrating Tundra Swans. Trumpeter Swans are now beginning to be seen at the Refuge. ♦

Left: *Retired Refuge biologist and TTSS member Carl Mitchell was on hand to answer visitor questions about swans. The most frequently asked question was "How do you tell a Tundra Swan from a Trumpeter Swan?" Our Swan ID brochure helped answer that question! Photo by Kathi Stopher*

Flyway updates

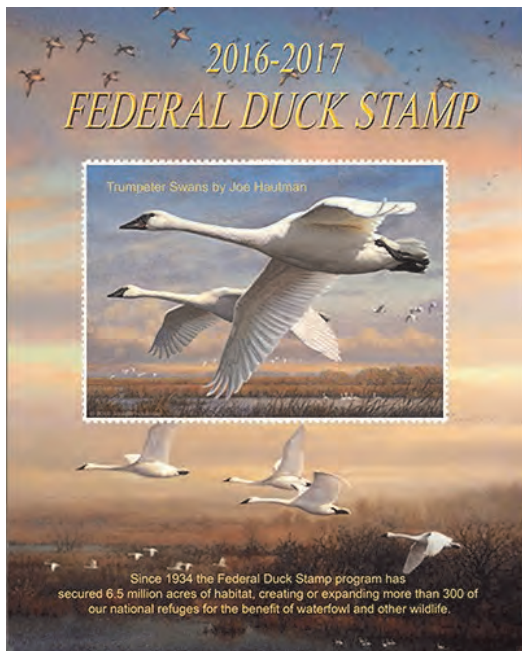
Mississippi Flyway: The Swan Committee met in late February in Pineville, Louisiana. It has been waiting for the release of a draft Environmental Assessment on general swan hunting for public comment before proceeding with the Interior Population Plan revision. Preliminary results from some of the Interior Population states participating in the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey were presented. The committee was invited to attend the 24th Swan Conference being held in November 2016. The committee is looking for a replacement chair.

Central Flyway: Senior Conservation Advisor, John Cornely attended the March 2016 Central Flyway meeting and reported on the preliminary results of the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey. He discussed the upcoming Swan Conference in November and invited presentations for the conference. He also updated attendees about Trumpeter Watch and continuing concern by TTSS about lead toxicosis.

Pacific Flyway: Board member, Gary Ivey attended the March 2016 Pacific Flyway meeting and participated in discussions on the update of the 2008 Flyway Plan for the Rocky Mountain Population. The update is planned to be finished in 2017. No meeting was held for the Pacific Coast Population in March.

National Flyway Council Meeting: Each year all four flyway councils meet at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference as does the National Flyway Council (NFC). Each year John Cornely presents a Trumpeter Swan update to the NFC. He thanked the Central and Pacific Flyway councils for being sponsors for the upcoming TTSS Swan Conference and briefed the group on the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan survey (the final report will be out later this year). John reminded attendees that TTSS is on each of the flyway swan committees and willing to help with revisions of Trumpeter Swan management plans. Updates on Trumpeter Watch and lead poisoning problems were also presented. ♦

Purchase a signed Duck Stamp poster to help swans!



Award winning Duck Stamp artist Joseph Hautman designed this unique 16"x20" poster featuring his 2016-2017 Federal Duck Stamp image of Trumpeter Swans.

You can purchase this beautiful poster, signed by Joseph Hautman, for \$20. The price includes U.S. shipping.

Your purchase will support swan conservation.

You can order the poster using the return form on page 11.

Later this year, the *Collector's Edition* of the 2016-2017 Duck Stamp print will be available for purchase as well to help Trumpeter Swan conservation.

Thank you, Joe Hautman, for this very special way to support swan conservation! Thank you to all who purchase it to help swans. ♦

Trumpeter Watch update

Your volunteer effort is making a difference!

Thanks to you, history is being made as Trumpeters move into new areas!

Citizens and biologists continue to send in valuable observations to our Trumpeter Watch. We have been able to add three more National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) because of sightings from Mattamuskeet NWR, North Carolina; Iroquois NWR, New York; and Lost Trail NWR, Montana.

