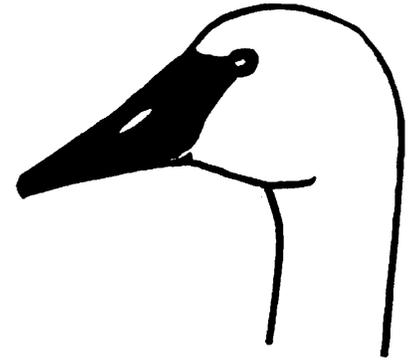


TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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ANNUAL APPEAL AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS - As Year 2000 draws to a close, it is once again time to raise funds for the challenging work of the upcoming year. We prefer to include our Annual Appeal in the fall issue of *Trumpetings* to reduce separate mailings. TTSS greatly appreciates your past support and asks you to once again to take a few moments to make your annual contribution over and above membership dues.

TTSS continues its efforts to build a secure future for Trumpeter Swans. As we have become more involved in habitat and management issues, and in programs to help trumpeters expand from coast to coast, the costs of meeting new challenges increase. In addition to our own programs, we also review and participate in many agency efforts. To remain effective we ask for your help.

During the past year, we substantially increased our efforts to educate the public about trumpeters, their restoration, management challenges, and habitat needs. We strengthened our role as the international clearinghouse for information on Trumpeter Swans and coordination of federal, state, provincial, and private efforts, and participated in most agency meetings where decisions impacting trumpeter management were made. We expanded our efforts to monitor nesting trumpeters in Idaho and correct problems that have reduced the productivity of many nesting territories. We stimulated greater public and agency discussion of RMP management, which helped improve administration of swan hunting and will likely expand the role of the National Wildlife Refuge system in trumpeter restoration. We organized conservation groups and various agencies in Washington State to develop a long-term management plan, acquire key parcels, and implement improvements to restore a major wetland for trumpeters.

In the coming year, our education and coordination efforts will continue, through our website, publication of *Trumpetings*, *North American Swans*, including the *17th Conference Proceedings*, participation in agency meetings, and educating over a dozen conservation groups on issues that impact trumpeter restoration. We will continue to be deeply involved in management planning and actions to reduce the vulnerability of Rocky Mountain trumpeters and to prevent further decline of those that nest in the Yellowstone region.

Other TTSS priorities will be protection of winter habitat for the Pacific Coast Population, our Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Initiative, identification of potential winter sites and techniques to increase migration of the Interior Population, and gaining U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state endorsement of a plan for restoration in the Atlantic Flyway. Developing a Strategic Plan for our future administration and program priorities, our combined 18th Conference and International Swan Symposium in February, and strengthening our endowment, the North American Swan Fund, will also be major activities in 2001.

Your generous response to our Annual Appeal goes a long way in helping to make Trumpeter Swan conservation happen. Please consider giving a gift membership to a friend or relative, sending us the names of potential new members and donors, or making an enduring gift to our North American Swan Fund, where your contribution will forever benefit swan research, habitat protection, and public education.

Thank you for your support of TTSS and your concern for the secure restoration of Trumpeter Swan populations.

Ruth Shea
Executive Director

All contributions from U. S. citizens are tax deductible. As has been done the past several years, we are combining membership renewal with our annual appeal. Your membership label indicates the year through which your membership is current. Please be sure to check the appropriate box so that your donation and/or membership can be properly credited. Thanks!

CALL FOR POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBERS – The next TTSS elections will be held in February 2001. TTSS is looking for suggestions of people who might be interested in serving on the Board, if not next term, perhaps in the future. One does not need to be a swan biologist! Some background in environment, non-profit work, finances or writing would be helpful. And, of course, a love of swans. If you have suggestions, please contact Madeleine at the TTSS office.

4th INTERNATIONAL SWAN SYMPOSIUM AND 18th TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE

– Make your reservations now for this once-in-a-lifetime event! Occurring only once every 10 years, for the first time the International Swan Symposium will be held in the United States, in conjunction with our 18th Conference. The Conference will be February 14-18, 2001, at the Airlie Center, Warrenton, Virginia, and will be preceded by an optional field trip on February 11-13. On Sunday morning, February 18th, TTSS will invite Conference participants to join with the TTSS Board in a roundtable discussion of Trumpeter Swan restoration, management, and research priorities. TTSS members are also invited to attend the winter Board meeting which will follow the discussion and continue to mid-afternoon. Please register for the Conference by November 30. Airlie Center recently mailed registration packets to TTSS members. If you did not receive one or for schedule details and costs, contact Donielle Rininger, Airlie Center, 7078 Airlie Road, Warrenton, VA 20187 (Tel: 540-341-3239; Fax 540-349-4236, Email: es@iapm.org).

