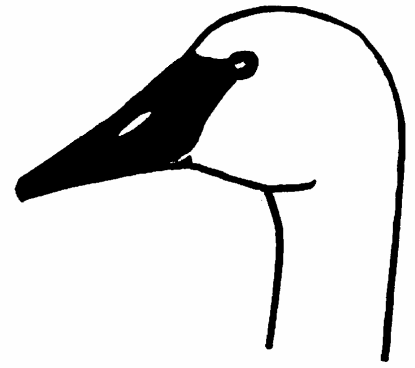


# TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society  
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**FROM THE PRESIDENT** – On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank John Turner for his 7 years of service to the TTSS Board as Director-At-Large. We all wish him well in his new challenge as Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. Our best wishes to Director Dave Weaver who retired in January as Grants Administrator for the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office. Dave has not retired from swans, however, and he will still be very active with TTSS. He and his wife Kitty plan to move to Massachusetts later this year.

In other fronts, TTSS is participating in the ongoing process of the Pacific Flyway's Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan (TSIP). Gary Ivey and Ruth Shea have attended TSIP meetings in Idaho Falls, are helping with drafts, and working hard to make the process successful. The USFWS requested the Pacific Flyway to develop and approve an Implementation Plan by July 2002 and to involve the public and other agencies in the process to achieve the goal and objectives of their 1998 Rocky Mountain Trumpeter Swan Management Plan.

As many of you may have heard, the Federal courts decided in January 2002 that USFWS does have management authority over the Mute Swan under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, even though the Mute Swan is not considered a native/indigenous species. Previously, management of Mute Swans was left primarily to the individual states.

I urge members to consider attending the next Society Conference to be held in British Columbia (see below). It will be a great opportunity to meet other swan enthusiasts, to share current information about swans and their management on both sides of the border, and to learn about the challenges ahead.

Harvey K. Nelson

**FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS: 19<sup>TH</sup> TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE** – Plans are taking shape for the 19th Society Conference to be held in Richmond, British Columbia, February 5 – 8, 2003. The Richmond area, just south of Vancouver, offers excellent swan viewing opportunities. The Conference will include papers and discussion on all North American swan species and we welcome suggestions for topics and speakers of particular interest. If you are interested in

presenting or volunteering to help at the Conference, please contact Ruth Shea at [ruthshea@srv.net](mailto:ruthshea@srv.net) or contact Madeleine at the Maple Plain office (address above). Watch for Conference registration information in upcoming issues of *Trumpetings*.

**LEAD POISONING DIE-OFF IN CANADA AND WASHINGTON** - Laurie Wilson, Biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, reported a total of 272 dead trumpeters, including 78 in Canada with the remainder in the State of Washington, as of March 4th. Most of the wintering swans have died of suspected, and some of confirmed, lead poisoning. In Washington, the counties affected are Whatcom County along the Canadian border and Skagit County, immediately to the south of Whatcom. In Canada, the majority of the swans have been in the Sumas Prairie area near Abbotsford.

Twenty-six swans were captured in December and fitted with radio collars so they could be followed to roosting and foraging sites. At least five of these swans have died. As in other areas of North America, the wintering swans have adapted to field feeding and may be picking up old lead shot in heavily hunted fields. The Canadian Wildlife Service has been conducting soil and sediment sampling. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFG) biologists have been working hard to map and prioritize fields to sample for presence of lead. Lead shot has been banned in Washington State since the mid 1980s and in British Columbia since 1995. While some noncompliance with the ban is a possibility, lead shot stays in the environment for years, and remains available to the foraging birds. With potentially many fields involved, the task is enormous.

Sue Murphy with the Pilchuck Valley Wildlife Rehabilitation center at Stanwood, Washington, has taken the lead in collecting carcasses and sick swans in Washington. There are similar volunteer groups monitoring swans in Canada. Laurie Wilson has been interviewed by the Canadian media for several news stories about the swans, with emphasis on educating the public about the crisis. The next step is to determine the source of lead and initiate measures to prevent such losses in the future. Making the lead unavailable to the swans will be a major challenge. TTSS is donating money raised for this issue to WDFG to help pay for the costly equipment and field work.

