



TRUMPETINGS

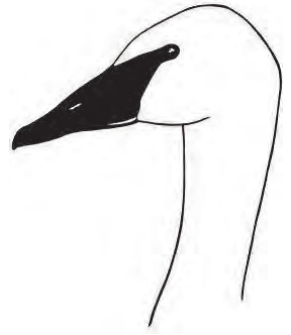
Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society

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

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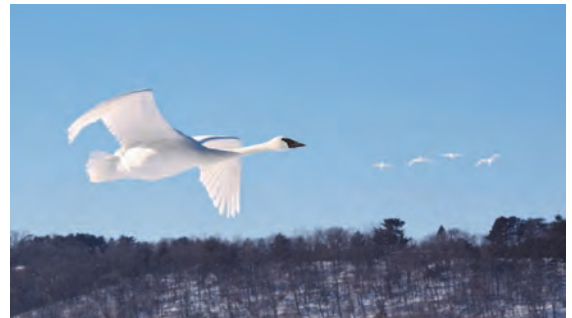
APRIL 2018

Changes to Migratory Bird Treaty Act weaken bird protections

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), signed into law in 1918, is among the oldest and most effective wildlife protection laws on the books. When Congress passed the MBTA in 1918, it codified a treaty already signed with Canada, then part of Great Britain. The Treaty was in response to the serious overharvest of numerous bird species that had resulted in extinction in a few instances and near extinction in some species. Since 1918, the MBTA has broadened its international scope through treaties with Mexico, Japan, and Russia. The MBTA is credited with saving numerous species from extinction, including Trumpeter Swans.

It continues to protect nearly all native birds in the U.S. covering more than 1,000 species, including Trumpeter Swans.

Legislation in Congress (HR 4239), and a new interpretation of the law by the Administration, would end the ability to hold industries accountable for bird deaths. Industries would only be held accountable if their *intention or purpose* was to harm birds through their activities. This rolls back decades of bipartisan support and interpretation of the MBTA. It also removes industry incentives to prevent bird deaths and its associated penalties.



The Department of Interior made significant changes to the interpretation of the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Photo by Margaret Smith

We know powerline collisions are a significant source of swan deaths. Powerline collisions cause deaths to other bird species as well. According to studies, powerlines kill up to 64 million birds a year. Communications towers are estimated to kill up to 7 million birds per year, and uncovered oil waste pits account for up to another 500,000 to 1 million bird deaths every year. Data on wind turbines are harder to come by, but current estimates are approximately 234,000 bird deaths a year. Wind turbines have not been associated with significant swan deaths, but transmission lines serving turbines are linked to swan deaths. We at TTSS have advocated against a number of significant proposals for high power transmission lines across important migratory corridors and habitats and asked the lines be moved. The new interpretation negates such advocacy.

Urge [your members of Congress](#) and the [Department of the Interior](#) to uphold the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and to oppose its new legal interpretation. The new interpretation was issued in late December 2017 without the need for public comment. ♦

Setbacks and success in Oregon, by Gary Ivey



Above: TTSS's male swan, "Chuck" was shot on Thanksgiving Day, 2017 in Sunriver, Oregon. The shooter was arrested in March 2018. Photo by Sunriver Nature Center, home to the male swan



Above: Summer Lake Wildlife Area is also an important resting spot for migrating swans. Photo by Gary Ivey

Below: By late 2017, 112 swans have been released in the Oregon Restoration Project. Photo courtesy Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



OREGON WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

Since the last update in the December 2017 *Trumpetings*, there have been setbacks and success for the Oregon Restoration Project.

On Thanksgiving Day, someone shot the male parent of the Sunriver Nature Center pair of Trumpeter Swans. The pair was producing young to help build the wild Trumpeter Swan population in Oregon. The swan was shot along the Deschutes River within the Sunriver community. His injuries were severe and he had to be euthanized.

