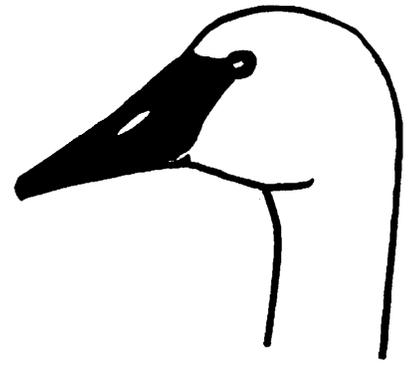


TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - During the past year, your Society's Board and Staff worked with members and partners of TTSS to develop our first 5-year Strategic Plan. The Plan begins with statements of our Mission, Values, and 5-year Operating Goals. It then lays out Objectives and Actions for continent-wide issues, for each population, and for organizational development. Based upon the Plan, we developed specific program objectives for 2004, which are presented in this issue of *Trumpetings* along with some excerpts from the Plan. If you would like a full copy, please contact Madeleine Linck at our main office. It will be posted on our website in the near future.

During the past 50 years, the remnant populations of Trumpeters that survived the species' near-extinction have begun an encouraging increase. Restoration efforts in the Midwest and Ontario have provided hope for the species' return even where total extirpation occurred. As humans continue to alter the face of North America, the various breeding populations will face challenges. Some of the problems are predictable, some are not. The current lead poisoning crisis impacting the Pacific Coast Population has shown us that even the largest population is much more vulnerable than anyone realized. In the western U.S., breeding groups still struggle to survive while in much of their historic range, Trumpeters remain absent, or are only rare visitors. During the next 5 years, we look to our Strategic Plan to provide a roadmap as we work to protect and nurture the progress of recent decades and to securely restore all populations and conserve their habitats. We welcome your involvement and support.

Ruth Shea

DIRECTOR HARRY LUMSDEN AWARDED CANADA'S HIGHEST RECOGNITION - Word came from TTSS members in Ontario that Her Excellency the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, announced that Harry G. Lumsden was made a member of the Order of Canada. This is the highest award of recognition in Canada. Congratulations to Harry, his wife Karen and family for such a well deserved and prestigious honor. Harry Lumsden and Trumpeter Swans are synonymous in Ontario. An active member of TTSS since 1980, Harry has worked tirelessly for restoring the Trumpeter Swan to Ontario where the last Trumpeter was seen in 1886. We are very lucky, indeed, to have Harry on our Board of Directors!

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MIDWINTER SURVEY - The annual survey of Trumpeter Swans that winter in the Greater Yellowstone region was flown primarily during 9-13 February, although Montana was not flown until 20 February due to weather. According to Jim Dubovsky, USFWS, Denver, the total of 4,584 swans found during the 2004 survey is the highest count on record, and up 15% from the February 2003 survey. This total included 3,831 adults and 753 cygnets. Results are still preliminary and may change slightly.

The swans counted in this wintering area include most of the Trumpeters that summer in western Canada as well as those that summer in the Greater Yellowstone region. Because swans that once migrated to other areas were extirpated, both of these breeding populations have become almost entirely dependent upon this wintering habitat, which they share. During a severe winter, when below-zero temperatures can persist for weeks, most slow-moving feeding areas freeze and the risk of winter mortality is high. Fortunately, a severe winter has not struck the region since the late 1980s.

Although the increase of swans compared to last winter's survey is quite substantial, the total of 3,974 swans found during February 2003 was unexpectedly low and a substantial number of swans likely escaped detection last year. Compared to the February 2002 survey, when 4,415 swans were counted, this year's count is well within the expected range. During the recent period of mild winters, the number of migrants arriving from the north has increased from about 1,300 to over 4,000. During the same period, the resident Greater Yellowstone breeding population has declined from about 600 to slightly under 400. Their decline, despite relatively mild winters, has increased concerns for their long-term survival and prompted continuing efforts to restore them to a more secure distribution.

