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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24th Swan Conference

Photos. Left: *Beautiful British Columbia was on display during the Thursday field trip at the 24th Swan Conference. Middle: There were 29 presentations at the November 16-18, 2016 conference. Right: The conference presentations and Gala Banquet were held at the Quw'utsun' Cultural and Conference Centre in Duncan, British Columbia. Duncan is known as the "City of Totems."*
Photo center: Mary Nelson, other photos Margaret Smith

24th Swan Conference a success!

Swan biologists and enthusiasts from across North America participated in the 24th Swan conference. The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS) has hosted conferences to share the latest in swan research since 1969. The 24th Swan Conference, hosted by TTSS and Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, was held in Duncan, British Columbia. The theme of the three day conference was "Swans and Agriculture. Working Together."

The preliminary results of the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey were presented by Deborah Groves. The report is now available on TTSS' website. A number of presentations included survey methods and results from various parts of North America. Other presentations shared how communities across North America engaged in swan and wetland conservation through celebrations, educational programs, and many kinds of public outreach. History and updates about Trumpeter Swan restoration and management brought participants up to date on programs in Alaska, Iowa, Idaho, Montana, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Ontario, and Washington.

24th Swan Conference (cont.)

Graeme Fowler (left) was the field trip leader. A tour of Somenos Marsh, a Globally Important Bird Area, was the final stop on the all day field trip

Six farms were toured on the field trip. Lure crops, assessing crop damage, and the latest in dairy farm improvements were showcased

The Tzinquaw dancers enthralled the Banquet attendees with their rich cultural heritage

Former TTSS Board member, Dale Becker (right) received an appreciation award from Board President, Carey Smith (left).
Photos by Margaret Smith and Gary Ivey

Swan conservation needs and issues included updates about lead across North America and flock isolation and lack of connectivity in the Rocky Mountain Population. Audubon made a presentation about a project monitoring climate change's impact on birds.

Another highlight was a film clip from TTSS's film project "Return of the Trumpeter Swan" by Steve Harryman.

In addition to the daytime presentations, there was a three hour evening panel discussion focusing on wildlife and farming issues. The panel discussion was filmed by Shaw Cable and shown in several British Columbia communities due to high viewer interest.

An all-day field trip, including tours of six local farms, highlighted on-the-ground issues farmers face from wildlife damage (waterfowl and mammal), programs and practices to address wildlife damage issues, and a chance to learn from individual farmers their successes and challenges as dairy farmers. A tour of Somenos Marsh gave participants a chance to explore and enjoy this Globally Important Bird Area.

A Gala Banquet event included a performance by the Tzinquaw dancers sharing the Cowichan people's culture, a wonderful silent and live auction, and a chance to meet the Duncan community. ⬨

Special thanks to our 24th Swan Conference Sponsors

BC Nature
Central Flyway Council
The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation
Cowichan Valley Naturalists' Society
Cowichan Valley Regional District
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Intermountain West Joint Venture
The Dr. Jerome Katchin Waterfowl Foundation
Natural Insect Control
Northwest Swan Conservation Association
Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture
Pacific Flyway Council
Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society
The Trumpeter Swan Society
Thunderbird Motel

2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey

2015 Rangewide Survey Summary

(you can download the entire report from our website. http://www.trumpeterswansociety.org/continent-wide.html)

The results are in! Our thanks to Deborah Groves of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for her leadership in this continent wide project.

The 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey reported just over 63,000 white swans (non cygnets) in North America. The Rocky Mountain and Interior Populations experienced large gains, while the Pacific Coast Population showed just a slight increase since 2010. The Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) of 11,721 includes 10,957 in the Canadian provinces, while the U.S. flocks numbered only 764 white swans.

Here is an excerpt from the 24th Swan Conference abstract about the Survey (with population estimates revised to include the final results):

"The North American Trumpeter Swan Survey has been conducted approximately every five years since 1968 to monitor the status of Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) in North America. The 2015 survey, like previous surveys, was a cooperative effort of federal, state, and provincial agencies and private individuals across Canada and the northern United States. The primary survey objective in 2015 was to estimate the abundance of white swans (adults and subadults) in North America and within the three recognized Trumpeter Swan populations: Pacific Coast (PCP), Rocky Mountain (RMP), and Interior (IP)... Methods varied among regions and in some regions changed substantially from prior years, thus caution is warranted when comparing results."

"The continental estimate of white swan abundance was 63,016, which was the highest estimate since the surveys began in 1968. White swan estimates for the PCP, RMP, and IP were 24,240, 11,721, and 27,055, respectively, all record-high estimates as well. The PCP, RMP, and IP comprised 38%, 19%, and 43% of the continental white swan population, respectively..." ◆

Photo by Richard Sonnen

The Pacific Northwest wintering Trumpeter Swans

It is through your support we continue our partnerships to monitor swan deaths and swan counts in northwest Washington State and Sumas Prairie in British Columbia.

