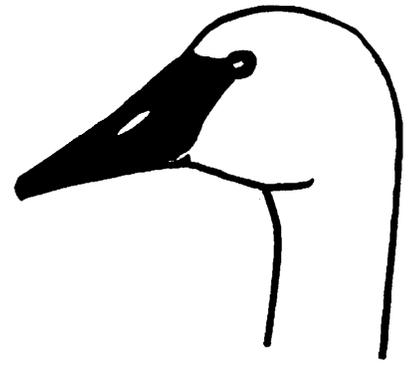


# TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society  
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**FROM THE PRESIDENT** – The latest news from Washington, is that President Bush intends to nominate John F. Turner to be Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. John has been a long-time member of TTSS and was a guest speaker at the International Swan Symposium in February 2001. He was the Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service from 1989 to 1993 and a member of the Wyoming legislature from 1971 to 1989.

While his appointment requires Senate confirmation, it is expected that this will occur by early fall. John has a long-standing reputation for his commitment to sound fish and wildlife management, environmental issues, and public service. The Trumpeter Swan Society wishes you well in your new challenge, John!

Harvey K. Nelson

**PACIFIC FLYWAY'S TRUMPETER SWAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROCESS** - Staff from federal and state agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens met in West Yellowstone, Montana, on June 14 for the first meeting of the Pacific Flyway's Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan (TSIP) process. This process arose out of concern that the Pacific Flyway had no program in place to achieve the goal and objectives of their 1998 Rocky Mountain Trumpeter Swan Management Plan. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) requested the Pacific Flyway to develop and approve an Implementation Plan by July 2002 and to involve the public and other agencies in the process.

The TTSS Board is hopeful that this unique opportunity for open discussion of Rocky Mountain Population (RMP) Trumpeter Swan data and public involvement will lead to effective actions to reduce the vulnerability of the Canadian and Tristate populations that are concentrated in marginal winter habitat in the Tristate area. TTSS will support the TSIP effort by contributing \$1,000 to help pay for a professional facilitator, contributing 50 copies of the *Proceedings* of our 17<sup>th</sup> Conference (which focused on the RMP), providing data and technical assistance, and, participating in all discussions.

In addition, the FWS has completed a first draft of a Concept Plan for enhancing the RMP of Trumpeter Swans on units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. This document will be further refined, and will provide a

starting point for Pacific Flyway Trumpeter Swan management actions that would extend to lands outside the refuge system. The FWS Concept Plan represents an innovative attempt to work across regional boundaries and unite National Wildlife Refuges in a coordinated effort to rebuild a secure distribution of RMP trumpeters. TTSS will be working to help strengthen this document and ensure that it includes refuges that can provide secure migration and winter habitat, as well as nesting habitat. This document can be obtained from Dick Munoz, USFWS, Pocatello, Idaho (208-237-6615, [Dick\\_Munoz@fws.gov](mailto:Dick_Munoz@fws.gov)) or on the web at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>

**GENERAL SWAN HUNT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT** - On June 15, 2001, the FWS released its Final Environmental Assessment (EA) of its proposal to legalize harvest of RMP Trumpeter Swans in Montana, Nevada, and Utah. The EA can be obtained from the FWS Office of Migratory Bird Management or on the web at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>. In May, TTSS expressed strong concerns with this proposal in a letter commenting on the draft EA.

Our primary concerns were that the general swan hunt continues to prevent the effective involvement of Bear River Refuge in a National Wildlife Refuge System approach to expanding RMP winter distribution and increases the mortality of trumpeters that attempt to migrate southward. In addition, the FWS failed to require mandatory check stations, thus undermining the credibility of estimates of trumpeter harvest during the general hunt. TTSS expressed additional concerns regarding errors in the EA, the decline of Tristate winter habitat due to extreme drought conditions, the precarious status of the Tristate Population, and the lack of an effective program to achieve the approved management objectives. Further, the FWS has not yet ruled upon the pending petition to list the Tristate Population under the distinct population segment portion of the Endangered Species Act.

TTSS urged the FWS to not allow any further legal harvest of trumpeters migrating southward from the Tristate area, to add Bear River Refuge into the area closed to all swan hunting, and to require mandatory check stations to accurately document the species of all harvested swans. Much to our disappointment, the Final EA proposes to continue legal quota harvest of

southward migrating trumpeters in Utah and Nevada, including on Bear River Refuge, and will not require mandatory check stations, even on the Refuge. Hunters will be allowed up to 72 hours to have harvested swans checked by unspecified procedures, with no apparent penalty for failure to comply.

