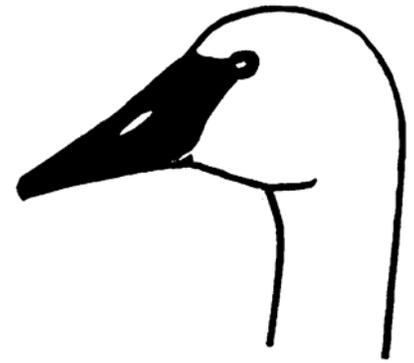




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
12615 County Road 9 – Suite 100
Plymouth, Minnesota 55441-1248
763-694-7851; ttss@threeriversparkdistrict.org
www.trumpeterswansociety.org.



Vol. XVIII. No. 2

July 2008

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - We had an outstanding 21st Conference in April! More details are noted below, but I want to personally thank everyone who helped make our April conference in the Yukon Territory such a success. Also, thank you to the members who returned ballots for the Board election and filled out questionnaires.

The Board and the staff welcome our newest Director, Jerry Serie of Easton, Maryland. Jerry was the Atlantic Flyway Representative of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service when he retired in 2007. Jerry will be the Society's lead for swan conservation issues in the Atlantic Flyway and our delegate to the Bird Conservation Alliance.

Lead poisoning of swans and California Condors were addressed by papers at the Conference. You will find a note below on a conference held in May on ingestion of spent lead ammunition. Although we have known that lead in any form is highly toxic to wildlife and humans for decades, the threat is even more serious than we thought. In light of the evidence that lead continues to be a very serious problem, the TTSS Board unanimously passed the following Motion at its meeting on 20 April:

TTSS recognizes that lead is a potent toxic substance and hazardous to wildlife and human health when scattered into our environment.

Trumpeter Swans are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning. In Washington State alone, over 2,500 trumpeters have needlessly suffered and died in recent years after swallowing lead as they fed in fields and wetlands.

TTSS urges the rapid end to the use of this toxic substance in all hunting, other shooting activities, and fishing and conversion to the use of alternative non-toxic substances.

We urge all who value wildlife to unite in this effort to end this needless poisoning.

On another note, as you can tell by our new member list in each *Trumpetings*, TTSS is gradually growing. We are inching toward 500 members; still quite small for a continent-wide organization. **However, if each member had taken seriously my call to action 1 year ago, we would have over 1,000 members now.** As you know, economic times are tough and that always concerns

nonprofit organizations like ours. Please help us with outreach to prospective members and consider gift memberships to family and friends.

TTSS has been going through a financial processes review and will receive recommendations soon. We are developing an Administrative and Policy Handbook to help guide our organization into the future. We are facing some new challenges over the next year or 2 that we will discuss in future issues of *Trumpetings*.

I hope your summer is going very well. I was excited to see a number of nesting trumpeters on a recent trip to western Minnesota, where they are doing very well. Contact me any time at (303) 933-9861 or johncornely@msn.com. Mornings are best.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

John Cornely

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS IN WHITEHORSE, YUKON TERRITORY - More than 80 swan enthusiasts and biologists gathered for 2 days of presentations and 1 day of field excursions to learn about continent-wide conservation issues facing Trumpeter Swans. Attendees came from as far away as Ontario, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Maryland to hear presentations on nesting surveys in Alaska, the role of wildlife in the culture of First Nations, migration experiments in the Midwest, challenges on wintering grounds in British Columbia, range expansion in the Rocky Mountains and many other topics.

Sincere thanks to Canadian Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Environment Yukon for hosting the Conference. The Honorable Dennis Fentie, Premier of the Yukon Territory, welcomed conference participants to "Trumpeter Swan Central" North of the 60th Parallel and assured us that the Government of Yukon strongly recognizes the importance of protecting the swans and their habitats. He thanked the Society for its vision and efforts to protect the Trumpeter Swan. Bev Buckway, Mayor of Whitehorse, also warmly welcomed the swan enthusiasts to the capital of the Yukon.

