TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society

12615 Rockford Rd., Plymouth, MN 55441-1248

715-441-1994

www.trumpeterswansociety.org

ttss@trumpeterswansociety.org

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

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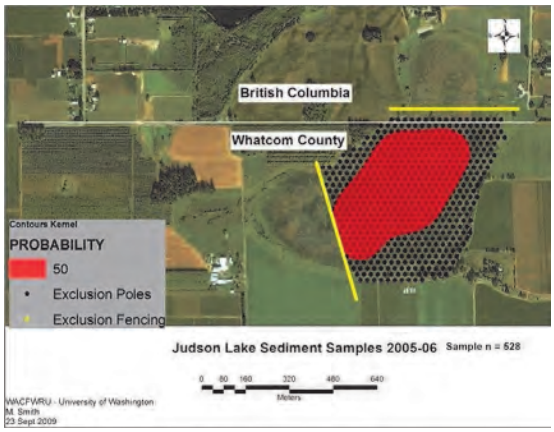
Thank you for helping Trumpeter Swans at Judson Lake



Photos. Left: *A web cam view of the poles in the lead shot "exclusion zone" at Judson Lake which straddles British Columbia and Washington State, about 120 miles north of Seattle. Right: a map of Judson Lake with the fencing (yellow lines) and exclusion pole zone marked. The "50 Probability" refers to the red area where 50% of the lead shot within the lake is expected to occur, based on core sampling, and which the exclusion zone incorporates.* Photo and map courtesy of Michael Smith

The Trumpeter Swans arriving at Judson Lake needed help and you made a difference!

If you receive *Enews*, you learned the Trumpeter Swans that are arriving to winter at Judson Lake urgently need help. Judson Lake is a known source of lead poisoning. An "exclusion zone" of biodegradable poles was installed in 2009, but is now in need of replacement ASAP.

While maintenance has been performed each year in the exclusion area, many of the remaining poles are rotten or broken and the original triangular grid has been lost. Initially, the exclusion zone resulted in a 62% reduction in lead-caused swan deaths compared to the previous 5-year average from 2001-2006.

However, the last two winters have seen an unusually high number of swan deaths in the region of Sumas Prairie, Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish Counties. Is this troubling increase due to the deterioration of the exclusion zone, or is there a new source of lead pellets in the region that swans are ingesting? That's what our members are helping to find out, thanks to your generous donations to "Buy a Pole."

With new poles and a reconstructed exclusion zone, plus monitoring by webcam of swans using the lake, we will learn how successful the repaired exclusion zone is in keeping swans away from the lead "hot zone." By continuing to monitor this winter's swan deaths, we may discover if there may be another source of lead poisoning.

Thanks to your generosity and the generosity of our partners, 2,400 poles at Judson Lake are being replaced before the swans arrive this winter season. If you would like to help the swans at Judson Lake, you can donate online or use the form (page 7) to make a donation to help monitor and maintain the exclusion zone. ♦

Zoos and Trumpeter Swan restorations

Trumpeter Swan family at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (CMZ). The three cygnets hatched earlier this year arrived in Iowa in early October and will be released in spring 2017 as part of the Iowa restoration program. The adult female (no tag) is eight years old and came to CMZ in 2010. The adult male (green tag) was hatched at CMZ in 1997 after being collected as an egg from Alaska. He was released in Ohio and then came back to CMZ in 2007 after being injured. He is nineteen years old. Photo courtesy Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Zoos have played a vital role in bringing the magnificent swan back to its historic range

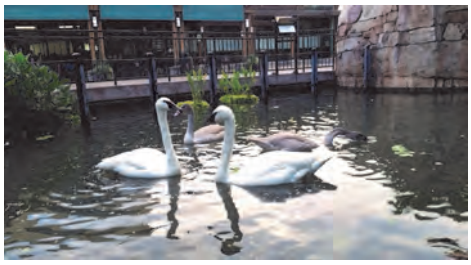
How it began

Carol Hesch, Assistant Curator for the Memphis Zoo, shared with zoo donors the story of the zoo's role in Trumpeter Swan restoration. "12:20 PM, Aug 30, 1966, the Memphis Zoo (Overton Park Zoo) received a telegram from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Monida, Montana, alerting zoo officials that their pair of Trumpeter Swans will be sent via rail car from Monida, Montana to Salt Lake City, and then flown by air to Memphis. This was the start of Trumpeter Swans at the Memphis Zoo."

