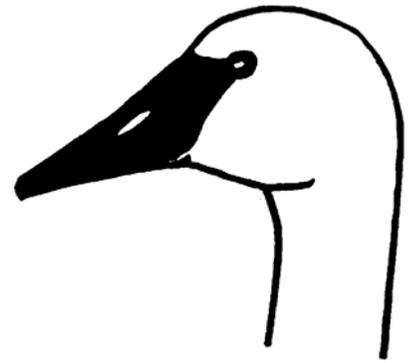




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - The months since our last newsletter have been some of the most eventful in recent times! We are experiencing a turbulent economy and we have a new President Elect. Nonprofit organizations face doubly uncertain times when an election year and difficult economic times coincide. We need your support more than ever during our membership renewal and annual appeal. This year's annual appeal coincides with our 40th Anniversary Fundraising Campaign. In addition to our usual appeal to you, our dedicated members, we are reaching out to new folks to join us and to former members that we have not heard from for some time. Please renew your membership now.

New membership structure - TTSS maintained the same membership fee structure for the last 18 years. During its last meeting, the Board of Directors approved a new membership structure that increases the base membership fees. The Board decided to eliminate the Life Membership category. All current Life Members will continue to enjoy that designation, but no new Life Memberships will be offered. Members are still encouraged to donate to our endowment, the North American Swan Fund. In the past, Life Memberships were all designated to the Fund. The most difficult funds for nonprofits to secure are those that are not designated for special projects. These "unrestricted" funds are critical to our daily operations. That is why our membership fees and annual appeal are so important.

Annual Report – You will find a 2007 Annual Report in this issue. Our intent is to complete a brief annual report for the members each year and, in the future, it will be mailed with the 1st *Trumpetings* of the year. Look for the 2008 report in the February issue.

Red Rocks Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Montana, draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) - After reviewing the CCP/environmental assessment prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we discovered that Trumpeter Swans were barely mentioned. No future management direction for Trumpeters or other waterfowl was provided. TTSS found that unacceptable. Red Rock Lakes NWR was established in 1935 to protect Trumpeter Swans. No real justification was presented for this abrupt, very drastic change in direction. To read our comments on the CCP, please go to the Society website. You may also follow a link to the document itself. We encouraged other concerned conservation groups, agencies and individuals to comment on the

flawed plan. TTSS Board and staff are uniquely qualified to review and comment on management plans that are of critical importance to Trumpeter conservation.

Change is in the air - The time of transition for the United States is also an important transition period for TTSS. We are developing an Administrative and Policy Handbook to help guide our daily operations. Our 5-year Strategic Plan will be revised in 2009. The timing is appropriate as the Society will be facing a major change at the end of 2009. We will report more details in the next issue. A financial practices review was completed recently and recommendations from that review will be considered as we revise our plans and adapt to current challenges and changes. We always welcome your input and ideas, so please call or write!

On behalf of the Board and Staff, I want to wish all of you a great holiday season and a fulfilling New Year. Even in turbulent times, we have much to be thankful for.

John Cornely

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS

News from the Washington State Working Group - Swans have begun to arrive in good numbers throughout Washington State. There have been many Tundra Swans passing through on their way to points south and Trumpeters are settling in for the winter in western Washington. Some old friends are back, including M72 & M73 and M20 & M69, two pairs that have each been together at least 10 years. The lead poisoning reduction effort has begun with another winter of precluding swan use of Judson Lake along the border with British Columbia. Once again, there will be sick and dead swan retrieval, and surveys for swans in various areas.

Efforts to map farmland used by swans in western Washington are going well. The process is slow due to lags in data coming in from various sources. Once finished, it will be available through Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) data base. The end product will provide anyone, including all land use planners and consultants, with quality information on swan use in their project planning phase. This mapping has been generously funded by a grant to TTSS from the Felburn Foundation.

In other news, a Sedro Woolley High School student is doing her senior project on building an educational information kiosk at the Johnson DeBay Reserve,

northeast of Mt. Vernon. This swan interpretive display is funded by the John Glenn Memorial Fund. It is exciting to have community support and to get students involved with the Reserve. Thank you to student Allison Donovan and her teacher, Robert Dow.

