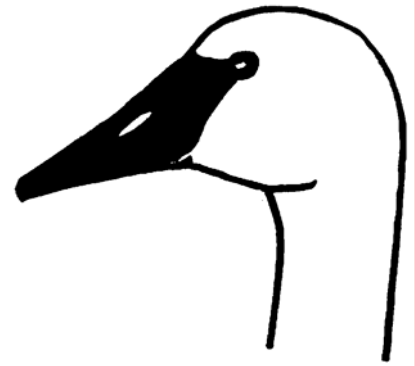




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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FROM THE PRESIDENT - On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, I want to sincerely thank our members for supporting TTSS with financial contributions, volunteer efforts, letter writing and speaking out when the swans need our strong support.

Also, I would like to welcome Bettina Sparrowe of Daniel, Wyoming, as a new Director-At-Large. Bettina, appointed by the Board at its October 12th meeting, retired in 2003 after 25 years with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and has a strong background in wetland and species conservation.

I am looking forward to meeting many of you at the 20th biennial Society conference where professionals and swan enthusiasts will come together to exchange information, promote research, and advocate for this majestic species that we all care so much about. We are also looking forward to 2005 with anticipation – next summer's range wide survey will hopefully show that Trumpeters are continuing to reoccupy long-vacant range. Though some nesting groups, like those in Greater Yellowstone, Oregon, and Nevada still face serious threats, we are hopeful that through our joint efforts we can make all populations secure. We are hopeful that the difficult and complex effort to halt the lead poisoning in Washington and British Columbia will soon yield positive results and that ongoing efforts to protect and expand winter habitats will increase the security of all populations. The future of Trumpeter Swans throughout North America will not be secure until adequate and safe winter habitat is preserved forever.

Trumpeters are focusing public attention on the great benefits of partnerships between agencies and private citizens and have become a high-profile ambassador for wetland conservation and the restoration of rare species.

In this *Trumpetings* you will find our combined membership renewal/Annual Appeal donation card with return envelope. The year on your label indicates the year through which your membership is current. TTSS is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, so contributions from U. S. citizens are tax deductible. Also included, the Holiday Gift list is another way to support your Society. Please note there are still a few of the very beautiful James Meger prints available.

We would be most grateful if you will take this opportunity to make a special gift to TTSS to help us continue to promote the welfare of Trumpeter Swans in the coming year. Thank you!

Sally Shanks

20TH TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE – Plan to join us on 20-22 October 2005 at the next Society Conference to be held in Council Bluffs, Iowa, co-hosted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites @Ameristar which is only 10 minutes from the Omaha, Nebraska, International airport.

Council Bluffs is an historic river town, steeped in the history of the Great Plains. The area is known for its picturesque bluffs called the Loess Hills in the Missouri River Valley. In 1804, Lewis and Clark held their first council with the Native Americans of the area and, 200 years later, wonderful celebrations are taking place.

While the focus of this conference will be on the updates and challenges of the Interior Population including Ontario, TTSS also invites submission of papers covering the other North American swan populations and species. There will be special emphasis on the challenges of promoting winter migration, securing wintering locations and stopover sites. More details will follow in future *Trumpetings* and on the TTSS web site. A registration brochure will be mailed out in July 2005.

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS –

Alaska Conservation Foundation presents lifetime achievement awards to Director Jim King and his wife Mary Lou King - The Alaska Conservation Foundation (ACF) held a special luncheon on August 19, 2004, at the Anchorage Hilton to honor four of Alaska's most dedicated conservation heroes who included Jim and Mary Lou King of Juneau. The award is presented to individuals whose efforts have made a direct and invaluable contribution to the preservation of Alaska's wildlife and ecosystems. These outstanding individuals will join the Alaska Conservation Hall of Fame.

Jim worked as a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for most of his career, advocating wildlife

conservation in Alaska, and was instrumental in establishing nine national wildlife refuges protecting over 23 million acres. Jim's specific passion is birds and he has been an innovator in the field of waterfowl population surveys, developing schemes to measure migratory bird populations throughout the state. A TTSS member since 1976, Jim is a Past-President of TTSS. Mary Lou King taught high school for 6 years before moving to Juneau in 1958. Following their marriage, she and Jim lived in Interior Alaska, returning to Juneau in 1964. Her volunteer work coordinating the "Seaweed Program" led her to write about the trails in Juneau, *90 Short Walks Around Juneau*.

