

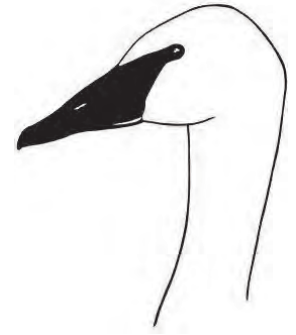


TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society

12615 Rockford Rd., Plymouth, MN 55441-1248
715-441-1994

Website: www.trumpeterswansociety.org
Email: ttss@trumpeterswansociety.org



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

VOL. XXX No. 3

DECEMBER 2020

New information about Midwest swan migration thanks to you



Left: Wisconsin swan 0P was reported in southern Indiana in early November. Photo by Tiffany Revesz. Middle: Manitoba swan 1H flew to Minnesota in late September and was at Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri by late November. Emily Hutchins photo (MN).



Iowa swan 3C has remained in its summer area which is also a wintering area for other swans. Photo by Diane Zumbach

The Midwest swan tracking project is already giving new information about swan behavior during fall migration. Thank you for your support of this valuable partner project (pg 2) and for supporting Trumpeter Watch.

Here is a remarkable story about Minnesota swan 8E from David Wolfson, University of Minnesota researcher.

“We captured him on July 1st hanging out all by himself in a very remote area of Minnesota, no partner or cygnets. He was one of the biggest swans caught all year (and the feistiest).”

“**The flight path for this swan was pretty impressive.** The swan had been hanging around within 30-50 miles of its summer area for the last few weeks. Then it bumped down to near Monticello, Minnesota Sunday afternoon (November 29).”

“At around 7 p.m. it took off from there and **made almost a direct path down to Arkansas, covering about 700 miles in 12 hours. The flight averaged ~55mph over the entire time, didn't appear to dip below 45mph at any point, and (if the sensor data is accurate), hit a max of 75mph.** There was a fairly strong tailwind from the northwest which helped a lot I'm sure. The swan arrived in Heber Springs area the next morning, November 30 around 7:30 a.m.” ♦

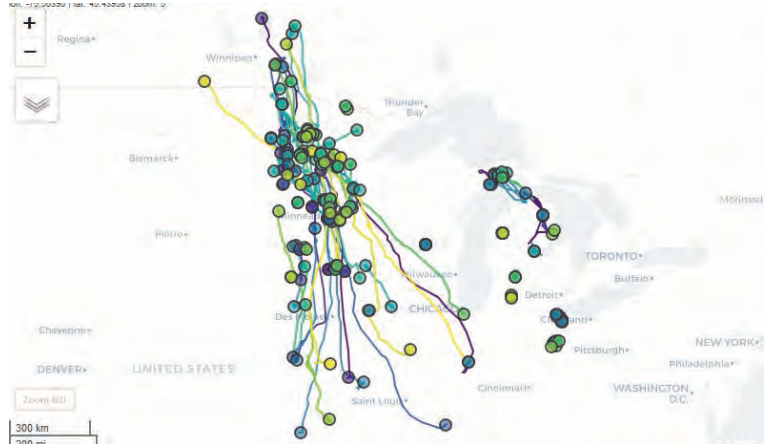


Minnesota swan 8E arrived in Heber Springs, Arkansas from Minnesota flying 700 miles in 12 hours. Photo by Jim Belote

You tracked Midwest migrating swans



Above: *September 7, 2020. Most swans are still at their summer 2020 capture locations.*



Above: *November 28, 2020. Migration began in late October. By late November, some swans in Iowa, Manitoba, Minnesota and Wisconsin were in other states. Michigan and Ohio swans remained in their states through late November.*