**GREATER YELLOWSTONE TRUMPETER SWAN INITIATIVE** - Ruth Shea, and longtime TTSS member, Rod Drewien, have been documenting Trumpeter Swan nesting success at approximately 70 potential nesting territories in Idaho. Productivity this year has been reduced by drought conditions, the disappearance of several nesting pairs during the past winter, and human disturbance. As of mid-July, 40 cygnets (13 broods) had hatched from 20 known nests on 27 occupied territories. Projects to improve habitat on four territories by improving water control structures and nesting islands are also underway in partnership with US Forest Service, Idaho Department of Transportation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the FWS.

**TRUMPETER SWANS IN ONTARIO, SPRING 2001 UPDATE** – Despite a rather cold late spring in southern Ontario, the captive stock of the Ontario Trumpeter Swan restoration program had its earliest nest initiation on 14 April. Harry Lumsden, TTSS Director and coordinator of Ontario trumpeter restoration, reports that there were two nests yet to hatch as of July 10 (also the latest recorded in Ontario). Among the program's 24 captive pairs, 19 nested and have hatched 74 cygnets to date. Releases of 2-year-old swans are almost complete with 32 swans having been placed at four sites and another two birds yet to be released.

On 2-3 July, an aerial survey of Trumpeters Swans was flown for the first time in the Kenora District of western Ontario. The survey was flown by Steve Kittelson of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ontario Trumpeter Swan restoration program. The Kenora District is a remote, heavily wooded area with many wetlands north of the Minnesota border. Timber harvest and fly-in fishing are the main human activities. This trumpeter population was likely established by pioneering birds released in Minnesota. Although less than 10 swans were sighted due to the vastness of the area and heavy vegetation, Harry believes that it is likely that 20 to 40 trumpeters are concentrated in an area about 40 x 50 kilometers.

**IOWA TRUMPETER SWAN RESTORATION GAINS MOMENTUM IN 2001** - Ron Andrews of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is pleased to report that eight pairs of Trumpeter Swans attempted to nest within the Iowa border in 2001 as compared to only two attempts in 2000. Five of the eight nesting attempts were successful. Unfortunately, in one case, two females nested next to each other with no male involved. (Even the Iowa DNR hasn't figured out how to make that

work?!) A third nest flooded out. It was on the flood plain of the Upper Mississippi NWR and the second highest flood on record finally inundated the nest. In a more typical flooding spring, it would have been successful. Iowa's initial goal was to have 15 free flying nesting pairs of trumpeters in the state by Year 2003 and, in the next 2 years, Iowa could conceivably reach that.

Iowa's captive pairs of trumpeters have not fared as well this year. Clutch sizes have been small with several unhatched eggs in each clutch and several completely failed nests. Ron blames low production on the unusually cool rainy weather and what he calls the behavior quirks associated with Trumpeter Swans.

Iowa is excited about the potential expansion of the Trumpeter Swan population further south into more of their historic nesting range. Three of the nest attempts occurred in the central part of Iowa. There have also been several scattered reports of Iowa swans nesting in southern Minnesota. To date, Iowa has released over 300 trumpeters and hopes to release about 75 swans in 2002 and have 12 wild nesting attempts.

**WISCONSIN UPDATE** – Pat Manthey, Wisconsin DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources, reports that there are currently 45 (up one from 44 pairs in 2000) known breeding pairs of trumpeters in Wisconsin. A very wet spring with high water followed by violent storms in the north has contributed to lower brood sizes and cygnet survival this year. Banding efforts are currently underway. An important part of evaluating the success of the reintroduction program will be the development of a model of the population and calculation of minimum viable population estimates. Tracking marked swans gives valuable data on composition of the breeding population and swan survival for the model.

Wisconsin will begin a cooperative winter-monitoring project with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Data from the satellite tracking project and from ground observations, has shown that many of central Wisconsin trumpeters winter in the Carbondale area. Graduate student Faye Babineau, working with Professor Bruce Dugger, will study winter behavior and habitat use by radio-collared Wisconsin swans. The Wisconsin crew has begun putting radio collars on selected swans.

Sumner Matteson is Coordinator of Wisconsin's Trumpeter Swan reintroduction program. Pat Manthey is Field Coordinator. Summer monitoring assistants are Kristin Lucas and Cari-Ann Hayer. Recently, Pat and Cari-Ann were privileged to give TTSS Past President Harold Burgess a guided tour of swan nesting sites at Crex Meadows. Best of all, Pat writes, they got to hear a wealth of stories and swan lore from Harold.

