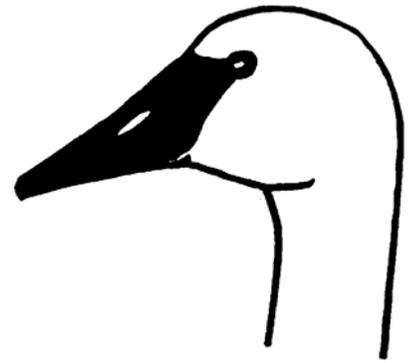




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

A New Era for TTSS – Usually we make our Annual Appeal in this November issue, so that we start the New Year with a solid financial base for our programs. This year, we are combining our Annual Appeal with a special **Trumpeter Swan Conservation Campaign** to help TTSS take a crucial step to reach a new level of effectiveness.

Since 1968, TTSS has provided a wonderful way for private citizens to work with agency and business partners to restore trumpeters. Our work has focused in five main areas: population security/range expansion, habitat conservation, research, advocacy and agency coordination, and public involvement. Many members and Directors have worked with TTSS for decades and have been the pillars of the restoration effort in North America. I first met many dedicated TTSS members at the Society's 1976 Conference and their inspiring efforts, and depth of knowledge changed my life.

By 1999, it was obvious that population security and habitat issues had become more complex. Opportunities and problems were increasing. To manage TTSS more effectively as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, the Board hired me to be the Society's first paid Executive Director, working part-time from my home. It has been my honor to hold that position for the past 7 years and to help TTSS develop the administrative processes and resources to expand its efforts.

Now it is time for TTSS to move to a new level of vigor and effectiveness. I have growing obligations to care for my elderly parents and have had to reduce my hours substantially this year. TTSS needs "new blood" and new energy. We need a new Executive Director who can work at least half-time, and, hopefully, more as sufficient funds are raised. I plan to remain deeply involved with TTSS and with Trumpeter Swan restoration and will do all that I can to ensure a smooth transition. I hope to gradually shift my efforts into fieldwork in the Greater Yellowstone area, publishing past data, and creating tools for public education.

The challenges facing TTSS and Trumpeter Swans are changing. Restoration efforts have re-established trumpeter populations in key portions of their historic range and most of these groups are increasing. Our main challenges now are to nurture their expansion and establish secure winter distributions, gain protection of

the habitats that are essential for their long-term security, and respond to specific local challenges, such as the massive lead poisoning crisis along the Washington/British Columbia border. To be effective, we need to greatly increase public awareness and support, and develop effective partnerships with the agencies and private parties who control key habitats. We need to build Trumpeter Swan populations that will be resilient enough to cope with the growing impacts of increasing human population. We must be very proactive and strategic in our efforts.

We need your help to keep TTSS strong and effective. You can help in two ways. First, please help distribute the job announcement for the Executive Director position that is included in this issue. Contact our main office if you would like an electronic copy to distribute. We want to search as broadly as possible for the best candidates. Consider applying, if you are interested. It is a wonderful and challenging job!

Second, please make a special effort to contribute to our Trumpeter Swan Conservation Campaign! Our steady partner, the Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation, Jackson, Wyoming, has offered us a significant challenge grant and our goal is to raise \$50,000 by March 1, 2007. We need your help! We have combined our usual fall Annual Appeal into this single campaign to meet the Earth Friends challenge. Your contribution will help us garner the resources to continue our core programs, support increased staffing, and expand our habitat protection and public education efforts. We have inserted the Campaign flyer in this issue. Please give generously so that TTSS can move into a new level of increased staffing and programs with a solid foundation.

With deep appreciation for your support of TTSS and the Trumpeter Swans,

Ruth Shea, Executive Director

Note cards - While supplies last, we will send donors of \$50 or more a packet of 7X5 note cards with a photo by Riccardo Savi of a Trumpeter Swan pair flying through a snow storm. This is made possible by a generous donation by Snowlight Editions of Colorado (www.snowlightcards.com).

Also, please note that on the Holiday Gift list there is a new gift item to help spread the word about TTSS – a TTSS color logo cling-on window decal for your vehicle.

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS

Swan Lead Poisoning Project - Fall 2006 update

As many of you know, there has been a significant number of swans, mostly trumpeters, that have died from lead poisoning due to lead shot ingestion in Whatcom County, Washington, and Sumas Prairie, British Columbia. This year, The Trumpeter Swan Society is once again part of the study team with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, University of Washington, and the Canadian Wildlife Service.

The effort this year is focused on two major components: swan surveys to locate where swans are feeding during the day and roosting at night and "hazing activities" to keep swans off Judson Lake, a ~40 hectare lake spanning the U.S. and Canadian border and a major night roost for swans.