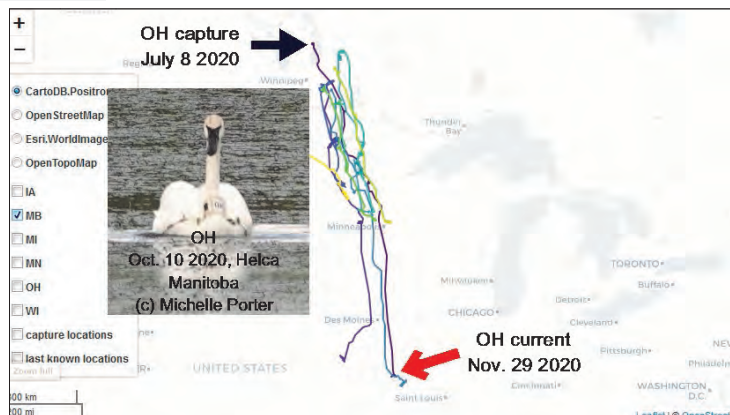
Exciting news about flock connections!

By early December, **Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri has six GPS swans**: four swans from Minnesota, one from Iowa, and one from Manitoba!

Manitoba to Missouri

Manitoba swan OH (photo right) was captured and collared on July 8, 2020 (blue arrow). TTSS received several Trumpeter Watch reports from Michelle Porter of swan OH at Grassy Narrows Marsh, Hecla, Manitoba.

Her last report and photo of swan OH in Manitoba was October 10. By late November, swan OH was in Missouri (red arrow).



Above: *By late November, Manitoba swans travelled as far south as Missouri. You can isolate the state/province swans on the website using the drop down check boxes on the left.*

Your support made it possible to be a partner in this project, including the purchase of seven collars. Four collars were deployed this summer in Minnesota. Three collars will be deployed in Arkansas this winter, COVID-19 permitting.

Check out the tracking website to see if a swan shows up near you. Locations change frequently as swans continue to move through the year. Your sighting will be shared with the researchers.

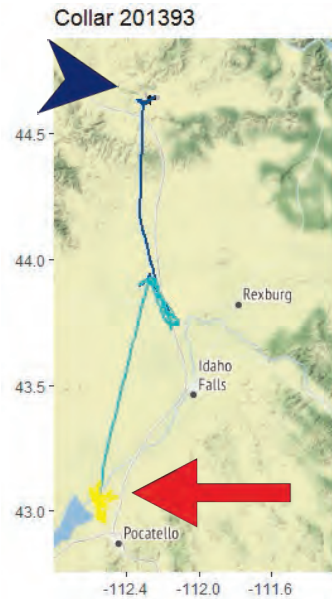
Shortcut link to map: <http://bit.ly/SwanTracking>
Shortcut link to reporting: <http://bit.ly/SwanReport>
or: www.trumpeterswansociety.org

Red Rock Lakes NWR GPS swans are on the move!

Thanks to you, western swan travels and timelines are being tracked right now!

Here's an update about two Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge swans that received GPS collars in July.

Right: One Red Rock Lakes swan descended into the Snake River Plains to visit Camas NWR before continuing south-east to the Snake River by Roberts. As of early December, it is at the Fort Hall Bottoms, just upstream of where the Snake River enters American Falls Reservoir.



Blue arrows: Lima Reservoir capture location (July 2020). **Red arrows:** current locations (December 2020)



Above: The other swan moved away from Lima Reservoir and out of cell tower range in late August. As of early December it is at Idaho's Harriman State Park. Maps courtesy of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service ♦

Oregon Project update- “gone missing” but finding love?

Nine cygnets were released in September at Summer Lake Wildlife Area. The cygnets hatched this summer at Sunriver Nature Center (three cygnets) and Aspen Lakes Golf Course (six cygnets). Read about “Grace”, the Sunriver female swan (pg. 4).

There was both sad and good news about the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Trumpeter Swans. The Malheur flock of swans is a ‘legacy flock’ where releases began in the late 1930s with swan transfers from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The Malheur flock has been declining over the past several years, mostly due to water management issues and depredation.

