

STATUS OF THE MICHIGAN POPULATION OF TRUMPETER SWANS, 2005

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ABSTRACT

The Michigan Trumpeter Swan restoration plan was approved by the Mississippi Flyway Council in 1986. For 3 years, we attempted to cross-foster Trumpeter Swans under Mute Swans. Eggs were solicited from several cooperative zoos and private aviculturists. From 1986 through 1988, a total of 44 Trumpeter Swan eggs were placed under Mute Swans, 35 hatched, however, only six cygnets survived to flight. Beginning in 1989, an alternate method of the rearing and release of 2-year-old sibling groups on suitable wetlands was initiated. Between 1989 and 1990, 91 eggs were collected on Minto Flats, near Fairbanks, Alaska. Eighty-eight eggs hatched, of which 80 young survived to flight. Cygnets were also obtained from zoo pairs and private aviculturists. Between 1989 and 2005, we released a total of 346 swans, of which approximately half were of Alaskan origin. Five captive pairs of Alaskan swans were developed from eggs collected in 1990 and 1991. The restoration was a cooperative effort between Michigan State University and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Nongame Program, many zoos, private citizens, corporate partners, Native Americans, and federal agencies within the state. In 2005, the release of 14 swans, the production of 188 cygnets by 61 successful pairs, and the addition of the surviving birds from previous years yielded an estimated fall flight of 728 Trumpeter Swans (Figure 1). While still considered a Threatened Species, trumpeters now nest in 23 of 83 counties in Michigan (Figure 2). We had a goal of 200 birds in two flocks by 2000, and we reached that goal in 1997 (Figure 1).

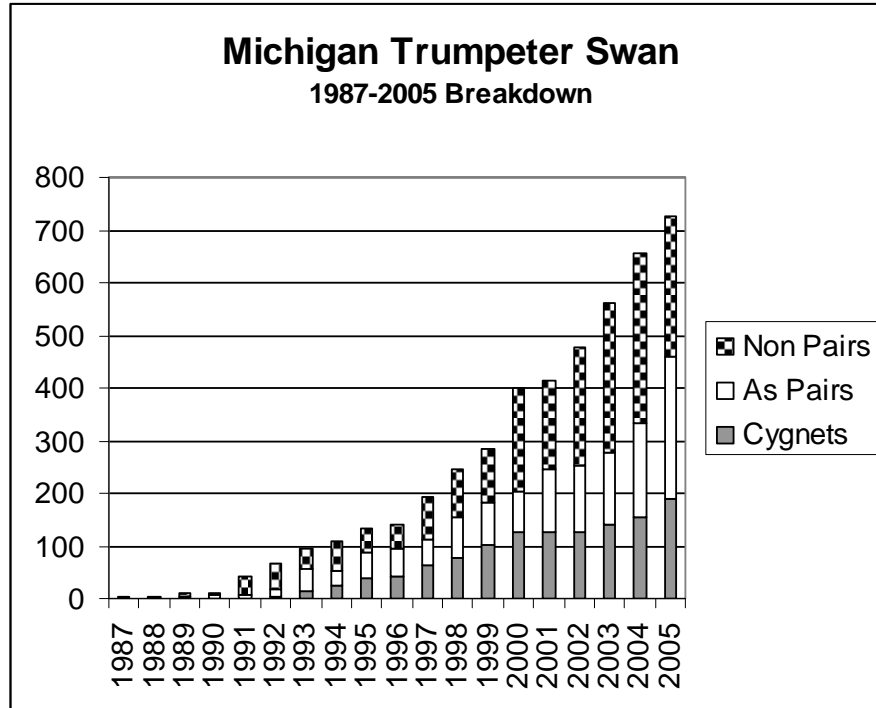


Figure 1. Michigan Trumpeter Swan nonpairs, pairs, and cygnets 1987-2005.