It was wonderful for those of us from the Lower 48 to see swans in such pristine wilderness and to learn about swans from the First Nations' perspective. Hearty thanks to Jim Hawkings and the local Whitehorse organizing committee of Bruce Bennett, Nancy Hughes, Patricia

Joe, Erin Spiewak, and Sara Nielsen. The Yukon Conservation Society is also celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and we thank them for their participation and sponsorship.

Please visit our website to see the complete list of titles and authors and the Conference co-sponsors that made the meeting such a success. Send an e-mail or note and we would be happy to mail you a program.

Weather at times was more like winter than spring, but the staff of Yukon's annual Celebration of Swans and our First Nations guides were able to show us hundreds of staging Trumpeter Swans and other waterfowl at Carcross, Tagish River, and at Swan Haven Interpretation Center on M'Clintock Bay. We learned a great deal about wildlife history and First Nations culture.

Following the Saturday night banquet and awards ceremony, long time TTSS member and former Executive Secretary/Treasurer Dave Weaver highlighted the history, prominent personalities, and issues of TTSS spanning its 4 decades of advocacy on behalf of the Trumpeter Swan from its founding in 1968.

A Conference Proceedings will be published, the format to be determined shortly.

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS

Ingestion of Spent Lead Ammunition: Implications for Wildlife and Humans conference – May 2008 -

This international conference was sponsored by The Peregrine Fund (www.peregrinefund.org) to bring together scientists, biologists, and human health care workers from around the world to address the issue of lead toxicity from lead shot and bullets. I attended the conference representing TTSS because of our involvement with lead shot toxicity issues and swans. This was probably the best conference I have ever attended and wished more people would have attended.

The information presented was so compelling on the medical, biological, and ecological fronts that it would be difficult for anybody to leave the conference and conclude that we should continue to use lead ammunition. The presentations were excellent with a diversity of topics related to the use of lead ammunition including historical background, human health, ballistics, economics, geology, and wildlife. A diverse audience attended from a variety of disciplines including medical, ecology, industry, geology, biology and more. At least seven countries and more than 20 states sent representatives including local, state and federal agencies.

The human health issue of consumption of game and toxic contamination from lead at shooting ranges were identified as serious issues by several presenters and are likely to come to the forefront quickly as concerns in the medical and ecological communities. The collective emphasis at the meeting was that this is not an "anti-hunting" issue, rather an "anti-lead" issue, and many of the presenters were hunters, all of whom have switched to steel or other non-toxic pellets and copper bullets after investigating the consequences to wildlife and human health. Presentations from industry confirmed that suitable alternative ammunition has been developed for all ammunition types, but suppliers are likely to increase their stocks only when legislation requiring the use of alternative ammunition provides the assurance of a steady market for new ammo types.

As a result of this meeting, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will be taking some action on this issue. TTSS will be working to educate more agency staff and political leaders to help bring changes that protect both wildlife and humans.

You can access the conference proceedings conference via the following website:

www.peregrinefund.org:443/lead_conference/2008PbConf_Proceedings.htm

Martha Jordan

Pacific Coast Population Trumpeter Swan Management Plan available - The Pacific Flyway Council has finalized a new revision of the PCP plan. If you are interested in a copy please contact John Cornely at (303) 933-9861 or johncornely@msn.com.



Lunch at Marsh Lake Community Center.
Photo by Bev Kingdon.



Field trip to Carcross, Yukon Territory.

Photo by Bruce Bennett. [Editors' note: on line, you can see the snow-capped mountains contrasting with a brilliant blue sky.]

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) draft available for public comment - Kenai NWR in Alaska is a significant nesting area for Trumpeter Swans. The Refuge is in the process of revising their CCP which will guide management for the next 15 years. The draft plan may be viewed at: <http://www.r7.fws.gov/nwr/planning/plans.htm>.