A reward fund was set up by TTSS, Sunriver Nature Center and the Oregon Hunters Association for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the shooter. In late March 2018 an anonymous tip led police to a 23-year old Bend, Oregon man who confessed to the shooting and was arrested.

TTSS, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Sunriver Nature Center spent several months trying to capture the female swan and the four cygnets that had escaped downriver at the time of the shooting. All were retrieved by early April. The four cygnets will be released at Summer Lake Wildlife Area in 2018. We are working to find a replacement male swan.

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Oregon had lost all its Trumpeter Swans by the early 1900s. To save the species, Trumpeters were moved from the Red Rock Lakes/Greater Yellowstone area to several other western refuges, including Oregon's Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, beginning in the late 1930s. The Malheur flock slowly grew through the late 1980s to reach about 75 birds. Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has supported a small flock of Trumpeter Swans for over 50 years. However, the swans never learned to winter beyond the bounds of the refuge. Numbers there have been limited by severe winters and limited food supplies caused by competition with an invasive fish, the carp, which also feeds on aquatic plants. Two swan pairs remain at the refuge as of April 2018.

The Oregon Restoration Project partnership

In 2009, driven by a reaffirmed desire to maintain this species in Oregon, we began releasing birds at Summer Lake Wildlife Area with the goal of restoring a healthy, viable, and sustainable breeding population of Trumpeter Swans to eastern Oregon. The Oregon Restoration Project is a partnership between TTSS, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and more recently, the Sunriver Nature Center in Sunriver, Oregon, and the Aspen Lakes Golf Course, in Sisters, Oregon.

This project has been supported partially by agency funding and additionally by grants to TTSS from Oregon Wildlife Foundation,

Setbacks and success in Oregon (cont.)

Mountaineers, and Charlotte Martin foundations, East Cascades Audubon and Klamath Basin Audubon Societies, plus private donations and your support.

By the end of 2017, the Project has released a total of 112 Trumpeters at Summer Lake Wildlife Area. Most have been cygnets, although several yearlings and one adult have also been released. Our sources of Trumpeter Swans include the Wyoming Wetlands Society, cygnets from the captive pair at Sunriver Nature Center and several zoos.

Update on the 2016 Summer Lake Wildlife Area swan shooting

The Project's first significant breeding success outside of the Malheur flock was in 2014. A Trumpeter Swan pair that had been released as cygnets themselves at Summer Lake Wildlife Area fledged one female cygnet. She was the first wild-hatched Trumpeter Swan for Summer Lake Wildlife Area in history. Two years later, in 2016, more success followed as three new pairs nested and hatched cygnets.

Days after the September 2016 release of 13 cygnets, including two from Sunriver Nature Center's breeding pair, the 2014 wild-hatched swan, now two years old, "adopted" the Sunriver and Wyoming cygnets. Summer Lake Wildlife Manager Martin St. Louis photographed her leading them around the marsh like a mother swan would.

Sadly, a few weeks later in mid-October, a hunter shot and killed one Sunriver cygnet outright and severely wounded the two year old wild-hatched swan. The wounded swan was taken to Native Bird Care of Sisters, Oregon for rehabilitation, but later died while under anesthetic to begin surgery on her broken wing. The hunter who shot both swans was charged and fined in early 2018.

A potential new breeding pair for the Oregon Restoration Project

We are excited that a newly formed swan pair at an Oregon development will potentially be a source of additional cygnets to the Project. The newly formed pair is the result of the hard work and generosity of a community of neighbors working together and with the Project partners to pair a lone female swan with a mate at Aspen Lakes Golf Course in Sisters, Oregon.