## **FALL SURVEY OF THE U. S. BREEDING SEGMENT OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION OF TRUMPETER SWANS**

- Dave Olson, Wildlife Biologist at Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Montana, compiled the annual fall survey results of trumpeters breeding in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, and Oregon. Aerial surveys and ground observations conducted 5-9 September 2001 counted 487 trumpeters. There were 416 white birds (11.8% more than in September 2000) and 71 cygnets (34.9 % fewer than last year). In the Tristate Region, Montana counted the majority of swans and white birds with 149 birds. The highest count of cygnets was found in Wyoming (27) and Idaho (23), although both showed a decline in cygnet production. Cygnet production in Montana (9) was the lowest since 1980. Nevada had no production, but Oregon had 12 cygnets (compared to only 5 in 2000). The 2001 total was up slightly from 481 trumpeters counted in fall 2000, and was the highest count since termination of artificial feeding in the winter of 1992-93.

## **BIRD FLIGHT DIVERTERS INSTALLED IN ONTARIO, AND IN MINNESOTA WILL MAKE FLYING SAFER FOR SWANS**

- In January, Hydro One, Inc., an energy company in Ontario, completed a pilot project on Lake Ontario at Burlington to help reduce swan collisions. Trumpeter Swan restoration began in Ontario in 1982 and Burlington has become an important wintering site. Hydro One installed 145 bird flight diverters along 2 kilometers of transmission lines by the Burlington Bridge. These devices, described as large orange disks or roundels, were obtained from Energy Equipment LTD ([www.energyequipment.co.nz](http://www.energyequipment.co.nz)) of Auckland, New Zealand and have been used successfully in Europe for many years. Collisions with power lines are a major source of swan mortality throughout North America. TTSS member Beverly Kingdon helps to monitor the wintering swans and has been volunteering to track the effectiveness of the project.

In Wright County, Minnesota, Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association is marking wires near trumpeter nest sites with colored bird flappers manufactured by Kaddas Enterprises ([www.kaddas.com](http://www.kaddas.com)) of Salt Lake City, Utah. Since Trumpeters are faithful to nesting territories, power lines in the flight path of a nesting marsh can be deadly to an established pair or young just learning to fly. TTSS would appreciate learning about other areas where power lines have been marked successfully.

## **TRUMPETER SWANS AND THE 102<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT**

- The 102<sup>nd</sup> annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) tallied 118 count circles reporting Trumpeter Swans. The CBC, begun in 1900 as an alternative to the holiday tradition of hunting birds, is an all day census of early winter birds. The count period ranges from 14 December to 5 January. Count circles are each 15 miles wide. Skagit Bay, Washington, reported the highest number of trumpeters at 1,758 swans. Comox, British Columbia, reported 1,560, and Bellingham, Washington, 1,286. To view the preliminary results of the count, go to <http://www.birdsource.org>.

Click on current CBC results. To participate in next year's count, check with your local Audubon chapter or visit <http://audubon.org/bird/cbc/>.

## **SWANS WINTERING IN HEBER SPRINGS, ARKANSAS – A GROWING TRADITION**

- Trumpeter Swans have become quite the tourist attraction at Magness Lake in Cleburne County, Arkansas. According to TTSS member and property owner Perry Linder, birders come from as far away as Mississippi, Texas, and Tennessee to watch and photograph the swans. The birds are reported annually on the state birding hot line and the wintering flock has appeared on Arkansas television. Three unmarked swans first arrived in Heber Springs in December 1990. The following year, a Minnesota DNR-banded swan came with its mate. The numbers have grown steadily ever since with this winter's population peaking at 50 birds. Early on, Perry Linder planted rye and wheat to help the swans adjust to field feeding. The number of families with cygnets has grown. Since cygnets learn safe migration routes from their parents, the wintering flock should continue to increase. While most of the swans are unmarked, tagged swans from Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Hennepin Parks, Minnesota, have been observed there over the years. December – February is the best viewing time. This is the largest number of Interior Population Trumpeter Swans wintering so far south. Karen Rowe, Nongame Bird Program Leader of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, is exploring opportunities to conserve this significant winter habitat for trumpeters.

## **RECORD HIGH NUMBER OF TRUMPETERS WINTERING IN MINNESOTA**

- A 1 February 2002 survey of swan wintering locations in Minnesota counted 1,184 Trumpeter Swans. Aerial surveys conducted by the Minnesota DNR and ground counts by Hennepin Parks and TTSS members Sheila Lawrence and Debby Whitney tallied 472 cygnets and 712 white birds. There were 620 swans on the Mississippi River near Monticello, Wright County, and 503 on the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County. Smaller groups were reported elsewhere. The majority of swans are unmarked in Minnesota. The Wisconsin DNR also reported 105 trumpeters on the Wisconsin side of the St. Croix River, based on counts by TTSS member Barry Wallace and State Park staff. Like much of the U. S., the Upper Midwest has had an extremely mild winter with larger rivers staying wide open.