Comments are due by 1 September 2008 and may be mailed, e-mailed, or provided orally to: Rob Campellone, U.S. FWS, 1101 E. Tudor Road, MS-231, Anchorage, AK 99503; E-mail: fw7_kenai_planning@fws.gov; Phone: (907) 786-3982

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION NEWS

Idaho nesting season worst in 30+years - Ruth Shea reports that the total number of nests in Idaho this year (8-10) is only about 40% of normal. As of July 3, 2008, several pairs were still incubating and no cygnets had been observed. Winter was colder than in many recent years and spring was unusually cold with very late ice-out and delayed plant development. It is likely that many swans were unable to regain adequate body condition by May and simply failed to initiate nesting. The few pairs that nested began unusually late. At this time, there is no evidence of unusual winter mortality. The September swan survey will hopefully clarify whether the resident Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan population suffered significant losses last winter or simply is having a very poor nesting season.

2008 Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) Midwinter Count - For the 2nd consecutive winter, the midwinter interagency survey of the Tri-state Area of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming found a decline in total trumpeters. Preliminary data from US Fish and Wildlife Service show a total of 4,592 swans, similar to the 4,584 found in winter 2004, but down 16% from the record 5,484 found in winter 2006.

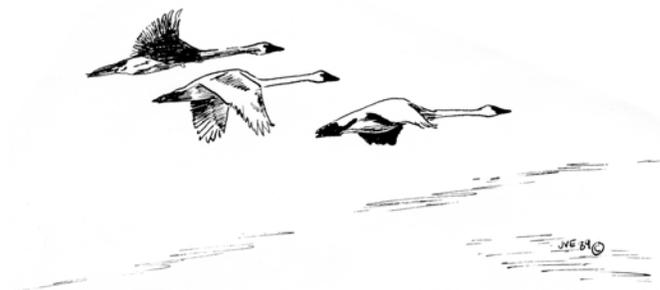
Of the total, 3,261 swans were located within the core Tri-state area, while another 1,331 swans were found at lower elevation expansion sites south of Idaho Falls, Idaho, and Jackson Hole, Wyoming. This is good news - dispersal of wintering swans to less severe expansion sites has been the goal of RMP hazing and translocation efforts for the past 20 years. The decline in the past 2 years has not been accompanied by any evidence of high mortality and could be the result of the dispersal of swans out of the survey area. Only time will tell.

Ruth Shea, RMP Working Group Chair

Wyoming Wetland Society (WWS) obtains eggs from British Columbia - According to Drew Reed, Executive Director of WWS, 59 of 60 Trumpeter Swan eggs collected near Fort St. John and Fort Nelson, British Columbia, survived the trip to Wyoming. This is the 2nd year of a 3-year Pacific Flyway Council approved project to collect eggs and hatch cygnets destined to enhance both numbers and genetic diversity of trumpeters in the Rocky Mountain Population in the United States. When

the swans are yearlings, most of them will be released at sites such as the Flathead Indian Reservation and the Blackfoot Valley, Montana; Fort Hall Indian Reservation, Idaho, and Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area, Oregon. These areas are Trumpeter Swan release sites that have been approved by the Pacific Flyway Council.

Rocky Mountain Population Trumpeter Swan Management Plan - The revised RMP Plan is expected to be approved by the Pacific Flyway Council this month at the summer meeting in Spokane, Washington. TTSS played a major role in coordinating discussions, soliciting comments and editing the revision. Watch for more information in the next issue of *Trumpetings*.



INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS

Trumpeter Swan Iowa to Arkansas migration experiment update - Previous issues of *Trumpetings* have given background regarding Iowa DNR, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC) the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gorgas Science Foundation and TTSS teaming 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. Two of the swans were killed soon after release, perhaps by coyotes. The remaining swans are now more than a year old and several were recently spotted exploring in Madison County, Arkansas. Most of the Holla Bend-released swans had found the Boxley released swans - from over 100 miles away! Currently, it is not known if the swans are still in Arkansas or if they have moved north as has been hoped. Hopefully, the yearling 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 the AGFC at www.agfc.com or (877)873-4651 or to TTSS. The migration experiment will continue over the next 2 winters.