Martha Jordan

Tundra Swan satellite tracking - Craig Ely, Wildlife Biologist, Alaska Science Center, Anchorage, reports that the Alaska Science Center website tracks the migration of the 50 Tundra Swans implanted with satellite transmitters in Alaska last summer. As in previous summers, Tundra Swans received collars in five regions of Alaska. Biologists will update location information on the site at least once a week and daily during the migration period (Sep - Dec & Mar - May). To follow the swans and their movements, check out http://alaska.usgs.gov/science/biology/avian_influenza/TUSW/index.html

Feeding study of swans wintering in Fraser River Delta - From the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust Newsletter (August 2008) came a report that British Columbia's Institute of Technology (BCIT) students documented the importance of winter cover crops for swans on British Columbia's Fraser River Delta. BCIT students Xiaojun Song and Puru Shresta found the majority of swans were associated with potato fields. Cover crops became more important when the ground froze, making the subsurface potatoes inaccessible. Potato tubers provide a very rich source of energy, but 30% of the swan detections were still on cover crops.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION NEWS

Elk Island National Park, Alberta, update - In 1987, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada Agency, and the Friends of Elk Island initiated the Elk Island National Park (EINP) Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Program. In 1998, 11 years later, a milestone was reached when a pair of reintroduced Trumpeters successfully raised four cygnets, becoming the first breeding pair of its species in the Park in over a century.

Now, 10 years later, the reintroduction program is showing signs of success. In a fall 2008 aerial survey by EINP staff, 6 breeding pairs of Trumpeters and 20 fledged cygnets were spotted. Another 15 subadult Trumpeters have established themselves in the area. A total of 47 swans migrated out of the area in 2008.

Although the numbers of swans returning to the Park have not increased every year, the trend is expected to be upward over time. Unless an unfortunate event takes place, such as severe weather on the winter range, the Trumpeter Swan is now a successfully reintroduced species to EINP and the rest of the Beaver Hills area.

Another indicator is that the swans are slowly expanding out from EINP. Of the 27 swans that returned to the area this year, 10 returned to EINP, 7 settled in the Cooking Lake-Blackfoot Provincial Recreation Area, to the south of EINP, 6 returned to the Ministik Bird Sanctuary, and 4 stayed on private land just outside the Park boundary. This is an excellent example of the

importance of habitat stewardship and the Beaver Hills Initiative in the region. The Beaver Hills Initiative is a committee comprised of a large group of stakeholders in the Beaver Hills region. This committee is working with public input on procedures to implement sustainable community initiatives that conserve landscapes.

Most of the 27 swans that returned to the area in 2008 were on remote lakes. Only a handful of these swans sometimes use lakes in the area that the public may see them. The best chance to view Trumpeters is during the spring or fall as they stage on Astotin Lake in EINP.

Present day factors limiting Trumpeter Swan survival include: continued habitat loss, human recreational disturbances, illegal hunting, accidental shooting (mistaken for the smaller Tundra Swan on winter range), collisions with power lines, lead poisoning from lead shot ingested while feeding, and disturbances from industry such as forestry, oil and gas. Despite these limitations, the Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Program in EINP and the greater Beaver Hills area has been a success.

Rob Kaye and Gerry Beyersbergen

News from Wyoming Wetland Society (WWS) - The Wyoming Wetlands Society in cooperation with the Shoshone Bannock Tribes joined six captive raised cygnets with a wild adult Trumpeter Swan near Fort Hall, Idaho, in September 2008. As of October, the six cygnets were still traveling locally with a wild adult (presumably the same adult).

The WWS has 66 cygnets that are scheduled for release in spring/summer 2009. The majority of these cygnets are birds from the Canada Egg Collection Project (see the July issue of *Trumpetings* for more project information) to enhance numbers and genetic diversity.

Drew Reed, WWS Executive Director

INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS

Ohio - Biologist Dave Sherman reports a successful 2008 breeding season for Trumpeters in Ohio. Latest tally showed that Ohio had another record year with 28 nesting pairs fledging 59 cygnets in Ohio.

Michigan Upper Peninsula - Dave Olson reported a fair year in 2008 for the swans at Seney NWR. Winter extended into April and, as a result, nesting was about 2 weeks behind schedule. There was a total of 236 swans using the Refuge this year. There were 33 swan nests on the Refuge that hatched 90 cygnets. Nest checks were completed on 23 of those nests. Average clutch size was 5 eggs and a hatch rate of 79%. The last complete survey of all pools was in September and there were 18 cygnets. The estimated cygnet survival rate is 20% for 2008 and the 3-year average is 32%.