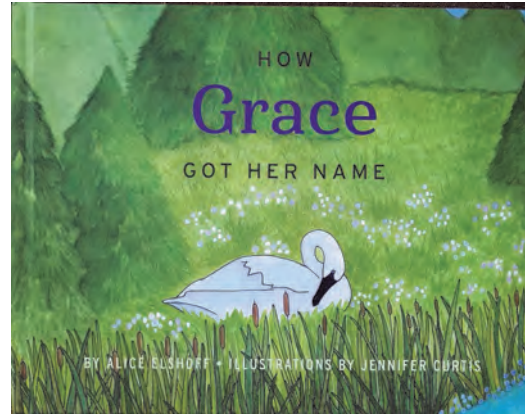
Early this year, only one male and three female adult swans remained on the refuge. This summer the only breeding male went missing. Also one of the females could not be found, leaving just two known females there.

In October, the missing female was spotted at Summer Lake Wildlife Area in the company of a four year old male from Oregon's Crooked River/Saber Ridge flock. This was great news! This means the Malheur female swan found a winter area outside Malheur Refuge, a long-time goal of the Oregon Restoration Project. It also means she may be checking out a potential mate. Only time will tell, but fingers are crossed the pair bond holds and they build a connection between the Summer Lake and Malheur flocks. ♦



The recently released cygnets from Sunriver Nature Center and Aspen Lakes Golf Course are doing well at Summer Lake Wildlife Area in late fall. Photo © Martin St. Louis

The passing of “Grace” by Amanda Accamando



Left: *Grace and her four 2019 cygnets. Three cygnets survived and were released at Summer Lake Wildlife Area in April 2020. Margaret Smith photo.* Right: *Grace’s special story is told in the book by TTSS member Alice Elshoff, “How Grace Got Her Name”. The book can be purchased through TTSS website Gift Shop. How to Help>Gift Shop*

From Sunriver Nature Center, Bend, Oregon, October 16, 2020

It is with heavy hearts that we write to let you know we lost Grace, our resident female Trumpeter Swan, to depredation, probably by coyotes. Gus, her mate, remains alive and well on Lake Aspen.

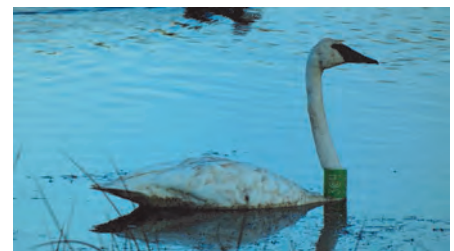
Although we are all aware that coyotes and other predators are a natural threat to swans in the wild, the loss of Grace is no less devastating. Grace has resided at Lake Aspen since 2015 when she was paired with male Trumpeter Swan “Chuck” with the hopes that they would mate and produce young that could help to establish a breeding population of swans in Oregon.

Since then, 13 of Grace’s offspring have gone on to Summer Lake Wildlife Area helping in part to restore Oregon’s natural heritage of Trumpeter Swans.

Grace’s legacy, through her offspring and the messages of conservation she brought to so many, will have lasting impacts for generations.

Each year the cygnets are translocated to eastern Oregon and released in the wetlands of Summer Lake Wildlife Area as part of a partnership with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and The Trumpeter Swan Society to reestablish a stable population of this species in Oregon.

The one remaining cygnet of Grace and Chuck’s 2016 brood, 3@4, seems to really get around. In March 2019, it was reported in the Flathead Valley in northwestern Montana. This April it made its way to Kimberly, British Columbia for a short visit before returning to Montana in May. It was still in Montana through early October.



Justin Bertram reported and photographed Grace’s offspring 3@4 near Kalispell, Montana on October 3, 2020. Your support of Trumpeter Watch made the review and sharing of this sighting possible.

We said farewell to this year’s cygnets in mid-September just as they were starting to learn how to fly. At Summer Lake Wildlife Area, the cygnets will have much more wetland habitat than here in Sunriver to spread their wings and learn how to fly. Together, the Sunriver cygnets and the cygnets produced by a pair of swans at Aspen Lakes Golf Course in Sisters, will contribute to establishing Oregon’s breeding population, one swan at a time. ♦

Thank you for your support of Trumpeter Watch



Retired Canadian biologist Bob Wynes reported Trumpeter Swans in Saskatchewan.