Information wanted on Zoo-raised Trumpeter Swans released to the wild - Erin Hennessy, a zookeeper at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, is currently working on a graduate school project entitled, "An Evaluation of Contributions Made by AZA Accredited Institutions to the Midwest's Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program". Erin is hoping swan biologists can help by providing swan

data or directing her to other sources. This data should be of great value to the Midwest's trumpeter restoration programs, to The Trumpeter Swan Society and to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Erin has been working closely with Dave Hoffman and Ron Andrews of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Erin is interested in data from swans that originated from AZA accredited institutions and is focusing on swans from Iowa, Wisconsin, Ohio, Minnesota, and Michigan.

The following information would be helpful: banding records (including those that died before release), release information, survivorship, nesting information (cygnet hatching, survival), sightings and re-sightings. Any observations that indicate success or failure and examples of individual birds that have been extremely successful would be valuable. If you can assist, please contact Erin Hennessy at ehennessy@lpzoo.org, cell: (847) 323-3992; work: (312) 742-7750.

Seney National Wildlife Refuge Study - TTSS recently awarded a \$3,000 grant from its North American Swan Fund (NASF) as partial funding of a study that will investigate the effects of summer grazing by Trumpeter Swans on the aquatic vegetation at Seney National Wildlife Refuge on the Upper Peninsula, Michigan. Seney NWR encompasses ~ 95,000 acres, has 21 carp-free managed pools and historical plant data going back to the 1940s. After 17 years of swan restoration, 238 trumpeters were counted on the Refuge in 2007. Power lines and lead are not mortality factors at this location and the swan population has been increasing 15% annually. Refuge staff report that there are often ~100 nonbreeders summering on the Refuge. The growing swan population appears to be eating significant amounts of aquatic vegetation. The Refuge is preparing a long term management plan with a focus on marsh management. Since the Refuge manages for habitat rather than a single species, biologists are hoping to have students determine the swans' impact on the vegetation and the swan carrying capacity.

TTSS Life Memberships and other specified donations are placed into the NASF Endowment Fund from which interest may be used to support research, education, and habitat protection and enhancement for Trumpeter Swans.

Wisconsin has a record number of nesting Trumpeter Swans – Sumner Matteson, Avian Ecologist with Wisconsin's Bureau of Endangered Resources and TTSS Director, reports that there are now a record number of 120 pairs of nesting Trumpeter Swans in the beautiful state of Wisconsin. The trumpeter is currently listed as state endangered in Wisconsin, but Sumner reports that the de-listing process has begun since the swans have far surpassed the program's recovery goal of "20 breeding and migratory pairs by the year 2000."



Mississippi Flyway Trumpeter Swan Summary - TTSS Director, Joe Johnson, chairs the Swan Committee of the Mississippi Flyway Council Technical Section. His report included the following information. **Minnesota:** In 2007, there were at least 250 breeding pairs that fledged 670 cygnets and the statewide Trumpeter Swan estimate was 2,800. **Iowa:** In 2007, 73 trumpeters were released. At least 29 pairs attempted to nest, 88 cygnets hatched and 60 fledged. **Wisconsin:** There were 113 nesting pairs in 2007 (see above for 2008). **Missouri:** One pair nested unsuccessfully in Carroll County. A peak wintering number of 250 trumpeters was reported on the Riverlands Environmental Demonstration area north of St. Louis and another 45 swans wintered at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Mound City. **Ohio:** Thirty-two pairs were located; 23 nested and 15 of them successfully fledged 53 cygnets.