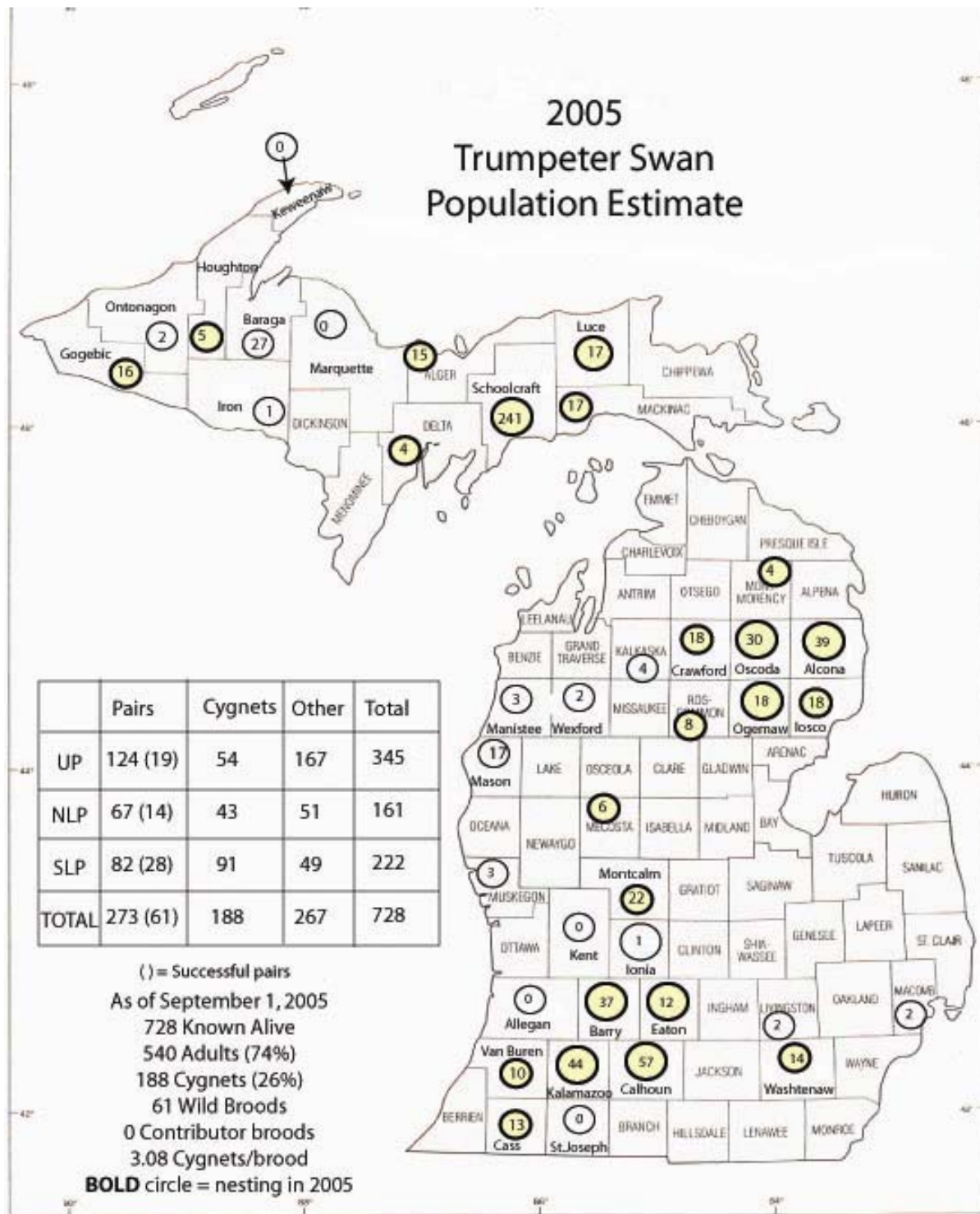


Figure 2. 2005 Michigan Trumpeter Swan estimate.