Wisconsin swan 30N and its family were reported and photographed in Manitoba in late October by Anita Wolfe. 30N is eleven years old.



Ontario swan K93 at New York's Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge was reported by several people, including Dave Lemke who took this photo. K93 is a male that has spent the last 4 nesting seasons at the refuge.



In mid-November, Patricia Robinson reported and photographed this swan family, giving the Ohio Department of Wildlife an important update about this local swan family.

Thanks to you nearly 800 Trumpeter Watch reports were received and reviewed since January.

After review, the report is often shared with a state agency or province.

These reports give valuable information about locations and habitats used by swans throughout the year.

Is the swan location safe? Is it a new area used by a swan family or group of swans? Is the location growing in importance? Is it secure habitat?

Your support of Trumpeter Watch answered these questions. Reports include unmarked and marked swans and swans that are part of research projects and ongoing restorations.

Here is a sample of just a few of the many Trumpeter Watch reports reviewed and shared in the last 60 days, thanks to you. ♦

Member Corner by Kimlinh Bui

TTSS member Kimlinh Bui shared her experience transporting a cygnet from the Bronx Zoo that arrived at the Minneapolis airport, to northern Iowa. The cygnet will be released in the spring by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources as part of its restoration program.

I responded to a TTSS Facebook call for volunteers to transport a swan from MSP airport to northern Iowa November 19. It was a wonderful experience.

When we picked him up he was awake but very quiet and sat in the back of his carrier without moving for the first hour of our drive.

But he got much more alert when we crossed I-90. He started trying to push his way out of the cage, pecking at the door, and picking up and tossing around the plastic lid to his water dish.

When we arrived at the pond in Nora Springs, Iowa, I expected that as soon as I opened the door he would come rushing out immediately to join the 20 or so swans that were on the water watching us.

Instead, he took a few minutes to collect himself and peeked out the door a few times before slowly emerging. He shook out his feathers, stretched his wings, walked around on the beach. To my surprise, he approached me and stood right next to me for twenty minutes preening.

He even whacked me in the head when he flapped his wings while preening.

And the whole time he was preening he was making these cute little beeping sounds. I suppose swans must do that all the time and we just never hear it because we're always so far away. It was so cute and I'll never forget those magical 20 minutes.

But as the sun was setting, Laurie (who lives at the pond and watches over the swans) was anxious to get him into the water to get acclimated and to meet his new flock.

We tried to urge him into the water. Laurie suggested that perhaps he was afraid because the pond was larger than he was used to at the zoo.

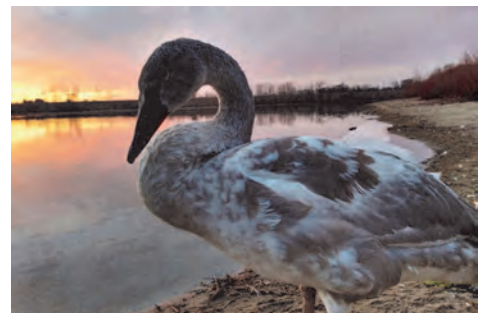
After a few minutes of chasing him around on the shore, he finally did flap himself into the water.

He swam around close to shore for a few minutes before heading out across the pond, but didn't swim directly toward the flock. It was getting dark, so I never saw him actually reach the other side or meet up with the other swans. I hope he did [he did!] and that all is well with him. What a beautiful creature he is. ♦



Above: The author and swan arrived in northern Iowa near sunset.

Below: The swan preens at the pond that will be its winter home.



Below: The swan heads off into the sunset.
Photos courtesy of Kimlinh Bui



Member Corner by Jim Gloe

The Trumpeter Swan

Star of beauty, and all white
who won the extinction fight.
You can hear it honk in night
The trumpeter swan, in flight,
its wings of wonder and might,
angels with souls to delight
The trumpeter swan, the perfect light.



Above: © Richard Sonnen photo

Jim Gloe (right) is 87 years old and has been a member for 32 years. He loves Trumpeter Swans and has a place in his heart for all kinds of animals. He is a Navy veteran and retired sheep farmer.



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