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION LEAD POISONING CRISIS - Poisoning of Trumpeter Swans from ingested lead shot is continuing to be an acute problem in western Washington and adjacent portions of southern British Columbia. Over 1,300 swans have been found dead since 1999, with over 380 documented to have died in just the past 3 months. Currently, there is no way to estimate the total mortality, including losses of weakened swans during spring migration or the impacts on the cygnet production of swans that are carrying sub-

lethal lead levels. The total impact on the population can not be assessed until the range-wide survey is flown on the breeding grounds in summer 2005.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, USFWS, and Canadian Wildlife Service are leading efforts to identify the source of the lead. Unfortunately, the source is somewhere within a large geographic area and funding for the effort is not adequate. Nevertheless, the field staff and volunteers worked tirelessly through the winter to search for the source. They located and collected dead and dying swans to gather essential data and to reduce secondary poisoning of eagles and other wildlife. As was done last winter, Trumpeters were trapped as they arrived in the wintering area, fitted with radio transmitters, and samples of their blood were taken to assess blood levels. By following 128 radioed Trumpeters this winter and documenting their feeding locations, the field staff documented those that subsequently died from ingesting lead pellets and are currently analyzing data to determine where dead radioed birds had been feeding.

TTSS has been working closely with the agencies and other private partners to plan the response effort, bring in trained assistance for trapping, provide computer support for data analysis, coordinate the necropsy effort that will retrieve pellets, and to increase funding from agency and private sources. Helping to solve this problem and to eliminate the source of lead once it is found will be a top priority for TTSS in the coming year. We will also be working hard to enlist the help of private, corporate, and agency partners to ensure funding is adequate to survey the Pacific Coast Population and assess its status in summer 2005.

HIGH PLAINS WINTER AERIAL SURVEY – The mid-winter Trumpeter Swan aerial survey of the High Plains Flock was completed 6-7 January 2004 by Rolf H. Kraft (volunteer observer) and FWS Regional Aviation Manager Dave Gilbert (pilot) flying a Cessna 177RG. The week prior to the survey was cold with daily high temperatures between 10-15°F and nightly lows below 0°F. All lakes and slow moving portions of rivers and streams were frozen, confining swans to the limited open water areas. The weather improved the week of the survey with temperatures about 8-10 degrees above freezing. No swans were found on Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), but 158 were observed on Trout Pond #1 just outside the Refuge on private property. The survey also included local lakes between Lacreek NWR and the Cody Lakes north of Cody, Nebraska, but lakes were frozen and no swans were observed.

In the Nebraska Sandhills, 43 swans were found in small groups on Blue Creek in Garden County. Blue Creek flows from springs and wetlands south of Crescent Lake NWR and flows 49 km to the confluence with the North Platte River near Lewellen, Nebraska. The South Platte River was flown southwest to Big Springs and east to Paxton. No swans were observed on the South Platte as it was low from the summer drought and mostly frozen. Swans are usually observed near Keystone and along the North Platte River below Kingsley Dam (Lake

McConaughy) to Sutherland, but, again, the river was mostly frozen, and no birds were seen. We flew the North Platte River to the city of North Platte, Nebraska.

The survey proceeded north up Birdwood Creek that joins with the North Platte River between Sutherland and Hershey. Birdwood Creek emanates from springs in the sandhills and flows 40 km to the North Platte. We observed 38 swans in moderate sized flocks in the lower 20 km. We then flew just over 100 km NNE to the headwaters of the North Loup River in west central Cherry County. Flying the North Loup, we observed 71 swans, in small family groups and in moderate flocks, concentrated on the reach west and east of Highway 97. Below Highway 97, the river began to freeze over being mostly frozen below Brownlee to the end of the survey near Purdum. We flew up Goose Creek back towards Valentine NWR and Merritt Reservoir on the Snake River southeast of Valentine, Nebraska. West along the Snake River, we observed 88 swans in small and moderate flocks with a large flock just east of Highway 61. Cottonwood Lake, just south of the Snake River, was frozen. No swans were found further west along the Snake, but we did find three swans in an open area on the Niobrara River southwest of Merriman.

A total of 401 swans, including 51 cygnets and 350 adults, was observed during the 2-day survey compared to a total of 412, including 94 cygnets and 318 adults in January 2003, and a total of 319, including 45 cygnets and 274 adults in January 2002.

