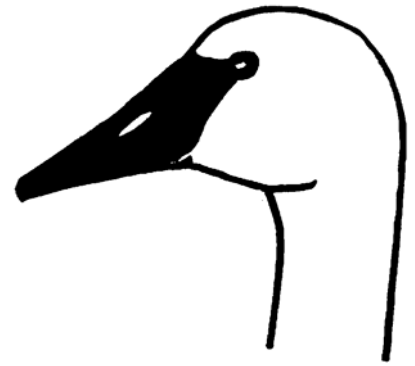




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Excitement is building for our 21st Conference in the Yukon Territory! I hope you are planning to join us. While we celebrate our 40th Anniversary, we will use the conference and associated Board of Directors and Membership meetings to help shape the direction of TTSS for the future. Registration and a preliminary agenda outline are enclosed in this newsletter. If you are looking for a roommate, please let us know so we can try to match you with another attendee to help save costs. To guarantee the Conference room rate, please make your reservations with the High Country Inn by 1 April.

Even if you can't attend, we want your ideas. This is your Society and we want to hear from you. How can we do a better job of advocating and delivering swan conservation and management of the habitats that swans are dependent on? Please review the Board approved 2008 priorities which are included in this issue.

The Board and the staff want to extend our thanks to Directors Sally Shanks and Bill Whitman who have chosen to step down after excellent service to all of us. Sally is a past President and has served on the Executive Committee and as TTSS Treasurer in recent years. Bill has been our Atlantic Flyway voice for swans. Both have indicated that they intend to stay active in the Society, but we will miss them on the Board.

I would like to welcome our newest Board member, Becky Abel. Becky completed graduate research on Trumpeter Swans in Wisconsin and is the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. We are delighted to have Becky as a Director-at-Large and look forward to her assistance and guidance.

Flyway meetings are imminent. I will be attending the Pacific Flyway Waterfowl Study Committee meeting in early March. The Study Committee has both Pacific Coast Population and Rocky Mountain Population subcommittees for Trumpeter Swans. Accompanied by Director Harvey Nelson, I will also represent TTSS as the flyway councils meet later in March in Phoenix. Director Joe Johnson will be attending the Mississippi Flyway in February. It is important for us to interact with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Canadian Wildlife Service, States, and Provinces at these meetings as they are the organizations with legal management responsibilities for Trumpeter and Tundra Swans.

I don't have to tell you that elections are in the air! Not those elections; TTSS elections. I promise you ours

will be short and sweet. We are open to additional nominations. You will receive a ballot in the mail in March along with the official election announcement and biographical information on each of the candidates. We have no primary or caucus, but please be sure to vote by returning your ballot! Only current members may vote, so check your mailing label for your membership status.

We hope to see you in Whitehorse in April!

John Cornely

NEW SWAN SPECIALIST GROUP COORDINATOR – Eileen Rees, Program Manager for United Kingdom Waterbird Conservation, announced late in 2007 that John Ø Albertsen has agreed to take on the role of Swan Specialist Group Coordinator which serves to improve communication and develop new projects involving swan research and conservation. John, a native of Norway, recently completed studies on the feeding ecology of Whooper Swans and is now at the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research. TTSS member Carl Mitchell is the North American swan coordinator for the Group and John Cornely is the Trumpeter Swan Species Specialist.

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS

Swan lead poisoning update, Winter 2007/2008 - Laurie Wilson, Wildlife Toxicologist, Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service, recently reported on the 9th year of the lead poisoning crisis along the British Columbia/Washington border. Hazing activities on Judson Lake were suspended on 19 January. Mike Smith, under the supervision of Dr. Chris Grue at the University of Washington Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit, reported that wintering swan populations in the U.S. core remained steady at 1,400 - 1,800 swans. Counts on the Canadian side have shown more fluctuation with numbers varying between 1,000 – 2,280 swans. This winter, there were fewer observations of collar sightings, largely due to the fact that the radio collars from previous years have stopped transmitting. Agencies are in the process of entering data, but preliminary numbers indicate lower mortality this winter with 139 mortalities recorded as of 6 February 2008. Initial review suggests lead and power line collisions are still the main causes of mortality. A more accurate summary of lead-exposure will be possible when toxicology testing is completed. Mike Smith has begun

estimating lead shot density on specific agricultural lands by taking core samples. There are other factors such as weather that determine the swan movements, making accessing roost sites and other observations difficult. The swans typically begin moving north to their breeding grounds during February. If you are interested in a more complete update, please contact the TTSS office or visit the TTSS website under *What's New* and click on the 2007-2008 Progress Report.