Iowa to Arkansas Migration Experiment Update - As reported in earlier *Trumpetings*, last January the Iowa DNR captured 18 free-flying cygnets and connected with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) to release these swans on the Buffalo River National Park and the Holla Bend NWR. The theory was that because these cygnets had gained their compass readings in

Iowa before they were released in Arkansas, they would migrate back to Iowa by early summer, molt in Iowa, and return to Arkansas in fall. We are aware of only one that returned to Iowa and molted. Once the swans left northwestern Arkansas, no reports were received other than for three birds that remained and molted at the Buffalo National River. On 2 November, however, nine of the marked swans reappeared in the same area that they departed in northwest Arkansas. Where these swans have been from late spring until now is a total mystery. The swans were marked with green collars, leg bands, and FWS bands. We plan to move 20 - 30 Iowa Trumpeters back to Arkansas over the next 2 years. It will be interesting to see if more return to Iowa or whatever the outcome. Because of the "predictable unpredictability" of Trumpeter Swans, it is uncertain. I think the experiment is worth the effort and Arkansas is very enthusiastic about participating. Hopefully this effort will "open the door" for more southern states to become involved with winter habitat management for Trumpeters. The current effort to encourage more swans to migrate from Monticello, Minnesota, will complement this effort to establish a migration corridor from northern states to southern states. The outreach and excitement associated with the migration experiment to Arkansas has been tremendous, especially for Nongame Biologist Karen Rowe, AGFC, and the Arkansawyers in the area.

Ron Andrews, Iowa Restoration Coordinator

Record year for Wisconsin swans - Sumner Matteson, Avian Ecologist with Wisconsin's Bureau of Endangered Resources (BER) reports that Wisconsin had nearly 130 nesting pairs of Trumpeters in 20 counties during 2008. Wisconsin has begun the process to remove Trumpeter Swans from the Wisconsin endangered and threatened species list. For further background, visit: www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/birds/delisting.htm Wisconsin recently produced a new video called *Trumpeter Swans...For Generations to Come*. It runs 25 minutes and sells for \$25.00. You may order directly from Sumner (c/o BER, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53711). Please include a check made out to: Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources, attn: Trumpeter Swan Program. Otherwise, there will be more order information on the Wisconsin DNR website.

Minnesota – The Minnesota DNR Nongame Wildlife Program, the U. S Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3, Three Rivers Park District, and The Trumpeter Swan Society met in July 2008 to discuss ways to encourage more Minnesota Trumpeter Swans to migrate. Currently, it is estimated there are about 2,500 Trumpeters in Minnesota, but less than 10% leave the State for the winter. In an effort to encourage more Trumpeters to explore habitat further south, the Minnesota Nongame Wildlife Program is asking the public to delay feeding the swans until January 1, 2009. Most of the swans winter within Minnesota on rivers kept open by power plants and survive on supplemental corn provided by local residents. Weather will be a key factor in determining if the swans will move south. Warm weather or lack of snow may allow swans to stay north. Some Trumpeters have learned to field feed on harvested corn and other crops. Biologists have agreed it would be beneficial for the birds to establish multiple wintering sites.

Unprecedented habitat protection in Ontario – In July 2008, the Province of Ontario announced that it would preserve one-half of its 1.4 billion-acre Boreal Forest. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty declared Canada would protect over 55 million acres of the Canadian Boreal Forest, one of the world's largest intact forest and wetland ecosystems that provide nesting grounds for untold numbers of migratory songbirds and waterfowl. Precluding this area from industrial uses will help guard against climate change. The world's leading ecologists and scientists congratulated Ontario for its outstanding vision. The size of Ontario's commitment is "unprecedented in North American history" and sets an example for other provinces and states to follow. To learn more about Canada's protection of its natural resources, visit www.borealbirds.org.



BirdNote radio program on waterfowl and lead - *BirdNote*, a Seattle-based radio series about the world of birds aired a 2-minute radio program in October about the dangers of lead to waterfowl. The issue of lead poisoning of swans in the Northwest and TTSS was mentioned. To hear the program, visit www.birdnote.org and click on the Archives for October 2008

PLEASE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- | | | |
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Anchorage, AK | Ginger Rogers
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3 rd & 4 th Grade Class
Chester, NY | Glacial Lake Cranberries, Inc
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WELCOME ALL!

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

Trumpeter Swans for sale – Three 2008-hatch (2 males, 1 female), clipped, parent-reared; reasonable price. Call TTSS member Vance Grannis, Minnesota, at (651)456-9000.

[Any persons or organizations paying \$100 or more per year for membership will be an Affiliate,]