Founded in 1980, ACF is dedicated to funding grassroots organizations in their efforts to protect Alaska's ecosystems. Since 1980, ACF has awarded over \$21 million in grants to over 200 organizations to help support critical conservation efforts in Alaska. For more details, visit the ACF web site at www.akcf.org. Hearty congratulations to Jim and Mary Lou!

The John Glynn Memorial Fund – John Glynn, who had worked for the State of Washington's Department of Ecology Northwest Regional Office for 30 years, passed away in September 2004 after a long battle with cancer. Friends and co-workers have so far donated a total of \$1,365 in John's memory. These memorial donations will be earmarked to fund the construction of a swan informational kiosk at the Johnson/DeBay Reserve near Mt. Vernon in Skagit County. John was an avid birder and frequently stopped by to enjoy the Trumpeter Swans in the wetlands of what is now the Johnson/DeBay Swan Reserve. Visit TTSS' website and click on the Washington Working Group to learn more about this Reserve where one can see tens of thousands of migrating ducks and hundreds of Trumpeters. TTSS wishes to thank John's many generous friends and expresses its sincere condolences to the Glynn family.

Washington lead poisoning update - The first Trumpeters are beginning to arrive in western Washington, raising great apprehension that the massive mortality from lead poisoning that has killed over 1,400 swans during the past 5 winters will soon begin again. Despite the best efforts of field staff, USFWS funding has been substantially reduced this year, leaving all partners scrambling to pool resources to continue searching for the source of the lead shot that the swans are ingesting as they forage. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Canadian Wildlife Service are leading the field work, which will once again involve radio-marking about 100 additional swans and tracking all marked swans to their foraging areas. As the marked swans die during the winter, the field crew will reconstruct the foraging patterns from the tracking data and hopefully determine where they picked up the lead. TTSS Board member Martha Jordan is leading our efforts to help retrieve carcasses, and to raise funds to provide spotting scopes, radios, data processing costs, and some volunteer expenses. Last winter's research effort seems to have substantially

narrowed the likely source area. This is a very difficult and frustrating effort for all involved and we hope this year's data will locate the source area. We extend our sincere thanks to all those who are working to solve this problem. TTSS will continue to do all that it can to support this effort and to raise public awareness.

Volunteers still needed - As mentioned above, Alaskan swans will soon be migrating south to winter in western Washington. Again, it will be crucial to make an all out effort to locate the source of the lead that is causing so much mortality among this population of Trumpeters. TTSS will be coordinating volunteers to assist in following the movements and feeding activity of neckbanded and radioed swans. If you have time to spend several weeks in that region between November-February, and would like to join in the monitoring effort, please contact Martha Jordan at marthaj@swansociety.org. For updates on the swan lead crisis, visit the TTSS web site and click on Washington Swan Working Group.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION NEWS -

Tri-state September Survey – The September 2004 survey of the Tri-state region of Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho found 383 total swans (289 adults and 94 cygnets in 29 broods). These are preliminary results from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and may change slightly when the final report is issued later this fall. Concern for the continued survival of the Tri-state Population heightened in 2002, when the number of adults declined by 25%, from 362 in September 2001 to only 273 in September 2002. Although a total of 148 cygnets fledged in 2002 and 2003, and 27 captive-reared yearlings were released into the population in 2003 and 2004, survival has not been adequate to lead to a significant increase in the adult segment. Fall surveys also showed serious problems with the Oregon and Nevada flocks, which have both been declining since 2001. For the 4th consecutive year, the Nevada flock fledged no cygnets and now contains only 19 adults. The Oregon flock fledged only two cygnets and only 10 adults were counted at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Greater Yellowstone swan workers meet - About 35 state, federal, and private biologists and managers who work with Trumpeter Swans and their habitats in the Greater Yellowstone region met on October 27-28 in West Yellowstone, Montana. This active group of field-level workers has created the Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Working Group to better coordinate their efforts to securely restore the region's nesting population. Meeting topics included updates on the 2004 nesting season, trends in nesting effort, cygnet production and adult numbers, habitat improvement projects, research results, winter translocation plans, and future data analysis, marking, and monitoring needs. This group plays a key role in providing detailed on-the-ground information to higher level agency managers and in developing efficient partnership approaches to take advantage of various funding options. TTSS has worked hard to assist and strengthen this group, and we

continue to play a very active role in monitoring nesting effort, implementing habitat improvement projects, and working with independent scientists to compile and analyze long term population and habitat data sets.