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SWAN HUNT DECISION

– To protect Tundra Swan hunters from prosecution if they shoot a Trumpeter Swan, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has authorized hunting of Trumpeter Swans by quota in Utah and Nevada, and with unlimited take in central Montana during Tundra Swan hunting seasons. In response to over 1,100 public comments opposing the proposed general swan season, the USFWS closed additional portions of Utah north of the Bear River Refuge to swan hunting, reduced allocated swan permits in Utah from 2,750 to 2,000, reduced the trumpeter quota in Utah from 15 to 10 and increased the Utah season length by 1 week. It also promised increased leadership of restoration efforts, including greater involvement of National Wildlife Refuges and development of a new plan to achieve RMP restoration objectives.

While the final decision was an improvement compared to the draft proposal, TTSS expressed concerns that it allows continued killing of southward migrating trumpeters on Bear River Refuge, fails to commit to use of this key refuge in range expansion efforts, provides no mandatory mechanism to monitor and enforce the quota, and allows trumpeter harvest to continue without requiring simultaneous actions to reduce the population's vulnerability. We will work to ensure that these concerns are addressed as we participate in development of the promised restoration plan.

PETITION AND LAWSUIT TO PROTECT TRISTATE NESTING POPULATION

– In August, the Fund For Animals and Biodiversity Legal Foundation petitioned to list the Tristate nesting population of Trumpeter Swans under the distinct population segment criteria of the Endangered Species Act. The petition cited its substantial decline during the past decade, its importance as the only breeding population in the lower 48 states to escape extinction, isolation from other nesting populations, and threats to its survival, including severely diminished numbers and distribution, winter vulnerability, habitat loss, lead poisoning, disease, and

increased risk due to legalized hunting. The petition requested that the USFWS recognize that the Tristate trumpeters are a significant and distinct biological population facing severe problems, and not merely lump them with the increasing Canadian trumpeters into one overall "management" population.

On October 25, these groups filed a formal complaint in Federal District Court, alleging that the USFWS violated several federal laws when it authorized the Trumpeter Swan hunt. The complaint asks the court to overturn authorization of the Trumpeter Swan hunt, require the Service to comply with all pertinent laws before authorizing any trumpeter hunt, and rule on the merits of the petition to list the Tristate population as threatened.

TTSS will follow these legal actions very closely. We have repeatedly expressed our strong concerns to USFWS regarding the serious threats facing the Tristate nesting trumpeters, particularly since termination of supplemental feeding, and the need to recognize them as a distinct breeding population in management planning and actions. We will continue to work with the USFWS, wildlife managers, and the public to ensure that the importance and vulnerability of these swans is clearly understood and actions to ensure their survival are effectively implemented.

RESTORATION NOTES

- Sumner Matteson and Pat Manthey of the **Wisconsin** DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources report that Wisconsin's Trumpeter Swan restoration program has had its best year to date. As of October, 43 nesting pairs were identified. Of the 43 nests, 30 (70%) were successful with 109 cygnets produced. There are two broods of eight (one in central Wisconsin, the other on the Bad River Indian Reservation near Ashland) for the first time, all surviving to fledging.

Rolf Kraft, Manager at Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota, completed the 2000 aerial production survey of the **High Plains Flock** in September. Rolf counted 233 adults made up of 115 breeding birds and 118 subadults in flocks. A total of 84 cygnets in 27 broods brought the survey count up to 317 swans.

Hennepin Parks and the **Minnesota** DNR Nongame Program made a preliminary tally of 72 known nesting attempts in 24 Minnesota counties. There was a minimum hatch of 278 cygnets in 68 successful nests. Ground checks by local wildlife staff often followed up reports by the public, including volunteer pilots. Two DNR summer aerial surveys were flown in northern Minnesota. More broods will likely be identified as they arrive at traditional wintering sites, including the Mississippi, Otter Tail and St. Croix Rivers, Hennepin Parks swan refuges and private propagator ponds.

Gerry Beyersbergen, Canadian Wildlife Service, reports good success at **Elk Island National Park, Alberta**. Two pairs of trumpeters fledged cygnets this year. This is the third successful nesting for one pair and the second attempt by the second pair. Four other adult trumpeters were also observed within the Park area.