Arkansas: Approximately, 200 Trumpeter Swans were observed at Magness Lake, Heber Springs, in January 2008. **Illinois:** In 2007, for the 2nd consecutive year, a pair successfully nested in a small backwater lake of the Mississippi River in northwestern Illinois. They were subsequently observed in Ballard County, Kentucky, in February 2008. The peak winter trumpeter number in southern Illinois was 144. **Indiana:** Dr. Steven Lima of Indiana State University observed 243 trumpeters in December 2007, near the Illinois/Indiana state line north of Terre Haute. He reported at least 167 trumpeters on Universal, just on the Illinois side of the state line, in January 2008. At least 800 Trumpeter Swans wintered south of the 40th parallel.

Exchange your lead fishing tackle! Minnesota residents - there are many opportunities to exchange your old lead tackle for new non-toxic alternatives. Help get the lead out to prevent lead poisoning in swans, eagles and loons. All summer there are fishing tackle exchange events sponsored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency at various camping and hardware stores throughout the State. For dates and more information, visit www.pca.state.mn.us/oea/reduce/sinkers.cfm

If you live in another state or province, talk to your local wildlife officials about starting a similar program.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS! TTSS appreciates Annual Appeal contributions from the following members not previously listed. These donations will match the challenge grant given to TTSS by Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation, Jackson, Wyoming. Visit www.earthfriends.com to read about their strong support of conservation projects.

Kenneth Abraham
Judy Chrysler & Kelly Kline
Fred Engelman, Jr.
Carole & Norman Hofley
Gary Ivey

Kittitas Audubon Society
Carolyn & Wilbur McDowell
Burton Rounds
Claudia & Roger Salquist
Larry & Arleen Schinke

Sally Shanks
Lynn Spicer-Tucker
William Uhl
Rick Webb

PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Robert Blohm, Bowie, MD
James Bortner, Brush Prairie, WA
Jackie Boss, Anacortes, WA
James Carroll, Milwaukee, WI
Gene Collins, Selkirk, Manitoba
Bruce Harrison, Kamloops, BC
Nancy Hughes, Whitehorse, YT

Bud & Heather Johnson, Tok, AK
Irene Lawseth, Camano Island, WA
Daniel Logan, Cordova, AK
Bruce McLean, Whitehorse, YT
C. Palmatier's Class, Mashpee, MA
Janelle Raker, North Pole, AK
Valerie Schroeder, Camano Island, WA
Dave Sharp, Littleton, CO

Ruth & Bob Sheets, Maquoketa, IA
Karen Smallman, Fairport, NY
Sydney Sparks, Tuscaloosa, AL
Carolyn Trevis, Minneapolis, MN
Glenn Ward, Everett, WA
Bonnie Wieber, King Salmon, AK
Steve Wilds, Bemidji, MN

THE ELEVENTH NORTH AMERICAN CRANE WORKSHOP

– A crane meeting sponsored by the North American Crane Working Group will be held at Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, 23-27 September 2008. Several TTSS Directors are also active with crane conservation. There will be 2 days of technical sessions, a visit to the International Crane Foundation, and opportunities to observe Trumpeter Swans as well as loons and other waterfowl. The conference will take place close to the Necedah Whooping Crane Festival (www.whooping-crane-festival.com). A proceedings will be published after the meeting. For details, contact Tom Hoffmann at thoffmann@hoffmanns.com

THE SWAN SPECIALIST GROUP ANNOUNCES FIRST EUROPEAN SWAN CONFERENCE

– A conference on swan ecology and biology will be held 8-11 October 2008 at Daugavpils University, Latvia. The conference is being organized by Daugavpils University and the University Association of Young Researchers. The working language of the conference will be English. For further information, please contact dmitrijs.boiko@gmail.com or visit the conference website at www.biology.lv/conferences/swans

The Swan Specialist Group is also in the preliminary planning stage for an International Swan Conference to be held in Chile in November 2009. Details will follow in future *Trumpetings*.

FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE SMALL WETLANDS ACQUISITION PROGRAM IS 50 YEARS OLD

- Unless you live in the prairies of the Dakotas, Montana, Minnesota, or Iowa, you may have never heard of a

Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) or a Wetland Management District (WMD). WPAs are units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. In 1958, an amendment to the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act of 1934 created the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program. This program uses funds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps to protect waterfowl habitat on small wetlands and adjacent grassland uplands. Protection is accomplished both through fee title purchase and perpetual conservation easements. There are more than 36,000 WPAs in the U.S. protecting more than 677,000 acres of waterfowl habitat. Trumpeter Swans are successfully nesting on several WPAs in Minnesota and these areas will become increasingly important to swans as wetland habitat continues to be lost and degraded.

BUY DUCK STAMPS AND PRESERVE TRUMPETER SWAN HABITAT

- Duck stamps are not just for hunters. Duck stamp revenues are used to purchase habitat for inclusion in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Refuges and Waterfowl Production Areas provide wetlands vitally important to trumpeters throughout their range. Red Rock Lakes NWR in Montana was established primarily for Trumpeter Swan conservation in 1935. Refuges in Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, the Greater Yellowstone area, northern prairies, and the Great Lakes states are vital to trumpeters. The 2008 Federal Duck Stamp Contest will be held in October in Bloomington, Minnesota, not far from TTSS main office. Your purchase of ducks stamps will help secure wetlands for waterfowl, including Trumpeter Swans. Many species of wildlife and plants will benefit as well.

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]

Make check/money order payable to TTSS (Canadians please write "in US funds" on personal checks). Mail to:
The Trumpeter Swan Society, 12615 County Road 9 - Suite 100, Plymouth, Minnesota 55441-1248

Name_____Address_____

The Trumpeter Swan Society
12615 County Road 9
Plymouth, MN 55441-1248

Return service requested

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 25
Maple Plain, MN

Directors

Ron Andrews
Clear Lake, IA

Dale Becker
President
Pablo, MT

Laurence N. Gillette
Maple Plain, MN

James Hawkings
Whitehorse, Yukon Territory

Gary Ivey
Vice-President
Bend, OR

W. C. Joe Johnson
Augusta, MI

Martha Jordan
Everett, WA

James G. King
Juneau, AK

Harry G. Lumsden
Aurora, Ontario

Sumner Matteson
Madison, WI

Harvey K. Nelson
Bloomington, MN

Jerry Serie
Easton, MD

Becky Abel
Director-At-Large

Ruth E. Shea
Director-At-Large

John E. Cornely
Executive Director

TRUMPETINGS EDITORS

Madeleine Linck
John E. Cornely



Affiliate Directory

Becky Abel
Madison, WI

Allison Arnold
Dripping Springs, TX

Tim & Wendy Brockish
Idaho Falls, ID

Richard Brown
Bainbridge Island, WA

Earth Friends Wildlife
Foundation
Jackson, WY

Cynthia Gray
Chicago, IL

David Grimwood
Lake Oswego, OR

Karen Harris
Tulsa, OK

Iowa Department of Natural
Resources
Clear Lake, IA

W. C. Joe Johnson
Augusta, MI

Kari Koehler & Tobin
Sobaski
Woodbury, MN

Mary Maj
Cody, WY

Harvey K. & Gene M. Nelson
Bloomington, MN

Paula & Arthur Neumann
Longmont, CO

Richard W. Perkins
Long Lake, MN

Ed Riedel
Littleton, CA

Burton W. Rounds
Duluth, MN

Raymond St. Ores
Hudson, WI

Skagit Wild Bird Supply
Mt. Vernon, WA

Ruth Shea & Rod Drewien
Vale, OR

Casey Stemler
Littleton, CO

Three Rivers Park District
Plymouth, MN

Walt McCarthy & Clara
Ueland
Medina, MN

[Any persons or organizations
paying \$100 or more per year for
membership will be an Affiliate,
excepting life memberships
which are paid only once]

***** NOTES *****

Copies of past TTSS
conference Proceedings are
available to current members
for only mailing costs. Please
contact the TTSS office for
more information.