Rolf Kraft, USFWS retired

NOTES FROM ONTARIO – TTSS member Beverly Kingdon, who monitors Trumpeters wintering at La Salle Park on Lake Ontario in Burlington, reported that a record 100 Trumpeters wintered on the lake in January 2004. Beverly started monitoring and feeding wintering swans in 1993 when there was only one pair with six cygnets. Harry Lumsden, Program Coordinator, reports that since Hydro One Network installed bird flappers on the hydro wires that run along the barrier beach at Burlington, no swans have been lost from collisions.

The Ontario program has 48 cygnets for release in 2005. Harry believes Ontario is close to its goal of a self-sustaining population. There may be an underestimation of survival and wild productivity. A 1997 study by Marsolais and White recommended a population size of 500 Trumpeters with a minimum of 100 breeding pairs. As of September 2003, 482 Trumpeters were counted in southern Ontario, with ~ 75 breeding pairs.

TRUMPETER BREEDING CONFIRMED IN MANITOBA

– Staff from Ducks Unlimited Canada, Manitoba Conservation, and Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP), confirmed for the first time Trumpeter Swans with broods in the Mid-Boreal Upland Ecoregion. Pairs with broods of 4, 3, 2, and 1 were confirmed in RMNP in late August 2003. Additional nonbreeders brought the total observed Trumpeters to 30. Results are preliminary and will be summarized later in 2004. For more information, contact Chris Smith at c_smith@ducks.ca.

Excerpts from the 2004-09 Strategic Plan and FY2004 Priorities

MISSION: The mission of The Trumpeter Swan Society is to assure the vitality and welfare of Trumpeter Swan populations in North America.

VALUES: TTSS believes that the secure restoration of Trumpeter Swans in North America is an important endeavor, both for the intrinsic value of the species and its role in natural systems and for the inspiration and beauty that they bring to human existence. TTSS also values Trumpeter Swans as a symbol of hope for the restoration of imperiled species and as a high-profile ambassador for the conservation of North American wetlands. The Society's paramount task is to ensure that wild populations of Trumpeter Swans will attain numbers and distributions that will keep them strong and resilient as habitats are increasingly modified by human population growth.

TTSS strives to serve as an effective advocate for Trumpeter Swans by sharing its collective expertise and comprehensive knowledge of the species' biology, history, and management, providing an inclusive forum for discussion and resolution of swan issues in North America, and through using and promoting sound science. The Society shall strive to increase public knowledge, appreciation, and participation in the conservation of this magnificent bird. Whenever possible, TTSS will work in partnership with others to advance its goals.

FIVE-YEAR OPERATING GOALS

POPULATION SECURITY/RANGE EXPANSION: Help restore all breeding groups to above the minimum population goals in approved management plans and ensure that no breeding group declines below 2003 levels; promote the restoration of Trumpeter Swans into suitable habitats and develop secure winter and nesting distributions.

HABITAT CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT: Stimulate and support Trumpeter Swan habitat conservation, restoration, development, and effective management, with special emphasis on winter habitat quality and quantity.

RESEARCH: Stimulate and support important Trumpeter Swan research.

ADVOCACY AND AGENCY COORDINATION: Promote the integration of Trumpeter Swan conservation needs into federal, state, and local planning efforts and programs, and work to ensure that actions are implemented effectively and adequately evaluated.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT: Build a public constituency for the conservation and restoration of Trumpeter Swans and their habitats and facilitate the exchange of information among swan researchers, managers, and enthusiasts.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Be a regionally and nationally recognized and respected organization that is prudently governed, efficiently operated, and adequately funded to achieve its goals.

FY 2004 Program Priorities

Continent-wide

1. Publish four issues of *Trumpetings* and at least one issue of *North American Swans*.
2. Identify resources needed to conduct the 2005 Rangewide Trumpeter Swan Survey and identify potential contributions from partners so that an adequate survey will be possible.
3. Develop a public outreach program to make more people aware of Trumpeter Swan conservation and management issues, provide ways to become personally involved, and generate increased interest in TTSS.
4. Develop a work plan to create "A Trumpeter Swan Habitat Atlas for the 21st Century" that will show where they once were, where they are now, where they could be when fully restored, and identify priority restoration habitats (breeding and winter).
5. Identify three key wintering areas for each population that would benefit from long-term conservation measures; including at least one for each population that has public viewing potential.
6. Solicit proposals and award at least one research grant from the North American Swan Fund.
7. Plan for 20th Society Conference in fall 2005.
8. Keep website current and expand information on various populations.
9. Follow-up re Trumpeter Swan population objectives in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan revision.

