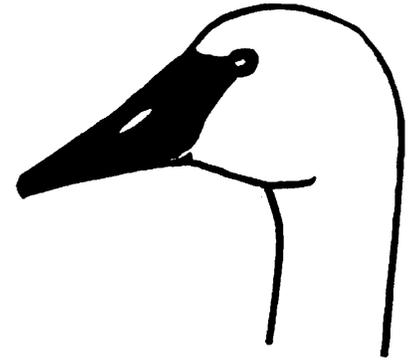


# TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society  
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**TTSS OPPOSES USFWS PROPOSAL TO PERMANENTLY LEGALIZE HARVEST OF RMP TRUMPETER SWANS** - In March, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing future management direction for Tundra Swans and the Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) of Trumpeter Swans in the Pacific Flyway. The draft included four management options. The preferred alternative included permanently legalizing harvest of Trumpeter Swans in parts of Utah, Nevada, and Montana. Public hearings were held in May in Idaho Falls, Idaho, and Salt Lake City, Utah, to discuss the proposal. Public comments were accepted until June 17. In our opinion, this option was not in the best interest of RMP trumpeters.

In April, TTSS Board President Harvey Nelson, Director Gary Ivey, and Executive Director Ruth Shea met with representatives of USFWS and the Pacific Flyway RMP Subcommittee in an attempt to develop a mutually agreeable alternative. Although the meeting identified several points of agreement, other points were unacceptable to the TTSS Board. The Board's primary concerns were: 1) Subcommittee insistence that no changes be made to swan hunts in Utah to protect southward migrating trumpeters; 2) Utah's continued unwillingness to help accomplish RMP Trumpeter Swan management objectives and allow winter range expansion efforts to aim southward from Idaho because of potential conflicts with Tundra Swan hunting; 3) the EA's lack of specific strategies to accomplish RMP distribution and population objectives; 4) the current precarious status of the Tri-state nesting population of Trumpeter Swans and continued high vulnerability of the RMP/Canadian flocks to winter mortality in the Tri-state region.

In written comments, the TTSS Board urged USFWS to assume leadership of RMP restoration efforts and develop an implementation plan to achieve the goal and objectives recommended by the 1998 Pacific Flyway Management Plan for RMP Trumpeter Swans. The Board emphasized that 1) RMP management should focus on expansion of winter distribution of both Tri-state and Canadian trumpeters southward of the Tri-state area into Utah and beyond and 2) USFWS should not allow swan hunting to impede trumpeter restoration to winter

habitats south of Idaho or jeopardize southward migrating trumpeters.

TTSS also urged that swan hunt frameworks remain experimental until much greater progress toward achieving RMP management objectives has occurred. The Board did not object to continuation of experimental harvest of Trumpeter Swans during Tundra Swan hunts in Montana and Nevada, primarily because both states are actively working to help accomplish RMP restoration objectives and the hunts occur in locations and places where they currently pose little risk to expansion of RMP winter distribution.

However, the Board opposed implementation of the Preferred Alternative in Utah and instead urged USFWS to implement Alternative 3. This would restrict or not allow swan hunting in those parts of Utah where trumpeters have recently been observed, or are likely to occur. The EA concludes that Alternative 3 would cause RMP Trumpeter Swans to increase at a greater rate and become more widely distributed than under the Preferred Alternative.

Federal and state agencies, aided by private cooperators, have worked for a decade to rebuild a secure winter distribution and reduce RMP vulnerability in the Tri-state area. Winter feeding at Red Rock Lakes NWR has been terminated and agencies continue to haze trumpeters from eastern Idaho. While TTSS has supported these actions, the Board is very concerned that USFWS has not yet identified even one wintering habitat south of Idaho where trumpeter use will be encouraged, primarily because of conflicts with Tundra Swan hunting. A final decision by USFWS is expected by early August. For future developments and other information, including TTSS comments on the draft EA, visit TTSS web site at [www.taiga.net/swans](http://www.taiga.net/swans) or the Washington State Working Group web site at [www.swansociety.org](http://www.swansociety.org). This EA process will set future USFWS direction for RMP restoration and management. Many thanks to all of you who wrote to USFWS about this issue.

Ruth Shea

**GREATER YELLOWSTONE TRUMPETER SWAN INITIATIVE** - For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, TTSS has led partnership efforts to monitor trumpeter nesting in Idaho and to identify and correct nesting habitat problems. Monitoring found 35 occupied territories with 27 active nests. As of July 15, 19 nests (70%) had hatched 75 cygnets. With 3.9 cygnets hatched per successful nest and 2.8 cygnets hatched per active nest, 2000 appears to be a good production year. A mild winter and a warm dry spring created good nesting conditions in most of Idaho. The exception is Grays Lake NWR, where inadequate water and deteriorating habitat conditions are jeopardizing the productivity of 13 of Idaho's swan territories.