As a result of the recent scientific data taken from core sampling at roost sites and forage fields, an adaptive management approach will be undertaken. This year to test the hypothesis that Judson Lake is a primary source of lead shot, "hazing activities" will be conducted to keep swans off the lake for the entire winter of 2006-2007. The Western Washington Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit at the University of Washington, Mike Smith and Dr. Chris Grue, are in charge of this effort.

Mike has been with the project in various capacities over the years. Now he is spending much of his time keeping swans off Judson Lake using a variety of tools including an airboat (on loan from Willapa Bay National Wildlife Refuge), cracker shells, a coyote replica that moves, and a special avian deterrent laser gun. He has two other people to help and depends, in part, on volunteers. The lake is monitored constantly day and night. So far, swans have been kept from using the lake. It appears the plan is succeeding. Thank you, Mike Smith!

During this hazing operation, swan mortalities and habitat use patterns will continue to be monitored. This year, TTSS has been contracted to coordinate the swan survey work using volunteers. Both day use and night roost surveys are planned. We have been recruiting volunteers from the community and have several who have also helped in previous years.

We had anticipated a normal start to the swan season, but Mother Nature sent a major flood event to keep life interesting. It remains to be seen if the flooding will alter the use patterns of the swans over the winter season. Our intrepid volunteers have been out sloggling to keep track of them. Thank you to everyone who has helped get this project up and running this year. It is a monumental effort, mostly done by volunteers on the U.S. side of the border. A more complete agency progress report may be found on our web site under *What's New*. For anyone who does not have Web access, we can mail a copy upon request.

"Mystery At Swan Lake" documentary

The lead poisoning problems along the Washington State/British Columbia border are attracting media attention. Jerry Thompson, of Raincoast Storylines Ltd., Halfmoon Bay, British Columbia, will be producing a 1-hour documentary for the Canadian television network, CTV. His crew will begin by filming the hazing effort at Judson Lake. TTSS is helping provide background information. Jerry sent the following glimpse of the draft story line: "A team of wildlife biologists and volunteer naturalists is hazing Trumpeter Swans with an airboat, laser beams, and coyote scarecrows on a small lake that straddles the border between British Columbia and the State of Washington. During the past 7 winters, thousands of these magnificent birds have died from eating toxic lead shotgun pellets. Are these long-necked swans scooping pellets from the bottom of the lake? Or, from nearby farmers' fields? ...Researchers are scrambling to find the "hot zone" of toxic lead and solve the ***Mystery At Swan Lake***. By hazing the birds this winter, they are trying their best to prevent another massive die-off. ***Mystery At Swan Lake*** is a documentary special that will follow the scientists over the course of the next 12 months in their quest to save the swans." We will keep TTSS members posted in future issues of *Trumpetings*, so stay tuned!

Tundra Swans in Alaska marked with blue collars

Tundra Swans were marked in western and northern Alaska in the summer of 2006 with coded neck bands as part of an effort to learn more about the timing of migration and movements relative to breeding area. The neck bands have a 4-digit code that begins with a letter and are read from bottom to top. Bands are blue with white digits, except codes T3## which are white with black digits. The tundras were marked in the Yukon Delta, the Alaska Peninsula, North, and South, the Koyukuk Drainage, North Slope, and the Kotzebue Sound. Please report any observations in Western Canada and the Pacific Flyway to Craig Ely, Alaska Science Center at 907-786-3526 or craig_ely@usgs.gov. On the East Coast, please report to John Whissel, Swan Research Program in Warrenton, Virginia at 1-888-2MIGRATE or jwhissel@airlie.com

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

September survey of the Rocky Mountain Population/US breeding segment

Although the final report is not yet available, preliminary data from the September aerial survey were discussed at the October 25-26 meeting of the Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Working Group in West Yellowstone, Montana. These preliminary numbers might change slightly. The Tri-state (Greater Yellowstone) nesting population had 459 total swans (377 white birds and 82 cygnets). White bird numbers were up 6 percent and cygnets were down 20 percent compared to 2005. The total RMP/US breeding segment, which includes Oregon and Nevada as well as the Tri-state area, had 507 total swans (416 white birds and 91 cygnets), compared to 510 total (404 white birds and 106 cygnets) in 2005. The

2006 count in Oregon was not yet complete and efforts are underway to determine better ways to survey these widely dispersed swans in the future. Nevada produced four cygnets, the first young produced since 2000.

Centennial Valley, Montana, habitat improvement

Using funds donated by the Cinnabar Foundation and some TTSS members, this summer we launched a program to systematically improve nesting habitat on the mixed private and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands along the Red Rock River downstream from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. At least 30 wetlands in this area have been used by nesting swans during the past 70 years. Their productivity declined in recent decades and we are identifying specific problems and opportunities for habitat improvement, and building partnerships with landowners to improve these sites. This year, TTSS put up \$2,500 for field work and supplies. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks matched our contribution and BLM matched our combined private/state funds to make a total of \$10,000 available for the work. Cooperative agreements have been made, fence lines surveyed, materials bought, and work will commence in the spring.