## **NEWS FROM THE NORTHWEST-**

### *Hines Marsh*

TTSS Director Martha Jordan reports that, at last, the project to replace the water control structure at the north end of Hines Marsh on Washington's Long Beach Peninsula is finally nearing completion. All necessary

permits have been obtained, and the fabrication of the structure is now underway, scheduled for completion between August 15 and September 30. An added bonus will be the construction of a fish ladder since coho salmon, a possible Endangered Species candidate, were observed just downstream from the marsh. This project will improve water flow in the marsh, allowing for overwintering swans in this large interdunal wetland.

#### *Lead Poisoning Die-Off*

As reported in the March 2001 issue of *Trumpetings*, about 230 Trumpeter Swans died of lead poisoning along the U.S. – Canada border in Washington and British Columbia during Winter 2000/2001. State and Federal agencies, organizations, and citizens are all concerned about the potential for another problem next winter. The Canadian Wildlife Service recently hosted a meeting in Delta, British Columbia, with all the interested parties to discuss plans for research and monitoring of the swans this coming fall and winter. The meeting was productive and both agencies and non-government organizations are now working toward a plan that will allow them to identify specific locations where the swans are getting exposed to the lead. Plans include the capture, marking, and use of radio transmitters to track individual swans. This is the first step in stopping the repetition of the die-off for a third year in a row. The problem is complex and logistically challenging. Thanks to the dedication and hard work by many people, we are moving closer to finding a resolution.

TTSS is grateful to the Pilchuck Valley Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of Stanwood, Washington, for the collection of the many carcasses and for the care of swans found alive. This tragic die-off provided an opportunity to do extensive necropsy work on a large number of Trumpeter and a few Tundra Swans. Dr. Laurel Degernes, TTSS member and professor at North Carolina State University, led a team of two veterinary students, Michelle Rocque and Jennifer Kishimori, in the necropsy work. A graduate student from Utah State University, Heidi Tangermann, had an opportunity to collect measurements for her thesis research on swans.

The necropsy project was made possible by a private donation to TTSS, use of facilities and many volunteers who helped with the effort. The entire project took 1 week, 4 days of which were spent doing the necropsy work. It was a marathon effort of very long days and lots of teamwork with the processing of 172 birds, collecting all types of data, and taking gizzards and samples of liver and brains for further analysis.

TTSS says THANK YOU to the people and institutions that made this project a success: Western Washington University, Bellingham, for allowing the use of their

Environmental Studies Laboratory and Professor April Markiewicz, Institute of Environmental Toxicology & Chemistry, for getting the lab set with supplies. The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association provided office space and field staff. Volunteers included Tom Pratum, Floie Vane, Rachael Vaughn, and Bryce Beard. Without them, the project would not have been nearly as effective or completed in the needed time frame.

**DR. JAMES TATE, JR. NAMED SCIENCE ADVISOR TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR** - The U. S. Department of Interior announced on June 5, 2001, that TTSS member Jim Tate from Washington DC. will become Science Advisor to Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. Jim has devoted his career to conservation and wildlife protection and has worked extensively on endangered species issues. From 1988 to 1991, he was a wildlife biologist with the USFWS division of Endangered Species. Jim has held numerous offices and served on boards of scientific and conservation organizations including The Wilson Ornithological Society and the Wildfowl Trust of North America. Congratulations, Jim!

**YEAR 2000 TRUMPETER SWAN POPULATION STATUS REPORT** - The 2000 status report compiled by David F. Caithamer, Division of Migratory Bird Management of the FWS, is available on the FWS web site under migratory bird population status at: <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/reports/reports.html>. To open the report you will need Adobe Acrobat (available free from the Adobe Acrobat web site: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>)

The swan surveys occurred at 5-year intervals beginning in 1968. The Year 2000 survey counted 23,647 Trumpeter Swans in North America. To obtain a published copy, you may contact the Division of Migratory Bird Management at USFWS, 11500 American Holly Dr., Laurel, MD 20708-4016.

**TTSS APPRECIATES FINANCIAL SUPPORT** – TTSS and its Board of Directors are most thankful to the following foundations and individuals for their recent generous grants in support of special projects, as well as general operations:

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation,  
Roger and Claudia Salquist  
The Philanthropic Collaborative, Inc.  
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**WELCOME ALL!**

**REMINDER** - The Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> TTSS Conference (Idaho Falls 1999) is available free to current TTSS members. Due to costs of postage, this special edition of *North American Swans* was not automatically mailed out to members. If you have not already done so, send an e-mail or post card to the Society's office to receive your copy.

**SWAN RESEARCH TECHNICIAN NEEDED** - From The Wildlife Society Listserve: the Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab, Southern Illinois University, is seeking a wildlife technician for a short-term winter ecology study of Trumpeter Swans 15 November 2001-28 February 2002. For further information, contact Faye Babineau at babineau@siu.edu