



TRUMPETINGS

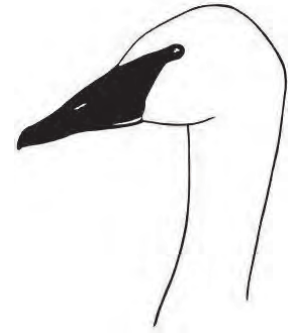
Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society

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

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An amazing journey by a young Midwest swan!

Thanks to you, TTSS is a funding partner in the three-year Midwest swan tracking study. Important new insights about Trumpeter Swan behavior and landscape use through the year are emerging.

One young Minnesota swan in the study has been on a remarkable journey of over 2,400 miles since June.

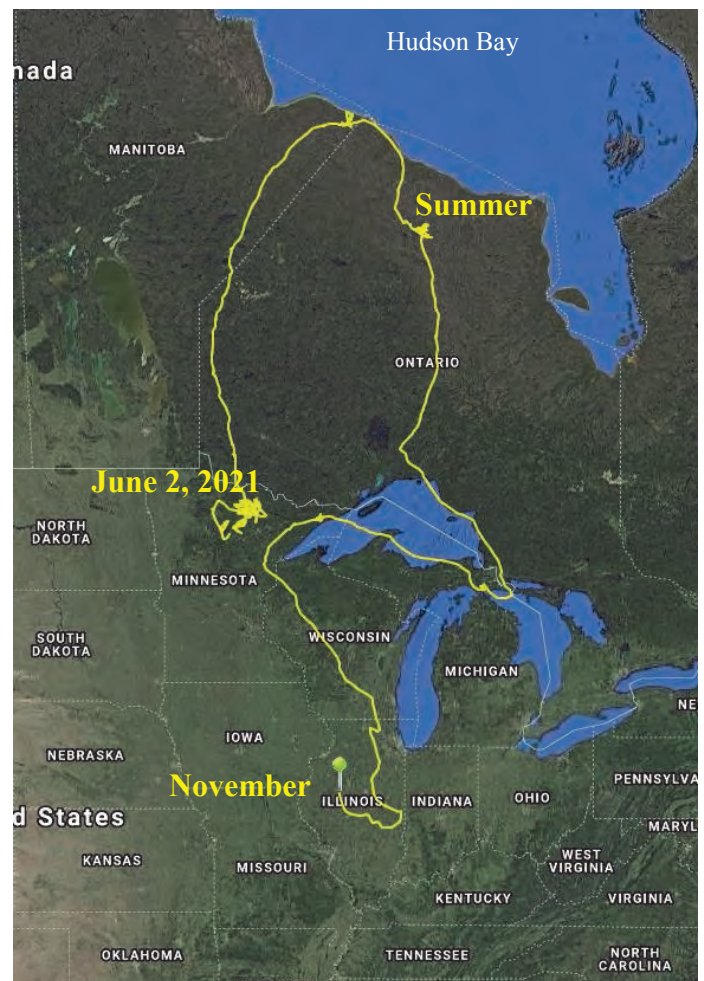
MN 5L is a female swan and was the only cygnet in Minnesota to receive a GPS collar. She received her tracking collar in August 2020 when she was just a few months old. She spent her first year in central and north central Minnesota.

But in June she began an amazing journey at the start of her second year!

According to researcher David Wolfson, “She left northern Minnesota (Bois Forte Res) on June 2. She got to Hudson Bay by June 20. She settled about 85 miles from Hudson Bay the next day and stayed there until October 17. On October 18 she flew to Lake Superior and turned east.”

“After stopping for a few days in Michigan’s Saint Martin Bay of Lake Huron, she flew directly across Lake Superior in about seven hours. She arrived back to Minnesota on October 22.”

“She spent a month in northeast Minnesota although she didn't visit the lake where she hatched. On November 21 she flew to Illinois. She headed south but dog-legged to the west. She is currently on the Illinois River Valley near Havana, a site heavily used by waterfowl.” ♦



Above: Google Earth map of Minnesota swan 5L’s remarkable journey (yellow line). Between June and November, she travelled more than 2,400 miles from northern Minnesota, to Canada’s Hudson Bay to spend the summer, and is now in Illinois (November 2021). Map by David Wolfson

You helped Trumpeter Watch record long distance swan travels



Above: *Two Ohio Trumpeter Watch reporters each reported 2 special marked swans. Each saw Ohio 8N which received its GPS/GSM tracking collar this summer. Each also saw Virginia swan, Z668 which was banded through Dr. William Sladen's program in Virginia. **Ohio has two banded swans from Virginia that have been reported through Trumpeter Watch since 2019.** Above left: Ohio 8N and Virginia Z668 on an Ohio farm pond, September; Jodie Thompson photo. Above right: Virginia swan Z668 is on the left and Ohio 8N is on the right, in an Ohio wetland, November; Larry Imhoff photo.*

Right: Montana swan T62 was banded in the Flathead program. In early 2021 it was reported in southern British Columbia. In October it was spotted and reported in northern British Columbia, about 1,000 miles from where it had been banded. Photo by Cindy Lewis, Round Lake near Telkwa, BC. Blue markers are reported locations.