Efforts to identify habitat problems and solutions have expanded this year. TTSS and the US Forest Service hosted a field trip June 26-27 to introduce potential partners to swan nesting lakes on the Targhee National Forest. Discussion focused on specific problems at historic nesting lakes and opportunities to improve habitat for swans and other nesting waterfowl. Response was enthusiastic, with over 20 wetland managers and researchers from federal, state and private agencies and groups sharing their experience and resources. Dr. Leigh Frederickson of Gaylord Memorial Lab, Puxico, Missouri, led discussions of the wetland ecology and improvement potential.

Correctable problems, including diminished wetland productivity due to decades-old dikes that have created high and relatively stable water regimes, were identified. Several new partners have offered technical services and potential funding for habitat improvement projects. Potential appears very good to expand this program next year beyond National Forest lands and systematically address problems at historic and potential swan nesting lakes throughout eastern Idaho. We are very encouraged by the enthusiasm this program has generated among wetland managers and are excited about the potential benefits for the Tri-state nesting population of Trumpeter Swans, as well as for many less conspicuous wetland species.

**NEWS FROM OHIO** - Dave Sherman reports that the Ohio Trumpeter Swan restoration program is having its best year of production since beginning the program in 1996. Eight pairs of trumpeters nested this spring. Five nests successfully hatched 19 cygnets. One nest failed and the production of the other two nests has not been verified. Production will probably be more than double the total production for the 3 previous years (nine cygnets). Ohio also had its final release of 29 swans (hatched from Alaskan eggs) this spring.

**NEWS FROM WISCONSIN** – The State of Wisconsin has 39 active Trumpeter Swan nests in 11 counties this year. In 2 years, the number of active nests has doubled and the program has obviously exceeded its original recovery goal of 20 pairs. That goal was based on a population model developed in 1986; now that Wisconsin has over 10 years of data from its own program, we will be developing a new, more accurate model that will tell us what the population level of recovery should be. This model is targeted for

completion by 1 October 2000, with services provided by Robert Rolley. Counties with active nests include Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, Iron, and Vilas in the Northern Tier. In the Grantsburg Study Area, Burnett County has the largest number of nests (11), and Polk County has five. In the Central/North-Central Region, nests have been located in Juneau (3), Wood (5), Marathon (1) Counties. There is one nest in Jefferson County in southeastern Wisconsin, the farthest south of any Wisconsin nesting pair to date.

The program success has truly been a team effort, with a nice marriage between the private and public sector. Until we have the new model, however, we can't gauge exactly how far along we are toward population recovery. Our success to date is due largely to the outstanding dedication of many, including wildlife managers and technicians, USFWS biologists, WI DNR Bureau of Integrated Science Services researchers, Bureau of Endangered Resources and Bureau of Wildlife Management; University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison Department of Wildlife Ecology, UW interns, the Natural Resources Foundation, the Bad River Tribe of the Lake Superior Ojibway Band, Milwaukee County Zoo and Zoological Society of Milwaukee County staff, Society for TCP, several private corporations and foundations, including the Windway Capital Corporation; and many private citizens who have contributed through the Adopt A Swan Program or otherwise.

Pat Manthey, Alisa Bartos, and Adam Fetting are the program's field monitoring team, and I owe a special thank you to them for the countless long hours they have spent the past 2 seasons in monitoring nesting birds.

Sumner Matteson

[Editors' note: Sumner hinted there will be a special prize to whomever locates nest number 40 in Wisconsin!]

**4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL SWAN SYMPOSIUM - DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS** – August 31, 2000, is the final date by which extended abstracts may be submitted for consideration for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Swan Symposium to be held 13-18 February 2001 in Airlie, Virginia. Authors will be notified by October whether their topic is accepted as a paper or poster. Papers will be presented on a broad range of subjects including population trends and distribution, migration and movements, feeding ecology and energetics, breeding biology and demography, management and conservation and general biology. Abstracts should include a brief description of the aims of the study, methods and preliminary results, and should be submitted to Eileen Rees, The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Martin Mere, Burscough near Ormskirk, Lancashire L40 0TA, UK. Telephone: 44 1704 895181; Fax 44 1704 892343; e-mail: Eileen.Rees@wwt.org.uk

**A PERMANENT LEGACY - NORTH AMERICAN SWAN FUND** – This spring, the TTSS Board transferred our North American Swan Fund (NASF) to The Minneapolis Foundation, where it will be professionally managed as a permanent endowment. We established the NASF to provide dependable annual funding for research, habitat protection and enhancement and public education for the benefit of North American swans. Currently, the NASF is worth \$36,724.00 and is invested in a socially responsible portfolio. All earnings will be reinvested until the Fund reaches \$50,000 at which time a portion of the earnings will become available to TTSS for the designated purposes.