[September 1999 photo by Madeleine Linck]

IN MEMORIAM – DONNA COMPTON - As many TTSS members know, Donna was The Trumpeter Swan Society's Administrative Assistant for many years. Donna lost her very courageous 7½-year battle with cancer on 14 August 2000. Just weeks earlier, Donna had delighted in viewing several new broods of trumpeters found near her home and the TTSS office. Donna was able to witness the impressive growth of Minnesota's population of trumpeters – a restoration that was successful in large part due to her many years of hard work both as a Hennepin Parks wildlife technician and as Administrative Assistant for the Society. TTSS benefited greatly from Donna's amazing energy and from her championing the welfare of Trumpeter Swans throughout North America. She organized many of the Society's biennial conferences, edited numerous conference *Proceedings* and Society newsletters, including early issues of *North American Swans*. We extend our condolences to her husband Kendall, sons Peter and John, and father, Richard Dahlstrom. Donna had suggested several organizations for memorials, including The Trumpeter Swan Society. For addresses of the other charities, please contact the TTSS office. Donna will be greatly missed, but her strong spirit and love of the majestic trumpeter and of all wildlife will very much live on.

ONTARIO UPDATE – Harry Lumsden recently provided many highlights that indicate Year 2000 appears to be a good year for Trumpeter Swans in Ontario. The total number of free-flying trumpeters between Lake Huron and Lake Ontario is estimated to be 303. Losses since 1 September 1999 were lighter than in the previous year. However, lead poisoning from ingesting lead shot is the

largest cause of death among adult swans in Ontario. In southern Ontario, there were 18 known wild nests with all but two of the nests concentrated between Georgian Bay, Lake Huron, and Lake Ontario. As is typical, a number of pairs disappeared in the spring and are expected to show up with cygnets later in the fall. So far, 14 of the wild pairs were known to be successful, producing 42 cygnets. Fred Zroback, Ministry of Natural Resources in the Kenora District, reported two broods of swans in the English River system north of Kenora. The Kenora area is a vast, largely uninhabited area with thousands of lakes and marshes suitable for breeding swans. Ken Abraham, Ministry of Natural Resources, saw a pair of swans in the interior of the Hudson Bay Lowlands within the tree line and about 900 km north of Wye Marsh. These birds were likely pioneering trumpeters from southern Ontario.

Twenty captive pairs nested out of 24 potential breeders. As of 1 September, 52 captive cygnets survived and will be released close to 2 years-of-age. The Ontario restoration program would not be possible without the dedication of many cooperators and contributors.

TRUMPETER SWAN ULTRALIGHT EXPERIMENT ENTERS THIRD YEAR

– In June, Environmental Studies at Airlie, Virginia, launched the third experiment of its Trumpeter Swan Migration Project. The work this year differs than the earlier two by starting with cygnets that have been initially raised in Alaska by their wild parents. The training program will be more rigorous with the handlers using a uniform to ensure a better following response as well as an easier return to wild behavior.

Eighteen cygnets were captured from six broods located in the delta of the Copper River near Cordova, Alaska. Brooke Pennypacker, team leader and ultralight pilot, and aviculturist Walter Sturgeon worked with the US Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game and US Geological Survey staff during a 4-day effort in the Chugach National Forest between 24 and 27 June.

On 5 October 2000, 14 of the young swans left Warrenton, Virginia, for an 11-hour drive to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's John White Wildlife Management Area east of Buffalo. The birds, divided in to four groups, have all already followed the ultralight in to the air. Historically, trumpeters were believed to have nested in New York State, but the knowledge of traditional migration routes was lost with the extirpation of the swan population. It is hoped that the cygnets will follow ultralight aircraft south to a wintering site at the Wildfowl Trust of North America on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. For more details on this project, see the Project's web site at <http://trumpeterswans.org>

WANT TO BE A MEMBER? NEED TO RENEW? GIFT SUGGESTION?

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

Student/Retired__\$15 Regular__\$25 Family__\$30 Organization__\$50 Supporting__\$100 Life Member__ \$500

Make check/money order payable to TTSS (Canadians please write "in U. S. funds" on personal checks). Mail to:
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WELCOME ALL!

17th CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS AVAILABLE SOON – The Proceedings and Papers from the September 1999 Conference in Idaho Falls, Idaho, will be published in a special issue of *North American Swans*. Conference participants and all **current** TTSS members will be mailed a copy. Due to postage costs, we will not be mailing to members who have let their dues lapse. So check your mailing label!

SWAN SPECIALIST GROUP NEEDS VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS – TTSS member Carl Mitchell (Alaska) has been acting as both overall Nearctic Species Coordinator and Trumpeter Swan Species Coordinator for the Swan Specialist Group since 1989. No longer active in swan research, Carl is looking for someone to take over the duties of communications and information exchange. A Mute Swan Coordinator is also needed. With the 4th International Conference coming up next February, it would be timely for new people working with swans to volunteer. For any questions or if interested, please contact Carl at Carl_Mitchell@nps.gov

ADULT MALE TRUMPETER SWAN WANTED – John Holzman, TTSS member from Cincinnati, Ohio, is looking for a mate for his adult female trumpeter. Please call John (toll free) 1-888-712-7841 or e-mail jph7841@earthlink.net