Right: Ohio swan 7A9 was banded in 2005 near Columbus, Ohio. Fifteen years later, in March 2020, it was reported to Trumpeter Watch in northern Wisconsin. This fall, in October 2021, it was reported in northwest Ontario. Sadly it perished shortly after being seen in Ontario, most likely from lead poisoning. Photo by Sandy Clare, 2020, 7A9 in northwest Wisconsin. ♦



Oregon Restoration Project: Progress and setbacks

Your gift supported the Oregon Restoration Project. Thank you!

Oregon swan 3@4 was reported through Trumpeter Watch this fall in Montana. He had a mate. He has been reported through Trumpeter Watch several times. He appeared to have paired with a mate this spring in northern Montana. This swan hatched to “Chuck and Grace” at Sunriver Nature Center in 2016 in their first brood. He was released that year at Summer Lake Wildlife Area in Oregon. He is 5 years old.

Swan releases: Five yearling swans from Montana Waterfowl Foundation were released at Summer Lake Wildlife Area. This brings the total swans released at Summer Lake since 2009 to 133 swans.

No recorded Oregon cygnets in 2021: The extreme heat wave this summer may be one of the reasons population surveys conducted this summer and fall showed there were no wild swan cygnets produced this year in Oregon. The extreme heat may have caused nest abandonment in June.

In addition, our two resident pairs in central Oregon did not produce cygnets. The captive pair at Pronghorn Resort may still be too young to breed. The Sunriver pair received a new female in February who, at 4 years of age, may also be too young to breed. This new female, nicknamed “Val” replaced “Grace” who died last fall from predation.

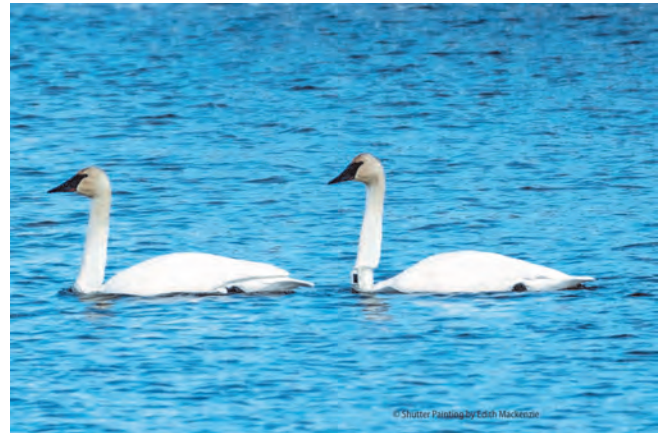
Oregon winter swan tracking points to Alberta as a summer area!

In February 2021, Oregon Fish and Wildlife staff marked eight wintering migrant trumpeters. Three received GPS/GSM collars. Five received regular green plastic collars.

All three GPS/GSM collared swans were recorded in northern Alberta this fall and one returned to Oregon’s Summer Lake on November 17! One of the green collared birds was reported through Trumpeter Watch in central Alberta in April. ♦



Stephanie Lindemann reported and photographed Oregon swan 3@4 in Sanders County, Montana in October 2021.



Edith Mackenzie reported and photographed one of the three swans with a GPS/GSM collar at Lesser Slave River in Alberta, Canada, in April 2021.



Oregon winter swan 9@7 was reported and photographed by Ed Stang near High River, Alberta, Canada in April 2021.

Answers from Yellowstone National Park— thanks to you!

Yellowstone National Park research into the Park’s swan decline, by Evan Shields



With the support of The Trumpeter Swan Society and other organizations, a recent study by Evan Shields, a graduate student at Montana State University, sought to explore potential causes of Trumpeter Swan decline in Yellowstone National Park. Photo left: A 2019 swan family in the Park. Photo by Steve Harryman. Photo right: Author and researcher Evan Shields at a swan release in the Park. Photo by Greg Albrechtsen.

Trumpeter Swans have been an iconic species in Yellowstone National Park and the Yellowstone region since they were first documented to breed in the Park in 1919. By 1933, Trumpeter Swans were nearly eliminated from the United States due to hunting, commercial harvest, and habitat loss. The only surviving breeding group of Trumpeter Swans in the continental United States consisted of roughly 70 Trumpeter Swans which nested and wintered in Yellowstone National Park (YNP or Park) and the surrounding Greater Yellowstone area.

Each winter a similar number of migratory Trumpeter Swans which used nesting areas in Canada joined the resident swans in the Greater Yellowstone area, where they were protected by the remoteness of the region.

Trumpeter Swan populations expanded across North America after actions were taken in the next decades, including protection from illegal shooting, closure of hunting seasons, restoration programs, and habitat conservation and management.

However, these gains were short-lived in YNP, where a sharp decline in Trumpeter Swan numbers began during the 1960’s and continued into the 2010’s.