Pacific Coast Population

1. Assist agency-private partnership efforts to reduce mortality from the lead poisoning crisis in Washington and BC.

2. Develop an informational pamphlet on swan winter habitat needs (current situation, what problems exist, what actions are needed) to educate potential agricultural, agency, and conservation group partners regarding opportunities to coordinate programs and resources to create/protect swan winter habitat.
3. Work with the Elwha Dam removal habitat mitigation project to make it a prototype for conservation and expansion of Trumpeter Swan winter habitat.
4. Complete the transfer of our dune properties at Hines Marsh and continue marsh restoration efforts with emphasis on water issues.
5. Explore potential for thorough analysis of population/ breeding habitat relationships based upon the data from previous 5-year surveys of Alaskan nesting areas.

Western Canada Population

1. Continue satellite telemetry to identify key migration and winter habitats; continue making data available on the Internet, to agencies, and other conservation groups.
2. Assist efforts to analyze existing population and marking data and improve the effectiveness of range expansion strategies.
3. Participate in development of the Alberta Trumpeter Swan Recovery Plan.
4. Provide technical support to winter translocation and range expansion efforts.

Greater Yellowstone Population

1. Work with Greater Yellowstone Working Group and university researchers to improve data analysis and assess population viability and management strategies.
2. Continue monitoring Idaho nesting territories and implementing habitat improvement projects.
3. Work with private and agency partners to improve habitat in Montana's Centennial Valley, including water level management at Red Rock Lakes NWR.
4. Provide technical assistance to Montana's Blackfoot Valley and Flathead Valley Trumpeter Swan restoration efforts.

Interior Population (IP)

1. Hold a conference call with IP managers to identify highest priority needs for the next 5 years.
2. Work with managers to determine what criteria must be met to consider a flock to be "self-sustaining" and how these parameters can best be monitored.
3. Identify specific ways to help support and continue long-term restoration efforts in Ontario.
4. Continue to coordinate resighting data for IP, particular reports of dispersal to southerly wintering areas.
5. Request that Lincoln Park Zoo population ecologists evaluate the viability of the IP.
6. Identify steps needed to protect specific habitats currently used by migrant trumpeters.

Atlantic Population

1. Prepare a status report summarizing recent data on location and numbers of Trumpeters.
2. Continue discussions with USFWS and Atlantic Flyway regarding steps needed to complete an Atlantic Flyway Trumpeter Swan Management Plan.

Administration

1. Produce quarterly and annual financial reports and file tax report (Form 990).
2. Conduct quarterly Board meetings and Executive Committee meetings at least once between each Board meeting by conference call.
3. Review membership patterns and develop a membership campaign.
4. Ensure that all administrative/financial policies comply with legal requirements and are clearly documented in a written policy manual.
5. Raise funding to adequately support TTSS programs and end the fiscal year with at least 80% of the FY2005 budget in hand.
6. Increase focus on Board development, including policies, needed skills, and recruiting potential new Board members.
7. Begin exploring long-term alternatives for our main office location and function.

THANK YOU FOR ANNUAL APPEAL CONTRIBUTIONS! The Trumpeter Swan Society very much appreciates that so many of its members are very dedicated and donate above and beyond their membership dues.

Dave & Jan Ahlgren
Joyce Anderson
I. J. Ball
Lawrence Blus
Harold H Burgess
Sheryl Butler
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Dr. William Sladen
James Snowden
Scott & Cindy Snyder
Lynn Spicer
William R. Uhl
Sonny Wainwright
David & Kitty Weaver
Marian White
Debby Whitney

IN MEMORIAM – Long-time Honorary Member of TTSS Margaret E. “Mardy” Murie passed away October 19, 2003, at her home in Moose, Wyoming, at the age of 101. A passionate conservationist, Mardy dedicated much of her life to protecting the Greater Yellowstone Region and along with her husband Olaus Murie helped to protect what is now the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Mardy was our banquet speaker at the 5th Trumpeter Swan Society Conference held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 1976. She was also the keynote speaker 2 years later at the 6th Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. An eloquent speaker, Mardy promoted the Trumpeter Swan and The Trumpeter Swan Society as a symbol of what man needs – “a whole planet, a healthy planet.” Mardy went on to say that she saw the concern for the swan as “a symbol of an awakening in the consciousness of people, of concern for our world...”