"The United States Fish and Wildlife loan program was sending Trumpeter Swans to the zoos to increase productivity in captivity of this species. During this program, the first captive swans in captivity in 100 years were produced. Trumpeters were rare at this time, as all swan populations except for the Red Rocks group were virtually extirpated from the continental United States."

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of zoos received Trumpeter Swans from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. However the program was discontinued as the number of swans at the Refuge began to decline.

Zoos help State Restoration Programs



Cygnets on exhibit with their parents at the Kansas City Zoo. Kansas City hatched and raised cygnets this year that will be part of Iowa's Trumpeter Swan restoration program. Photo courtesy of Kansas City Zoo

Zoos played an important role in Trumpeter Swan restoration programs as far back as the 1980's. Through the years, they worked with state wildlife and natural resource departments in several different states across the country.

For example, the Minnesota Zoo, Watertown Zoo, Chicago's Brookfield Zoo and Tulsa Zoo contributed to Minnesota's restoration program. Wisconsin's major zoo partners were the Milwaukee Zoo, with the Brookfield Zoo and the Minnesota Zoo hatching eggs from Alaska and providing cygnets. Michigan's important partners were the Detroit Zoo and Binder Park Zoo.

Our ongoing Oregon Restoration Project has used cygnets from Kansas' Topeka and Lee Richardson Zoos, the Anchorage Alaska Zoo and the Cincinnati Zoo.

Zoos and Trumpeter Swan restorations

Iowa's Restoration Program and the role of zoos

In the last twenty years Iowa's restoration program has released hundreds of swans from at least 17 zoos. Dave Hoffman, of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (and Vice President of The Trumpeter Swan Society) estimates that at least a quarter of the birds released in Iowa have come from zoos.

In 2002, Carol Hesch, Assistant Curator at the Memphis Zoo, handed over a cygnet hatched and raised at the Memphis Zoo to the Iowa DNR for release. To date, Memphis Zoo has sent an incredible 44 Trumpeter cygnets to the Iowa DNR to be part of the restoration program. Photo courtesy of the Memphis Zoo

This year four zoos are participating in Iowa's Trumpeter Swan restoration program. Kansas City Zoo, Green Bay Wisconsin's NEW Zoo, Maryland Zoo and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo will be contributing fifteen cygnets for release into Iowa in 2017. This will be the first time Maryland Zoo and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo work with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Both are excited to be part of this new partnership.

The zoos have been working closely with Dave Hoffman to coordinate the transfers of swans into Iowa. Dave has been integral in making the process easy and efficient as zoos have different logistical and administrative needs.

Rachel Peters, one of the Trumpeter Swan keepers at the Kansas City Zoo (KCZ), is super excited to be releasing cygnets hatched and raised at KCZ at the temporary holding facility in Iowa. They are set to be released into the wild in Iowa in spring of 2017. Photo courtesy of Kansas City Zoo

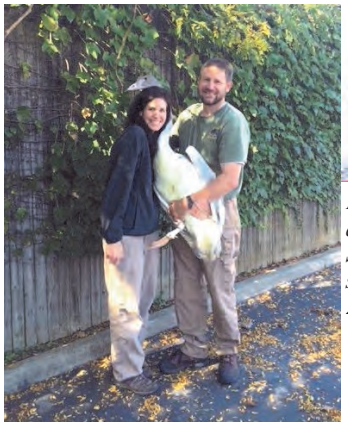
As a part of these restoration efforts, zoos are able to help this species in the wild and connect zoo guests with conservation initiatives right here in North America. This creates a very powerful personal connection for people that will fuel future conservation action.

Tiffany Mayo, from Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in Ohio, is the new Trumpeter Swan Species Survival Program Coordinator and Studbook Keeper for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Cleveland Metroparks Zoo played a major role in the Ohio Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program.