Long-term population monitoring has been conducted in the Park since 1931. This offers decades of data about swans in the Park.

Since 1931, Trumpeter Swan abundance in the Park ranged from a maximum of 87 total individuals in 1954 to only 2 in 2010 (based on autumn survey results).



Trumpeter Swans have been in decline since the 1960s in YNP. You funded research into the reasons behind the decline. Photo by Evan Shields.

Many possibilities existed for the decline in Trumpeter Swan numbers. Was it due to disturbance by Park visitors? Predators like grizzly bears and eagles? Weather? Environmental conditions? Changes in habitat quality?

The study by Evan Shields took advantage of the Park's long-term Trumpeter Swan data set to evaluate if any existing data sets (Park visitor, predator, weather, climate, and other information) could be used in statistical models to explore the many potential causes of swan decline.

While there were difficulties evaluating some of the data that dated all the way back to the 1930's, several insights were made.

⇒ Research showed new patterns in the locations where Trumpeter Swans were seen and successfully produced young in YNP.

⇒ Changes in those patterns in recent years may suggest that current restoration efforts in the Park, namely the annual releases of captive-raised Trumpeter Swan cygnets, are helping to increase the number of areas where Trumpeter Swans are seen *and* are seen with young.

⇒ It was also found that some nesting areas within YNP are much better than others and are more likely to be seen with cygnets. These results in particular may provide a useful tool for YNP staff to identify and manage important lakes or wetlands within the Park.

⇒ Support was found for the hypothesis that Trumpeter Swan population trends outside of YNP affected the number of swans observed within the Park, possibly through movement of Trumpeter Swans into the Park.

Although the visitor disturbance and predator hypotheses did receive some support from the data, there were multiple interpretations of these results that prevented stronger conclusions from being drawn.

Directions for future research were also considered. This includes gathering more information on the habitat characteristics of the lakes and wetlands used by the Park's Trumpeter Swan population. ♦



Above: Riddle Lake is one of the nesting sites for Trumpeter Swans in Yellowstone National Park. Photo by Evan Shields.



Predators like grizzly bears (above) and the high number of visitors to the Park (below) may affect Trumpeter Swan nesting, but no strong conclusions could be drawn on their impact on the swan decline.

Grizzly bear photo by Jim Peaco, National Park Service; Yellowstone visitors photo by Neal Herbert, National Park Service



A New Swan Record at Yellowstone National Park!



Above: This fall, a new nesting pair of Trumpeter Swans successfully fledged four cygnets at Swan Lake, a few miles south of Mammoth Hot Springs. In late October the swan family left Swan Lake for places unknown. Photos courtesy of Yellowstone National Park.

Yellowstone National Park announced that for the first time since 1966, four Trumpeter Swan cygnets successfully fledged from Swan Lake. The cygnets hatched on Swan Lake in early summer, 2021.

One parent was released into the Park several years ago in restoration efforts using annual releases of captive-raised cygnets (page 5). The other parent is not banded and had not been released within the Park.

Of the four cygnets that hatched on Swan Lake, one hadn't yet fully fledged when the lake started to freeze over in October. The parents and other cygnets left Swan Lake, leaving the lone cygnet behind. The weather warmed and the cygnet was able to forage on its own in the lake.

At the end of October the family returned and reunited with the cygnet. By then the cygnet had fledged. The entire family then flew off— setting a historic record of cygnets successfully fledging on Swan Lake after an absence of 66 years! ♦

Other ways you can help swans

A DONATION FROM YOUR IRA: If you are age 70½ or older, you can make a gift up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA each year. A married couple can make a gift up to \$200,000. An IRA gift will count against your Mandatory Minimum Distribution from your retirement account and won't go toward your Adjusted Gross Income.

And it's easy to do. Just tell your IRA plan administrator that you want to make a gift from your IRA to TTSS. They will send us a check and then report that gift as counting against your IRS required annual distribution.

PLANNED GIFT: A gift to TTSS in your will, trust or life insurances policy helps Trumpeter Swans for generations to come.

We advise you to consult your attorney or tax professional about how tax benefits may apply to your specific situation. The Trumpeter Swan Society's tax identification number is 23-7220654. ♦

Become a Monthly Swan Sustainer

Trumpeter Swans need your help to return to regions where they have been absent for decades. They also need your help to make sure they are in habitats that are safe, secure and known.

Monthly giving is the most effective way to make sure swan conservation programs keep working every day of the year. It's convenient for you and easy on your budget.

You can have as little as \$5 per month automatically charged to your credit card or withdrawn from your bank account, so your membership is always current. It's easier for you -- and a reliable source of monthly revenue for us so we can plan our budget more efficiently.

Your secure monthly gift will help swans through TTSS programs that:

- work with partners to restore and manage swans across North America
- safeguard swan health and protect habitat swans use throughout the year
- advocate on issues and threats affecting swans
- fund research for science-based knowledge to help swans long term

Send in the form below or sign up online at
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