ROLF KRAFT RETIRES FROM THE USFWS – After more than 33 years with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife biologist Rolf Kraft retired in January 2004. Rolf was Manager at Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge in Martin, South Dakota, since 1978 where he was very involved in Trumpeter Swan restoration. Rolf began his career with USFWS in 1970 at Wichita Mountains NWR in Comanche, Oklahoma, and also worked at Fish Springs NWR in Dugway, Utah, before moving to South Dakota. Rolf, a pilot, conducted many Trumpeter aerial surveys. Rolf’s dedication to the majestic Trumpeter continues, as evidenced by his recent volunteer survey. Heartiest congratulations!!

WASHINGTON STATE PARKS RECOGNIZES DIRECTOR MARTHA JORDAN - Martha Jordan, TTSS Director, received special recognition at the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on March 11th for her work on the Long Beach Peninsula at Hines Marsh. Paul Malmberg, SW Regional Director, presented Martha with a framed special Certificate of Appreciation that acknowledges Martha’s working closely with Washington State Parks for the protection and restoration of Trumpeter Swan habitat. Trumpeters returned to Hines Marsh for the first time in 40 years in winter 2002/2003. This winter, 13 swans wintered on the marsh. Protection efforts continue. Great work, Martha!

CELEBRATION OF SWANS IN THE YUKON, 17-25 April – Since 1994, a celebration of the swans festival has been held in April when thousands of Trumpeter and Tundra Swans gather in the southern Yukon on their way to northern breeding grounds. The festival features swan watching tours, artistic events, and opportunities to view waterfowl at the Swan Haven Interpretation Centre. The Interpretation Centre is open April 1-30th. For more information, contact the Wildlife Viewing Program at (867) 667-8705 or e-mail Todd.Powell@gov.yk.ca.

SWAN FESTIVAL AT SASKATOON ISLAND PROVINCIAL PARK, ALBERTA – The 6th annual swan festival celebrating the return of the swans to Grande Prairie and the Peace Country will be held April 24-25, at Centre 2000, Saskatoon Island Park. The Saturday evening festivities begin with a presentation by Ben Gadd, well known naturalist and nature writer. Visit www.swanfestival.fanweb.ca for more exciting details.

WANT TO BE A MEMBER? NEED TO RENEW? GIFT SUGGESTION?

Student/Retired__\$15 Regular__\$25 Family__\$30 Organization__\$50 Supporting__\$100 Life Member__ \$500

Make check/money order payable to TTSS (Canadians please write "in US funds" on personal checks). Mail to:
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TRUMPETINGS EDITORS

Madeleine Linck
Ruth E. Shea

[Editor's Note: Any persons or organizations paying \$100 or more per year for membership will be an Affiliate, excepting life memberships which are paid only once.]

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR THE SOCIETY

– Three Rivers Park District, where TTSS has officed since its founding in 1968, has a new telephone system. Madeleine Linck and the Society may now be reached directly at 763-694-7851. The fax and e-mail remain the same.

New Members

Kenneth Alhadeff
Seattle, WA

Dr. Jan Beekman
Amsterdam,
The Netherlands

Ron & Barb Campbell
Bellevue, WA

Gary Fletcher
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WELCOME ALL!

IOWA TRUMPETER SWAN BANQUET APRIL 10, 2004 – Trumpeter Swan enthusiasts are invited to attend the annual Iowa Trumpeter Swan Banquet at Scheman Building, Iowa State Center in Ames, Iowa, 11:00 a.m. Proceeds from the event will be used to fund the statewide Trumpeter Swan restoration. There are currently about 55 captive pairs located at various partnership sites including individuals, corporations, County Conservation Boards and DNR facilities. The fundraising event is hosted by the Iowa State University Trumpeter Swan Restoration Committee. Dr. Jim Dinsmore, noted Iowa ornithologist, will be the banquet speaker. For questions about the event, contact Brenda Van Beek at brendavb@iastate.edu or (515) 233-1803. Visit the Iowa DNR's web site at www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/files/swanindex.html to learn more about Trumpeter Swan restoration in Iowa or call Ron Andrews and Dave Hoffman at 641-357-3517.