TTSS remains committed to restoring swans to Oregon

In spite of setbacks and challenges, we remain optimistic that more of our released swans will reach breeding age soon and begin to naturally populate the wetlands of eastern Oregon. As more wild-reared cygnets survive to reach breeding age, we expect they will be more successful in building the numbers of this small at-risk Oregon flock. Progress in this restoration project remains slow. However, the Project partners, including TTSS, remain committed to it for the long haul. The Project's success is due to the generosity of our donors. Thank you! ♦



Above: In late September 2016, the two-year old wild hatched swan (white) led six cygnets around the Summer Lake wildlife marshes. Two weeks later, she was wounded and later died, and one of the newly released cygnets was shot dead by a hunter. The hunter was charged and fined in early 2018. Photo by Martin St. Louis



Above, center and bottom: A new swan pair at Aspen Lake Golf Course meet for the first time in March 2018. Any cygnets they produce will become part of the Oregon Restoration Project. Photos by Al Krause Photography

If you would like to help the project, you can make a donation securely online at www.trumpeterswansociety.org or using the form on page 7.

Iowa swans do “meet and greet” in Iowa and Arkansas

Iowa swans make headlines in Iowa and Arkansas



Above: People of all ages had a chance to see and touch a Trumpeter Swan at the January Iowa Swan Soiree sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Photo by Margaret Smith

Sunny weather and warm late January temperatures brought crowds of Iowans and out of state visitors to the Swan Soiree held at Walnut Woods State Park near Des Moines. The all day event featured presentations, kids’ hands-on activities, outdoor viewing of swans, and the highlight event, a “meet and greet” with a Trumpeter Swan.

This year’s “Soiree Swan” (photo top left) was an injured male swan from northern Minnesota. It lost its right eye to a fishing hook before it was found and taken to the Wild and Free rehabilitation center of the Garrison Animal Hospital in Garrison, Minnesota.

After delighting people of all ages at the Swan Soiree, the swan was placed at the Hurstville Interpretive Center near Maquoketa, Iowa. His new home has an unpaired female swan. Iowa’s Jackson County Conservation staff hopes the male swan and its potential new mate will raise cygnets as part of Iowa’s Trumpeter Swan restoration efforts.



Above: An Iowa swan cygnet, collared for the “Track a Trumpeter” project [circled], was seen near Heber Springs, Arkansas. Photo by Kenny Nations

In the December 2017 *Trumpetings*, we shared information about the Iowa “Track a Trumpeter” project. TTSS is a funding partner of the project thanks to your support. In August and September 2017, nine cygnets received gray collars with attached GPS transmitters. As of early April 2018, two of the cygnets had died from powerline collisions. The two cygnets were found and the collars will be repurposed to track two additional cygnets in 2018.

Sometime in September 2017, one of the transmitters on another cygnet was no longer sending signals. It was thought the cygnet had died. However, in early January 2018, TTSS received an email from Karen Rowe of Arkansas Game and Fish, with a photo taken by a local birder of a cygnet with something gray on its neck (photo, center left, with gray collar circled for photo use). Thanks to Arkansas birders, a closeup of the collar was taken. Tyler Harms, project leader of the Iowa “Track a Trumpeter” project, confirmed it was one of the collared Iowa cygnets. The transmitter had fallen off sometime between September and early January. It was an exciting discovery of “finding a needle in a haystack” - - one of only nine collared cygnets being spotted and photographed by eagle-eyed and curious Arkansas birders.



Above: More than 30 swans died at one Iowa location in late January. Lead poisoning was a contributing factor in the die-off. Photo courtesy of Iowa Department of Natural Resources

We are very sad to report there was a major die-off of 34 wintering swans at an Iowa private property wetland in late January. Lead poisoning is a contributing factor in the die-off. ♦

Wintering swans in Washington and British Columbia

In early April we received a preliminary interim report from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Canadian Wildlife Service. While the report is not final, it indicates that lead poisoning and powerline collisions continue to be major suspected sources of the 208 swan mortalities reported in the study area. Between early December 2017 and mid March 2018 (winter season 2017-2018), Trumpeter Swans were collected in British Columbia's Sumas Prairie and eight northwest Washington counties (Pacific, Pierce, Clallam, Island, King, Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish). Nearly two thirds of the total swan deaths are from suspected lead poisoning and powerline collisions.