## **NORTH AMERICAN SWAN FUND GRANT AWARDED**

- TTSS made its first grant of \$1,000.00 to University of Saskatchewan for swan research. Keith Hobson, Canadian Wildlife Service, will be conducting isotope analysis of Tundra Swan feathers from 40 adult female tundras of the Eastern Population Tundra Swan Project (see *North American Swans* (30)1:15-18). Isotope analysis can be utilized to distinguish Alaskan and Canadian molting birds. It is hoped that the same methods could then be used to distinguish Canadian Trumpeters Swans from the Greater Yellowstone nesting swans that intermingle in the RMP wintering flocks.



**IOWA TRUMPETER SWAN BANQUET** – The public is invited to attend Iowa's Trumpeter Swan Partners Banquet on Saturday April 13, 2002 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The event, which will raise money for Trumpeter Swan restoration in Iowa, will be held at the Scheman Building, Iowa State Center in Ames, Iowa. Featured speaker will be Joe Johnson from the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Michigan State University and coordinator of the Michigan Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program. To register, please contact Brenda at 515-233-1803 or [brendavc@iastate.edu](mailto:brendavc@iastate.edu). Nine pairs of trumpeters attempted to nest in Iowa in 2001. A total of six nests hatched and produced 19 cygnets. Two pairs fledged broods of five and two at the Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, near Titonka in north central Iowa.

Trumpeter Swan restoration began in Iowa in 1995. Iowa's goal is 15 wild nesting pairs by 2003 and the education of the public about the value of wetlands. To learn more about Iowa's program, visit [www.state.ia.us/government/dnr/organiza/fwb/wildlife/pages/swanindex](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dnr/organiza/fwb/wildlife/pages/swanindex)

**CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION** – TTSS recently awarded Certificates of Appreciation to Jean Niskanen of Oakville, Ontario, and Mr. and Mrs. Ron Harker of Burlington, Ontario. Harry Lumsden, Coordinator of the Trumpeter Swan Restoration program in Ontario, greatly appreciates their dedication to the monitoring and tracking of wintering Trumpeter Swans in Ontario.

**TRUMPETER SWAN ON TEXAS COAST** – Photo by wildlife photographer Paul W. Bozzo of Kingwood, Texas. Swan was seen and photographed at Brazoria National Wildlife Refuge in Brazoria County, Texas, on 15 and 23 February 2002 and again on 15 March. Historically, trumpeters wintered along the Texas Gulf Coast and migrated into Mexico. For more background on Trumpeter Swans wintering in Texas, see Burgess and Burgess *North American Swans* (26)2:50-53.

**ANNUAL APPEAL** – TTSS Board of Directors would like to thank the following members for their generous support for the Society's Annual Appeal. The Appeal is combined with the November membership renewal, but it is not too late to add your contribution! The Society thanks Dr. Bill Sladen and Bob Ritchie for their much appreciated donations to the North American Swan Fund. Dr. Laurie Degernes is a new Life Member. Hearty thanks to all!

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**WELCOME ALL!**

**TRUMPETINGS**  
**EDITORS**

**Madeleine Linck**  
**Ruth E. Shea**

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**GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIP FOR MUTE SWAN STUDY** – Ph.D student wanted for a 3-year project beginning May 2002 to study the impacts of Mute Swans on aquatic vegetation in Chesapeake Bay. Please contact Dr. James T. Anderson, Division of Forestry, West Virginia University, P. O. Box 6125, Morgantown, WV 26506-6125 (notice from The Wildlife Society student List Serve).

### **4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GRANDE PRAIRIE SWAN FESTIVAL** –

The Friends of Saskatoon Island invite all to attend the annual swan festival April 27-28 at Saskatoon Island Provincial Park, Grande Prairie, Alberta. There will be swan displays, hiking and bus tours to see the swans and other waterfowl. A presentation on wetlands and waterfowl will be given Saturday night at the Trumpeter Hotel. Call DU Canada at (780) 532-7960 or visit <http://www.heartwoodpublishing.com/swan/poster.htm> to find out more about the scheduled events.

**YUKON'S CELEBRATION OF SWANS** – The Yukon's annual festival of swans will be held April 13 – 21<sup>st</sup>. Wildlife viewing events, swan presentations by local biologists, guest speakers from Alaska, and many family oriented birding activities will celebrate the return of the swans to Whitehorse. For more details, contact Todd Powell at Yukon Renewable Resources at (867) 667-8291 or [Todd.Powell@gov.yk.ca](mailto:Todd.Powell@gov.yk.ca)