This past winter season (November 2016 to March 2017), 279 sick or dead swans have been reported primarily from Skagit County and Whatcom Counties, followed by Snohomish County, with low numbers from King and Clallam Counties in Washington and the Sumas Prairie in British Columbia. Cause of death still needs to be confirmed, but the majority of deaths are suspected to be powerline collision and/or lead poisoning.

Judson Lake, straddling British Columbia and Washington, was largely frozen through most of the winter and there were no swans found in the renovated exclusion zone of poles in the lead "hot zone." Your donations helped fund this successful renovation. Thank you! ◆

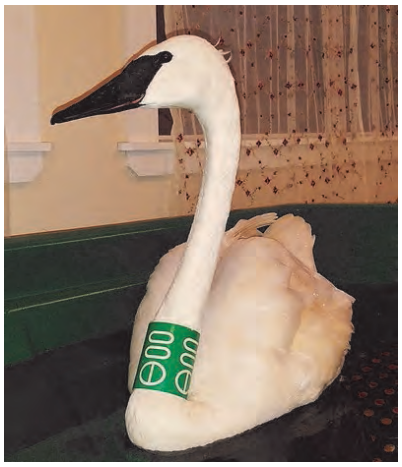
Oregon Restoration Project: update on injured swan

Summer Lake's first wild-hatched cygnet succumbs to gunshot injury

In the December 2016 *Trumpetings*, we told you about the two Trumpeter Swans shot in October at Summer Lake, Oregon. One, a cygnet from Sunriver Nature Center, had been released a few weeks earlier as part of the Oregon Restoration Project. She was killed. The other swan, a two year old and the first cygnet hatched in the wild at Summer Lake, suffered a wing injury. She had her wing bones pinned and we had hopes of her recovery.

Sadly, she died in early February during a second surgery to remove her wing which never fully healed. If she had recovered, we planned to mate her with another male swan that is also flightless.

Our thanks to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) for their commitment to her rehabilitation and to Native Bird Care in Sisters, Oregon for their care of this special bird. The Oregon Restoration Project is a partnership between TTSS, ODFW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. ◆



After being shot in October, 2016, "Hope" spent months in rehabilitation at Native Bird Care in Sisters, Oregon, to heal her injured wing. Photo by Elise Wolf, Native Bird Care

Iowa rolls out the red carpet for swan enthusiasts

Several hundred people attended Iowa's second Des Moines Swan Soiree in late January. The weekend event included a Friday evening presentation at Blank Park Zoo, an all-day event at Walnut Woods State Park, and swan viewing at the Dale Maffitt Reservoir.

A live Trumpeter Swan was the hit of the Saturday events. Hundreds of people of all ages had a chance to get up-close and personal with the swan. Americorps volunteers led kid activities and crafts including creating homemade swans using pine cones, feathers, and pipe cleaners. Spotting scopes were set up at the Dale Maffitt Reservoir during the day for easy swan viewing. Volunteers were on hand to answer questions. Thanks to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for organizing the event. We were proud to be a sponsor and presenter. ◆

Photos by Margaret Smith

Trumpeter Watch update

Your volunteer effort is making a difference!

History continues to be made as Trumpeter Swans move into new areas!

Arizona
The Arizona Birding Committee confirmed a rare Trumpeter Swan sighting by Jim Ripley in early January 2017. Lyndie Warner spotted the lone Trumpeter on January 17 in a flooded agricultural field south of I-10 near Buckley. It was with hundreds of White-faced Ibis, Long-billed Curlews, Kildeer, Black-necked Stilts and Greater Yellow-legs. She shared the photo of this exciting sighting.

Maryland
Maryland continues to have occasional sightings of Trumpeter Swans. A new report with photos came into Trumpeter Watch from Hugh Vandervoort. Over the past few years, a Trumpeter Swan pair was seen at Lake Artemesia in College Park, Maryland. One of the pair disappeared, while the other remains. Hugh reports the lone swan winters in the area, leaves in the spring, then returns in the fall.

North Carolina
Jay Wherley shared photos with us of a rare sighting of a Trumpeter Swan. The swan was seen in late December and January on the French Broad River near Ledges Park, about ten miles north of downtown Asheville. It is the first confirmed sighting of a Trumpeter in this area, according to the Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society in Asheville.

Vermont
We received reports from Vermont birders about a Trumpeter Swan seen near Brandon. This is only the second recorded sighting of a Trumpeter Swan in Vermont. It had no collar or wing tag. The bird was seen off Route 73 in the Otter Creek floodwaters.