Both British Columbia and Washington had bird mortality "hotlines" to report sick, dying, or dead swans.

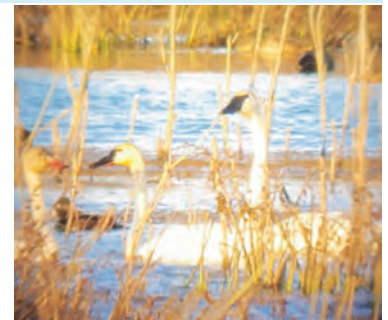
The exclusion zone at Judson Lake was very effective. Ten swans were recovered from Judson Lake this past winter. One swan was in the exclusion zone of poles erected to keep swans from the known "lead hot zone."

Mid-winter Swan Count (British Columbia's Sumas Prairie and Washington's Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, San Juan, King/Pierce Counties): There was a total count of 18,481 swans, down about 1,500 birds from last year's all-time high. According to Paul DeBruyn of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the decline is due to lower numbers in Skagit, Snohomish and Island Counties. This year more swans were reported from outside the counted areas, so it is likely swans are spreading out and wintering in new areas, rather than a drop in population. ♦

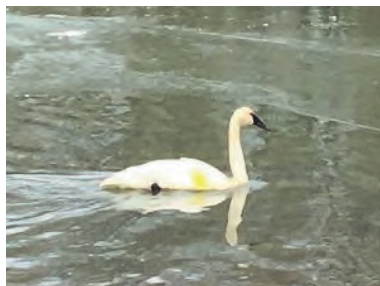
New swan sightings from Trumpeter Watch



New sightings of Trumpeter Swans were reported in the Atlantic Flyway this winter, exciting birders in Maryland, North Carolina's Outer Banks, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

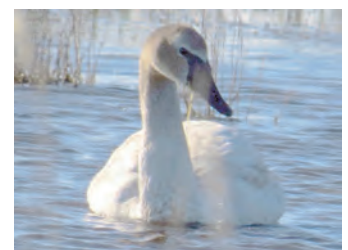


In the Central Flyway, a Trumpeter Swan sighting was reported near Fort Worth, Texas in late December.



Top: Two unrelated Ontario swans were seen in early April 2018 in Blair County, central Pennsylvania. Photo by Mark Nale

In the Mississippi Flyway, Missouri had a record number of wintering Trumpeter Swans. Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) each reported more than 1,000 swans last November. RMBS conducted its sixth annual Great Rivers Trumpeter Swan Watch. A record of 1,377 swans were reported on January 2, 2018, the third largest total of swans reported there. ♦



Bottom: Ontario Trumpeter Swan P61 was reported in Waynesboro, Virginia. Photo by Amy Kennedy

Top: A Trumpeter Swan (right) was seen with 2 Tundra Swans (left) at the Fort Worth Nature Center. Photo by John Allendorf

Bottom: North Carolina's Outer Banks first reported sighting is this unmarked cygnet, seen early March (after a strong Nor'easter) through April 2018. Photo by Peter Vankevich

TTSS welcomes new board members

We offer our grateful thanks to outgoing board members Larry Gillette, Deborah Groves, Jim Hawkings and Gary Ivey for their years of volunteer board service. Gary Ivey continues as TTSS's representative to the Oregon Restoration Project, Pacific Flyway, Greater Yellowstone Working Group, and is TTSS Conservation Committee Chair.

We welcome new TTSS board members:

Dr. Michael Anderson is Emeritus Scientist at the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research which he helped found in 1991. He was employed with Ducks Unlimited Canada from 1990-2013 and had broad responsibilities for DU's scientific investments and adaptive management culture. Prior to joining DU, Mike spent 18 years at the Delta Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Station, last serving as the Station's Director. He has been involved in waterfowl research, primarily on the Canadian prairies, since 1972. Mike has been engaged in national and international-level waterfowl management working groups for nearly 30 years. He serves on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's International Plan Committee, writes articles for scientific journals and outdoor magazines, and recently edited a book.