With these programs, zoos strive to create sustainable captive populations and work to bolster wild populations. As Tiffany works more with the program, she hopes to continue to help coordinate zoo participation in Trumpeter Swan restoration, expand Trumpeter Swan populations within the AZA and educate people on the importance of zoos supporting these programs. ♦

Above: *Animal keepers Tiffany Mayo and Maria Clapp put a temporary leg band identifier on one of the Trumpeter Swan cygnets at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (CMZ). CMZ sent three cygnets to Iowa this fall to be released in spring 2017 as part of Iowa's restoration program.*

Our thanks to Tiffany Mayo for her major contributions to this article and the photos. Tiffany recently become a TTSS member!



Right: *In early October, 2016, Dave Hoffman of the Iowa DNR received the three cygnets from CMZ. The cygnets will spend the winter in Iowa and be released in the spring.* Photos right: courtesy of Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Oregon Restoration Project: progress and setbacks

Two steps forward, one step back

Martin St. Louis of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, prepares to release one of the Sunriver Nature Center cygnets in September, 2016. This cygnet, with green collar 3@4, continues to thrive at Summer Lake.
Photos by Simon Wray.

Release of the two Sunriver Nature Center cygnets at Summer Lake in September, 2016. Cygnet 3@3 (left) was shot and killed a few weeks later in mid-October, 2016

While restoration of Trumpeter Swans to Oregon began in 1938 at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, the Refuge's swan population has been in decline since the late 1980s. Last year the Refuge had one nesting pair.

In 2009 we began a project to introduce Trumpeter Swans back to Oregon's Summer Lake. Summer Lake has both ideal nesting and wintering habitat for Trumpeter Swans. The project's goal is to restore a viable breeding population of Trumpeter Swans to eastern Oregon. It is a partnership between The Trumpeter Swan Society, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This project has been supported partially by agency funding and additionally by grants to TTSS from Oregon Wild, Mountaineers, and Charlotte Martin foundations, East Cascades Audubon Society, plus private donations from our members.

Between September 2009 – September 2016, a total of 107 young swans have been released as Summer Lake. There is about a 50% mortality rate during their first year due to predation, winter conditions, powerline collisions, lead poisoning, and now, illegal shooting. Plans are to continue releases at Summer Lake until there are at least 15 wild breeding pairs in Oregon. As the released swans begin to reach breeding age, we expect several pairs to begin nesting next year.

Two years ago, in 2014, we celebrated the first pair that successfully nested and produced one cygnet at Summer Lake. This wild-born cygnet was nicknamed Hope. Unfortunately, the female of the pair did not survive the winter of 2014-2015 and her mate did not nest in 2015.

Oregon Restoration Project: progress and setbacks

This year was a much better year for nesting. In 2016, three new pairs of released swans nested and hatched cygnets. A pair that remained at Summer Lake produced 4 cygnets that survived to fledge, as did another pair on private land a few miles south. A third pair, on a private ranch along the Crooked River in Crook County (about 100 miles north), hatched one cygnet but lost it. Happily, the one remaining pair at Malheur Refuge fledged 2 cygnets this year, for a total of 10 wild-produced young – which we hope is the beginning of a growing swan flock!

This fall, we released 13 cygnets at Summer Lake: 5 from Wyoming Wetlands Society (purchased by TTSS), 2 from the Cincinnati Zoo which were raised by the Whatcom Humane Society, 4 from the Alaska Zoo, and 2 from Sunriver Nature Center. The parents of the two cygnets from Sunriver are the famous pair Sir Charles (Chuck) and Grace whose story has been reported in previous *Enewsletters*. The cygnets were released in September just days before they were old enough to make their first flights.

Photos. Clockwise.
Right: *In late September, two year old "Hope" (white bird) led six of the newly released cygnets around Summer Lake Wildlife Area marshes. The cygnets include the two from Sunriver Nature Center*. Photo by Martin St. Louis.

Right, lower: *A metal plate and pins are inserted to align broken wing bones in Hope, the two year old wild Trumpeter Swan.*

Left, below: *Hope begins convalescence and physical therapy at Native Bird Care.* Photos by Elise Wolf, Director of Native Bird Care. www.nativebirdcare.org

A few days after release, the 2014 female cygnet, Hope, now a 2-year old, "adopted" the Sunriver and Wyoming cygnets. Summer Lake Wildlife Area Manager Martin St. Louis photographed her leading them around the marsh as a mother swan would.