We learned that cygnets released at Summer Lake Wildlife Area in Oregon had travelled south to California. Trumpeters continue to migrate in small numbers to the Chesapeake Bay and adjacent areas, returning to one of the most important wintering areas for their ancestors over 100 years ago.

This project has also connected us with a graduate student doing research on historic Trumpeter use in Indiana and wintering swans currently using that state.

As the numbers of Trumpeters increase, they will continue to pioneer into new areas. Trumpeter Watch is one of the very few tools to find out where they are going and what habitats they are using. Observations of swans marked with unique collars and wing tags are yielding even more valuable information on migration and movements.

Currently, we are discussing the potential of partnering with other conservation groups to expand our ability to detect changes in distribution. We are also partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a data base to facilitate the management, analyses, and mapping of the sightings. Keep those observations coming, folks! **Your volunteer effort is making a difference! Thank you!** ♦

Board and staff updates

We bid farewell to outgoing Board members Dale Becker, Robert Blohm, and Jerry Serie whose board terms ended in December. You can read Dale Becker's most recent update about swans in northwest Montana on page 7. Robert Blohm and Jerry Serie will continue as our Flyway advisors. We are deeply grateful for the board service of all three men and for their dedication and expertise which have so greatly helped the Society.

We will introduce our new board members in the next issue of *Trumpetings*.

Madeleine Linck, who has so faithfully and ably served as the Society's Administrative Assistant for many years, retired from Three Rivers Park District in early March. She was a Wildlife Technician for the Park District and Administrative Assistant for TTSS. She and her husband are moving back East to be near children and grandchildren. We wish her fun and relaxation in her retirement.

TTSS says farewell and thank you to Ruth Shea who served for many years in different capacities at TTSS including an employee, board member, and the Greater Yellowstone Coordinator. We wish her well in her future endeavors. Thank you, Ruth, for all you have done to help swans and TTSS. ♦

Welcome and thank you

New Members:

James Beyer
 Kayla Campbell
 Kalim Campbell
 Linda Claerhout
 Randall Eischens
 Pam & Gregory Gustafson
 Lisa Haddad
 Joseph Hautman
 Arthur Juchno
 Laura Kearns
 Susan Klatt
 Eyas Kutbi
 Deron Lord
 Spencer Mair
 Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
 Nancy Merrill
 David Mohseni
 Carol Morgan
 Eugene Ostertag
 Sunriver Nature Center & Observatory



Preliminary survey results show Minnesota and Wisconsin swans are on the increase! Photo by Margaret Smith

New Members (continued)

Richard Toy
 Sean & Cynthia Garcia Wirth

Gift memberships

To:

Pamela Bassett
 Fred Pavaglio
 Jim & Magaly Voelzer
 Ronnie & Sue Waide

From

Judith Anderson
 Carey & Kandi Smith
 Carey & Kandi Smith
 Robin Ayres

Memorials:

For:

Jean Gleason
 John Glynn
 Susan McLean
 John P. Oakes

From:

Harmony Hills Association, Inc.
 Edward O'Brien
 Trish Phelps
 Eleanor Oakes

Tributes:

Gary Ivey
 Carey Smith
 Sunriver Nature Center
 William Goldstein

A gift to TTSS in your will or estate plan helps Trumpeter Swans for generations to come

Yes!

I support Trumpeter Swan conservation.

Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift (US).

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_____ \$ *Surprise us!*

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☐ \$500 ☐ \$1000

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Area of Greatest Need \$ _____

Signed Duck Stamp 16x20" poster (\$20) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

I prefer to give by:

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swans
- Your swan sightings are recording history
and more....

For all you do for Trumpeter Swans, thank you!

Since 1968: Assuring the vitality and welfare of wild Trumpeter Swans



Look inside for these stories! Left: *Yellowstone National Park's Hayden Valley swans are seen by countless visitors.* Photo by Patricia Healy
Right: *Newly released cygnets from the Oregon Restoration Project were seen in California!* Photo by Kenneth Sobon.

TRUMPETINGS EDITORS

John Cornely, Gary Ivey, Margaret Smith

Go to www.trumpeterswansociety.org for a listing of the Board of Directors and Staff