Founded in 1915, The Minneapolis Foundation is the nation's second oldest community foundation and has a fine reputation for integrity and investment expertise. This arrangement will ensure that your contributions will benefit swans forever, be professionally managed, and be tax deductible. The Minneapolis Foundation can also set up innovative gift mechanisms, such as managing gifts of appreciated stock or bequests to provide the donor with maximum tax benefits. Please contact the TTSS office for more information.

**TRUMPETERS FEATURED AS AN INDICATOR OF WILDLIFE SUSTAINABILITY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA** – Environment Canada has chosen the Trumpeter Swan as one of its key indicators of Biodiversity within the Pacific and Yukon Region. The department's regional web site ([http://www.ecoinfo.org/env\\_ind/region/swan/swan.htm](http://www.ecoinfo.org/env_ind/region/swan/swan.htm)) highlights the trends in Trumpeter Swan populations in south-coastal British Columbia and the Fraser River Delta since 1970. This well written account also discusses the challenges the increasing winter population of swans has created in areas such as the Comox Valley.

**IN MEMORIAM** – TTSS recently received word from the family of Amos D. Faux-Burhans III of Frederick, Maryland, that Mr. Burhans, TTSS member since 1987, died last May in an aircraft accident. Mr. Burhans was a very enthusiastic Trumpeter Swan propagator and especially interested in educating children about this majestic bird. In lieu of flowers, the family asked friends to donate to two of his favorite charities, including The Trumpeter Swan Society. The family has suggested the donations go towards providing classroom video materials. We extend our condolences to the family and sincere thank you for its thoughtful contribution.

Trumpeter family of seven cygnets on G Pool, Seney NWR.  
Photo by Barbara Hendrick.

**SWANS IN MICHIGAN'S SENEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE** – As a Michigan native and graduate of Michigan State University in Forestry and Zoology, I am particularly interested in Michigan's Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program. Their annual progress is usually reported by Joe Johnson of the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary each winter. My daughter Barbara Hendrick and I visited the Seney NWR in Michigan's Upper Peninsula during the week of July 2, 2000. Barbara saw two adults and five cygnets on Show Pool and 42 subadult and other non-productive trumpeters on E Pool on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, we took part in the evening Wildlife Tour of the Refuge and returned again on July 6<sup>th</sup> to take the auto tour. We observed families with four cygnets each on both J and H Pools, a family of seven cygnets on G Pool and one with a brood of three on D Pool. We talked with Assistant Manager Gary Heet who gave us a copy of the Refuge's 1998 report, including a table of trumpeter production 1992-1998. This report indicated that in 1998, their maximum production was 10 broods with 48 cygnets hatched and 27 fledged. The report also noted that trumpeters were produced south of the refuge on nearby Chip Lake, Blaney Park, in 1997 and 1998. The Refuge Visitor Center provided us with a print out of Seney NWR Trumpeter Swan current production. There are 17 broods, 82 cygnets hatched and 67 cygnets remaining as of July 6, 2000. One family has 9 cygnets.

The Seney NWR flock leaves the frozen refuge in the winter, but apparently does not migrate any farther than necessary to find open water and food. Many winter on Lake Michigan. In the Lower Peninsula, I talked with TTSS member Marvin Cooley of Bath, Michigan, in early July. He had just returned from visiting a Trumpeter Swan nesting marsh near Bellevue, Michigan, where a pair was rearing five cygnets. This pair has nested there since 1991 and 1 year the pair reared eight cygnets.

Harold Burgess

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**WELCOME ALL!**

**THANK YOU, JANE!** Jane West, TTSS member from Minnesota and volunteer editor of *Trumpetings* since 1996, has stepped down from her duties. We wish to extend our thanks to Jane for all her help in summarizing articles and juggling of text and graphics, often on short notice!

**REQUEST FOR WWW LINKS FOR TTSS WEB SITE** – TTSS volunteer Webmaster Jim Hawkings and the TTSS office often receive inquiries about the purchase of or the care of captive swans. While we have some information available at the office, if you can suggest any additional relevant links, Jim would like to hear from you [jim.hawkings@ec.gc.ca]. Suggestions for web site material are always welcome. Thank you, Jim, for keeping TTSS up to date in the world of cyberspace!

**THE FRIENDS OF HINES MARSH** – The first meeting of the Friends of Hines Marsh on Long Beach Peninsula, Washington, was held on 23 July 2000. The informal meeting was set to help interested citizens learn how to help preserve this unique resource. For additional information on how you might be able to participate, please contact Martha Jordan at 425-767-0258 or e-mail marthaj@swansociety.org