Laurie Degernes, DVM, was staff veterinarian for the Raptor Center of the University of Minnesota as Minnesota ramped up its swan restoration program in the mid 1980s. In the late 1980s, she helped develop a new treatment protocol for removing lead shot from the gizzard ("gastric lavage"), a technique that is still widely used today for treating lead poisoned waterfowl and other birds. In 1990 she joined the faculty at North Carolina State University and retired as Professor of Avian Medicine in 2016. Her Masters of Public Health paper was on the epidemiologic investigation of wild swan mortality in Washington State, supported in part by TTSS. In addition to teaching veterinary students, she published multiple manuscripts and spoke at many state, national, and international conferences. She is now Professor Emerita of Avian Medicine.

Carrol Henderson has been supervisor of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources-Nongame Wildlife Program, a program he created, since 1977. During the past 40 years he has developed a statewide program for the conservation of nongame wildlife that has received both national and international recognition. He helped plan and carry out restoration of peregrine falcons, bald eagles, eastern bluebirds, river otters and trumpeter swans in Minnesota. Carrol is the author or co-author of 13 books including *Woodworking for Wildlife*, *Landscaping for Wildlife*, *Wild About Birds: the DNR Bird Feeding Guide*, and the *Field Guide to the Wildlife of Costa Rica*. The Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program and the state nongame wildlife checkoff on state tax forms was organized to expand on Hennepin County's swan restoration program to restore Trumpeter Swans elsewhere in Minnesota in 1982.

Richard "Perk" W. Perkins, C.F.A., President and Portfolio Manager of Perkins Capital Management, Inc., has over 50 years' experience in the investment business. His financial investment career includes Assistant Investment Manager of the Mayo Foundation Endowment Fund, Pension Fund Manager for Standard Oil Company of Ohio, Vice President of Piper, Jaffray & Hopwood, Inc. and Senior Vice President Piper, Jaffray & Hopwood, Inc.'s International Department, where he provided investment advice to both domestic and foreign institutions. He founded Perkins Capital Management, Inc., in 1984. He is President of Perkins Foundation and Perkins and Partners, Inc. He has served on numerous boards over the past several decades. He is an avid decoy collector.

Steve Quarles is a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of the law firm Nossaman LLP. He is a veteran attorney who focuses his practice on addressing issues concerning federal wildlife laws (Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)), federal lands and resources, and renewable energy. He represents a wide range of associations and companies, policy coalitions, state governments, local governments, land conservation trusts, and environmental organizations. Steve has served in high positions in the U.S. Department of the Interior and on the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. He is active as an officer and member of the Board of several non-profit organizations, including the National Wildlife Refuge Association. ♦

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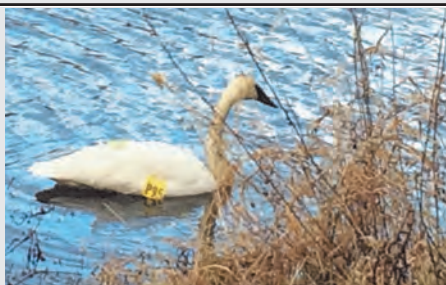
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For all you do for Trumpeter Swans, thank you!

Assuring the vitality and welfare of wild Trumpeter Swans for 50 years



Left: *In December 2017, Ontario swan P95 was reported in several places near Columbia, Maryland.*
Photo by Kurt Schwarz. See other Trumpeter Watch sightings, page 5.

Center: *There were plenty of indoor and outdoor kid activities at the January Iowa Swan Soiree.*
Photo by Margaret Smith

Right: *There’s a new swan breeding pair for the Oregon Restoration Project.*
Photo by Al Krause

Please consider a gift to TTSS through your will, trust, retirement account or life insurance. Together we can protect the beauty we love.

TRUMPETINGS EDITORS

John Cornely, Dave Hoffman Gary Ivey, Margaret Smith

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