We will build about 2.8 miles of fence that will allow grazing around the wetlands to be managed at desired levels and prevent overuse. This will help restore emergent vegetation and nesting cover at two historic territories. We are also exploring ways to work with private landowners to reopen old river oxbows that have gradually filled in. This would restore some top quality Trumpeter Swan nesting habitat in the river corridor.

Blackfoot Valley, Montana

Tom Hinz of the Montana Wetland Legacy program reports that Montana's most recent restoration effort moved forward this summer with the second release of swans. Tom reports that 17 yearling trumpeters from the Wyoming Wetland Society facility in Jackson, Wyoming, were released in the Blackfoot Valley in June 2006. One of the 2005 release birds from the Blackfoot summered in Montana's Mission Valley with swans from the Flathead restoration flock. Another of the 2005 birds spent at least part of the summer in the Blackfoot Valley and molted with some of the 2006 release birds on Kleinschmidt Lake. These are the only two of the 2005 release birds that were confirmed to be alive at the end of last winter. One spent the winter near Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area at Galen and the other wintered on the lower Blackfoot River near Bonner. All birds were marked with three bands: red with white alphanumeric codes on neck collars and tarsal bands and USGS stainless steel locking leg bands. The codes all have the letter P as the middle character. Resightings of these birds are now being maintained by

Vanessa Fields at Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge whose email address is Vanessa_Fields@fws.gov

INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS

Heber Springs, Arkansas, wintering swans arrive

The first Trumpeter Swans of the winter arrived at Magness Lake on 4 November with a full moon. Pat and Larry Eason, landowners and TTSS members, were excited to report the arrival of a pair with 4 cygnets, followed a few days later by two other pairs. Last winter, over a 100 swans wintered at this location. The Easons have planted several food plots for the swans to forage in and have provided more parking for swan viewers who come from all over Arkansas and neighboring states. TTSS has helped with an interpretive sign that will be posted along with swan information brochures. The swans typically head north again by late February.

Harvey Nelson judges in 2006 Federal Duck Stamp Contest

Harvey Nelson, Past President and Board member for TTSS, was selected as one of five judges for the 2006 Federal Duck Stamp Contest held in Memphis, Tennessee, on October 6-7, to determine the winner of the 2007-2008 Federal Duck Stamp. The Federal Duck Stamp has become a world-renowned conservation program, beginning in 1934 when J. N. "Ding Darling" became the first duck stamp artist. Since then, annual stamp sales have raised more than \$700 million to purchase 5.2 million acres of wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

There were 297 entries from wildlife artists from 49 states. Richard Clifton, Delaware, won with his acrylic painting of a pair of swimming Ring-necked Ducks. Joseph Hautman, Minnesota, won 2nd place for his pair of flying Wood Ducks. The 2006 Contest also recognized the 20th Anniversary of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). Harvey was the first Executive Director for the NAWMP, serving 1957-1992.

American Bird Conservancy (ABC) News Release

(November 2006) – The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) announced that it will propose a rulemaking that could help prevent the killing of millions of migratory birds at nearly 90,000 communications towers throughout the U.S. In 2002, ABC (www.abcbirds.org) and two other conservation groups filed a lawsuit against FCC charging that bird fatalities could be avoided with proper mitigation measures. ABC was pleased that the FCC is now responding to the mounting evidence of bird kills. See ABC's report at www.abcbirds.org/policy/towerkill.htm for documentation. TTSS is a member of ABC's Bird Conservation Alliance.

WANT TO BE A MEMBER? NEED TO RENEW? GIVE A FRIEND A GIFT?

Student/Retired__\$15 Regular__\$25 Family__\$30 Organization__\$50 Supporting__\$100 Life Member__ \$500 [to Endowment Fund]

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The Trumpeter Swan Society, 12615 County Road 9 - Suite 100, Plymouth, Minnesota 55441-1248

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[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.]

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Madeleine Linck
Ruth E. Shea

New Members

Mrs. Linz's 5th Grade Class
Bartlett, TN

David Parks
North Bay, Ontario

Peggy Ridgway
Oscoda, MI

WELCOME ALL!



Bird Conservation Minnesota - TTSS recently became a partner in Bird Conservation Minnesota (BCM). The mission of BCM is to keep Minnesota's common birds common and to reverse species decline by building strong connections among bird conservation organizations and individuals. Office facilities are provided by Audubon Minnesota and the goal is to reach 125 conservation partners by Spring 2007. To learn more about the activities of this new bird conservation group, visit www.birdconservationminnesota.org or call (651) 739-9332.

Visit TTSS' World Wide Web site at www.trumpeterswansociety.org