Sad News

Tragically, in mid-October, following the opening of waterfowl season, a hunter came to the check station at Summer Lake and reported that he had shot a swan. It turns out that he had shot 2 swans, killing one of the Sunriver cygnets and severely wounding its adopted mom, Hope. Hope was taken to a veterinarian in Sisters, Oregon and had her broken wing pinned. She will need about six weeks to heal. She is at a wildlife rehabilitation center, Native Bird Care, in Oregon. We are hopeful that we will be able to return this landmark bird back to the wilds of Oregon soon. Oregon State Police are investigating the incident which appears to be a case of mistaken identity and not a malicious shooting. We will let you know if this special bird recovers. ⬧

TTSS partners to create swan nesting habitat

Above left: *The Flat Ranch restoration project includes creation of seasonally flooded wetlands in this area of mesic grasslands, emergent wetland and willow riparian habitat.*
Above right: *The Flat Ranch Preserve, north of Idaho Falls, encompasses more than 1600 acres and is located on Henry's Lake Flat. It is a working cattle ranch where conservation and sustainable practices help promote healthy grasslands.*
Right: *One of the water structures to augment ground water with water from an existing irrigation ditch in the proposed new wetland areas to create Trumpeter Swan habitat*. Photos by Margaret Smith

Flat Ranch Project in Idaho to create Trumpeter Swan habitat

The Upper Henry's Fork basin, located in eastern Idaho near the western boundary of Yellowstone National Park, is a cornerstone of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Henry's Lake Flats (HLF) is a priority landscape for conservation. Flat Ranch, a Nature Conservancy property on the Henry's Lake Flats, is a working ranch and a wildlife haven, learning and research center, and community gathering place. The Ranch has an extraordinary concentration of breeding and foraging birds. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has designated this landscape as an Important Bird Area. While Trumpeter Swans once actively nested on HLF, it is now absent from the landscape. The Trumpeter Swan Society wants to help change that.

TTSS is a partner with The Nature Conservancy, IDFG, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and the Intermountain West Joint Venture in this project. The proposed project will expand habitat diversity and ecological function by creating several seasonally flooded wetlands across 15 to 20 acres dominated by submerged aquatic plants. Right now the landscape is dominated by mesic grasslands, emergent wetland and willow riparian habitat. The project will take several years to complete.

Just south of HLF, in Island Park, is one of the most productive segments of the Idaho Trumpeter Swan breeding population. Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, established to help safeguard Trumpeter Swans in 1935, is about 40 miles to the west.

If you build it, will they come? We will let you know! ♦

"Hope for the future and a sense of peace"

"About four years ago, I was going through a very difficult time. There is a very lovely cemetery where my grandmother and aunts and uncles are buried. I had not been to the cemetery in a number of years but the need to go there was great. I went to the grave sites and then got into my car to leave. At the other end of the cemetery is a pond and I suddenly was drawn to go there.

I drove to the pond. I parked my car and sat on a bench, alternately watching two beautiful trumpeter swans in the water and crying.

I was sitting near the swans' feeding station and they came out of the water to eat. I sat quietly and watched. When the first swan was finished eating, she started over in my direction and came close to me, first on one side of the bench and then the other. I could've reached out and touched her. She was so close, but I was afraid because I didn't know how she would react.

For me, it was a spiritual encounter. I felt so incredibly blessed that I had this encounter with the swan. The swans gave me hope for the future and a sense of peace. I did not feel it was a random encounter. In fact, it took many months of weekly visits for the swan to come close to me again." ~Marilyn Abato

Photo by Marilyn Abato, TTSS member since 2011

Do you have a special encounter or experience with swans that you would like to share? Please email ttss@trumpeterswansociety.org

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In This Issue:

- How you helped the swans at Judson Lake
- Zoos and Trumpeter Swan restorations
- Oregon Restoration Project: Progress and setbacks
- TTSS partners to create new swan nesting habitat in Idaho
- "Hope for the future and a sense of peace"

For all you do for Trumpeter Swans, thank you!

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

Photo courtesy of Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Photo by Margaret Smith

Photo by Simon Wray, Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Look inside for these stories! How zoos have helped in the restoration of Trumpeter Swans; Idaho's Flat Ranch Preserve project is creating Trumpeter Swan habitat; Oregon Restoration Project loses a cygnet to a shooting.

TRUMPETINGS EDITORS
John Cornely, Gary Ivey, Carey Smith, Margaret Smith

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