Conference on ingestion of spent lead to be held in Boise, Idaho – World experts on lead exposure in humans and wildlife will be presenting and discussing research results at a meeting 12-15 May 2008. The conference is open to anyone with concern about the toxic effects of lead exposure. Lead ammunition is still used in the U.S. for hunting big game, upland game, and varmints. Lead ammunition has been found to cause secondary poisoning in predators, especially among Bald and Golden Eagles and the endangered California Condor. For details and a registration form visit: www.peregrinefund.org/Lead_conference or contact the Peregrine Fund, Boise, Idaho, at (208)362-3716; tpf@peregrinefund.org

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION NEWS

Trumpeter Swan Survey of the Rocky Mountain Population, U.S. Breeding Segment – The USFWS, Division of Migratory Bird Management, recently published its fall swan survey where observers counted 527 swans in Fall 2007. The count was 4% higher than 2006 and the highest count since 1992. The number of white birds in the Tristate Region was similar to 2006, but the number of cygnets was 40% higher. The numbers of cygnets in Montana and Wyoming were 141% and 127% higher, but the number of young in Idaho was 62% lower. The abundance of swans at Malheur NWR, Oregon, was the lowest recorded since 1967 with no cygnets. No swans were observed at Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area, Oregon, but the swan count in Nevada was similar to fall surveys of recent years. Precipitation throughout most of the region was below average during winter 2006-2007.

INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS

Trumpeter Swan experiment: Iowa cygnets released in Arkansas to encourage migration of Midwest Trumpeter Swans – The Iowa DNR, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC) the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gorgas Science Foundation and TTSS teamed up in January 2008 to initiate an experimental migration project. Eighteen 8-month old free-flying trumpeters from Iowa captive pairs were released in sibling groups at two locations in northwestern Arkansas: Buffalo River National Park in Boxley and Holla Bend National Wildlife Refuge near Dardanelle. The swans were marked with green collars with alphanumeric codes 1P1-0P0 and released with wonderful media publicity and local interest. You can view a video of the swan release on YouTube by going

to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6DL6YYhrx0>. Biologists and volunteers have since been monitoring the young swans to track their movements and survival. Unfortunately, one recent report indicated two of the swans were killed. However, several of the swans have joined up with an unmarked pair of wild swans. Ron Andrews terms the process involved in this migration experiment as “reverse migration imprinting.” It is hoped that the young swans will bond to the Arkansas locations so that they can help to develop new wintering traditions. The public is asked to report swan sightings to TTSS or to the AGFC at www.agfc.com or (877)873-4651. The migration experiment will be continued over the next 2 winters after evaluating techniques and locations. See the 2007 issues of *Trumpetings* for more background.

Navy withdraws proposal for airfield next to national wildlife refuge important to Tundra Swans - The U.S. Navy has decided to withdraw its proposal to build an “Outlying Landing Field” next to the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in northeastern North Carolina. The Pocosin Lakes NWR is a significant wintering location for more than 100,000 Snow Geese, Tundra Swans, and other waterfowl. The National Wildlife Refuge Association (www.refugenet.org) led a coalition of environmental groups, including TTSS, to highlight the threat both to the waterfowl, their wintering habitat, and to the Navy pilots who would use the field for practice.

Michigan birding festival will feature the Trumpeter Swan - Peggy Ridgway, TTSS member and President of the Au Sable Valley Audubon Chapter, Oscoda, Michigan, invites birders to the Tawas Point Birding Festival, May 16-18, 2008, that will highlight the Trumpeter Swan. For more details, visit the Tawas Point Birding Festival website at www.tawasbirdfest.com. A January 2008 chapter field trip counted over 80 trumpeters on the lower Au Sable River in northern Michigan. The river water is kept open by hydroelectric power plants and the swans are feeding on good aquatic vegetation. Michigan Audubon will recognize Consumers Energy for their efforts working with the Michigan DNR, Michigan State University and the U. S. Forest Service to restore the Trumpeter Swan to northern Michigan. Consumers Energy printed a very informative color brochure *The Trumpeter Swans of the Au Sable River*. If you would like a copy, please contact our office or Peggy at rbirdlady@voyager.net.

Trumpeter Swan painting wins Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) art competition - British Columbia artist Heather Soos of Comox Valley was recently named National Artist of the Year for her painting *Winter Whites on Water – Trumpeter Swan*. Each year, hundreds of artists compete to win DUC's prestigious National Art Portfolio. The winning art is made into high quality prints which are then used to raise money across Canada to protect and conserve wetlands that are very important for all waterfowl.

THANK YOU TO ALL FOR GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND MEMBERSHIP DUES! TTSS appreciates extra contributions from the following members during our November 2007 Annual Appeal. These donations are part of the match to the challenge grant generously given to TTSS by Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation, Jackson, Wyoming. Visit www.earthfriends.com to read about their strong commitment to conservation work.

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SPECIAL THANKS to the Wianko Family Donor Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and The Summerlee Foundation, Dallas, Texas, for continuing their strong support of our general operations. General operations funding is what keeps our office open, newsletters coming, and responding to the public possible.

We would also like to thank Marjorie Harper of Monticello, Minnesota, who donated memorial funds in memory of her sister Judy Stokes, also of Monticello. These memorials were designated to the Society's Ray Whitney Memorial Fund that provides feed for the flock of trumpeters wintering on the Mississippi River in Monticello.

WANT TO BE A MEMBER? NEED TO RENEW? GIVE A FRIEND A GIFT?

Student/Retired__\$15 Regular__\$25 Family__\$30 Organization__\$50 Supporting__\$100 Life Member__\$500 [to Endowment Fund]

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for only mailing costs. Please
contact the TTSS office for
more information.