Keep those observations coming, folks! ♦

Above: *The Arizona Bird Committee confirmed a Trumpeter Swan sighting in Arizona, near Buckley.* Photo by Lyndie Warner

Above: This Trumpeter Swan has been seen near College Park, Maryland for the past several years. It spends the winter. Its mate was last seen a couple years ago. Photo by Hugh Vandervoort

Several people spotted this Trumpeter Swan near Ledges Park in North Carolina and reported it to TTSS. Photo by Jay Wherley

Learning more about Trumpeter Swans

You are helping to expand knowledge about Trumpeter Swans

Over the years, many of our members donated to our **North American Swan Fund** (NASF). The Fund was set up to fund research, education, and habitat protection and improvement for the benefit of Trumpeter Swans. Recently, it was used to help fund the 2015 North American Trumpeter Swan Survey (page 3), specifically for Minnesota's survey.

Two new research projects will be funded this year. University of Nebraska master's student Heather Johnson is studying the breeding success of the High Plains Flock (HPF) to provide a baseline for swan managers. This is a first time look at the reproductive success of the HPF since their reintroduction in the 1960s at LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge in South Dakota.

A second project is planned for this fall. At least six Iowa cygnets will be captured and collared with solar and battery-powered GPS units to track year round movements of Iowa swans, provide Iowa State University ornithology students an experience in field techniques, and educate the public about Trumpeter Swans through a website with live updates. ♦

If you'd like to donate to the NASF to fund worthwhile projects like these, use page 7, or mail a check, payable to TTSS, memo: NASF

Trumpeter Swans in the Sandhills of Nebraska are being monitored for breeding success. Photo © Laura McWha

This fall, some Iowa swans will receive GPS collars to track their movements. Photo by Bill Scheurman

"Make the Pledge" to keep wildlife safe

On January 19, 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a "Director's Order" to ban lead ammunition and lead fishing tackle on Service lands. On March 2, 2017, it was revoked by the new Secretary of the Interior. TTSS has long been an advocate to "Get the Lead Out."

Regardless of what happens at the federal level, you can personally make a difference to wildlife health. Many people are aware of lead poisoning to wildlife from traditional toxic ammunition. Far fewer are aware of lead poisoning from lead sinkers and jigs lost by fishermen in rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands. We want to change that. We need your help.

Whether ingested lead is from ammunition or from fishing tackle, the effect is the same on waterfowl, loons, raptors, and other wildlife. Muscle paralysis, starvation, neurological damage, and eventual death. It is prolonged, preventable, and unnecessary suffering and death.

"Make the Pledge" to keep wildlife safe (cont.)

4" x 4" adhesive, waterproof decal.
Above: Please use non-toxic fishing tackle

We are partnering with Loon Watch, Friends of Crex Meadows, and the Raptor Education Group to encourage a switch to nontoxic fishing tackle. Help get the word out. Choose a free decal to show your support.

Fishing openers are just around the corner. Let's make this year's fishing season safer for wildlife.

Make the Pledge. Keep wildlife safe. Let others know that lead kills wildlife.

Sign the pledge. Choose your FREE decal (limit one/family*)

- ⬭ Keep Wildlife Safe– Please use non-toxic fishing tackle
- ⬭ Lead Kills– Please use non-toxic fishing tackle
- ⬭ Keep Wildlife Safe– I pledged to use non-toxic fishing tackle
- ⬭ Lead Kills– I pledged to use non-toxic fishing tackle.

Name _____
Note: please fill in name/address in section below
You will also receive a FREE list of online non-toxic fishing tackle suppliers. It will be sent to you by email. Share the list with your friends and local retail fishing suppliers.
Your email_____
**Additional decals are $5/each.*

4" x 4" adhesive, waterproof decal.
Above: I pledged to use non-toxic fishing tackle

☐ $_____ Area of Greatest Need

☐ $_____ North American Swan Fund

☐ $_____ "Make the Pledge" Project

☐ $_____ Additional Decals ($5/each)

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OR **make your donation or purchase securely online at www.trumpeterswansociety.org**

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For all you do for Trumpeter Swans, thank you!

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

Enjoying Somenos Marsh during the 24th Swan Conference field trip

"Nonstop swan charm" at Iowa's Swan Soiree

Arizona had a rare Trumpeter Swan sighting

Look inside for these stories! 24th Swan Conference was a wonderful learning experience; see how Iowa rolls out the red carpet for swan enthusiasts; Trumpeter Watch has exciting new swan sightings. Photos left and center by Margaret Smith, right by Lyndie M. Warner

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, David Hoffman, Gary Ivey, Margaret Smith

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