Ruth Shea

Adonia Henry's thesis - In July, Adonia Henry completed her master's thesis at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where Dr. Leigh Fredrickson was her Thesis Supervisor. Adonia studied "Habitat characteristics and community ecology of waterbirds on three wetland types at the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Idaho and Wyoming". Her work is closely related to TTSS efforts to improve nesting habitat in that forest by installing water control structures that will enable the U. S. Forest Service to occasionally draw down water levels and stimulate wetland productivity. For more information, Adonia can be contacted at ahenry@ducks.org.

INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS -

Sumner Matteson, Avian Ecologist with the **Wisconsin** Bureau of Endangered Resources, reports that Alliant Energy installed 200 bird-diversion devices on three power lines near Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin, in October. This area has been prone to swan-power line collisions with four swans being killed this year. The swans would strike power lines as they took off or landed in one of their favored habitats, cranberry marshes. Marking of the lines will also benefit the State's many Sandhill Cranes. The devices that were installed are known as Firefly Bird Flapper/Diverters. Each flapper has a combination of fluorescent colors, rotates in the wind, and glows at night. Visit www.pr-tech.com to see photos of the device. In 2004, the Wisconsin Trumpeter Swan restoration program documented 80 nesting pairs of Trumpeter Swans. Wisconsin is estimated to currently have between 400-450 Trumpeter Swans.

In **Minnesota**, Xcel Energy also recently marked power lines in Watertown and Monticello townships in Carver and Wright counties, approximately 30 miles west of Minneapolis. Xcel Energy utilized yellow polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic spirals called swan flight diverters. Spaced 50 feet apart, these markers help the swans see the smaller wires. The Minneapolis/St. Paul area has increasing numbers of breeding pairs of Trumpeters defending territories. Once the young learn to fly in the fall, the family groups make short trips to feed in nearby

wetlands. They fly low, often encountering deadly utility wires. It is the smaller shield wires or the smaller utility lines that border roads along wetlands that cause the most difficulty. Swans are so large, it is almost impossible for them to change direction quickly. With more swans and increasing development in the metro area, swan managers and utility companies are working close together to reduce this source of mortality.

The **Iowa** Trumpeter Swan restoration program recently received a report of one of its banded swans observed on the west shore of Lake Manitoba near Hnaua, Manitoba. This is the most northern sighting of any Iowa banded swans so far. See *Trumpetings* Volume XIV No. 1 (March 2004) for reports of confirmed breeding Trumpeters in 2003 in the Province of Manitoba. The Iowa Trumpeter Swan restoration program, which began restoration efforts in 1995, experienced unusually high mortality in the fall of 2003. There were six confirmed shootings within Iowa and six shootings out of state, seven power line collisions as well as seven cases of lead poisoning. On the positive side, the Iowa program confirmed 14 nesting attempts with three additional reports of potential nesting pairs. For detailed updates on the Iowa Trumpeter Swan restoration program, visit www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/files/swanindex or go to the TTSS website and click on Iowa in the Links section. Ron Andrews and Dave Hoffman, Iowa DNR, may be reached at 641-357-3517.

BIRD CONSERVATION ALLIANCE LAUNCHED – The Trumpeter Swan Society has been a member of the American Bird Conservancy (ABC) Council for a number of years. In March 2004, the ABC Policy Council voted to expand into the brand new Bird Conservation Alliance (BCA) which will work to champion bird conservation issues in the Americas. The new alliance will serve as a forum for bird conservation and educational organizations and concerned citizens to exchange information to prevent further bird extinctions and to reverse declining populations. Outside of the U. S., more than 300 bird species in the Americas are threatened with extinction and bird habitat is in great decline. The BCA will host a meeting of The Future of Birds and Bird Conservation on November 10, 2004, in Arlington, Virginia. TTSS will be represented at this meeting. To learn more about specific goals and work of the Alliance, visit www.birdconservationalliance.org.

WANT TO BE A MEMBER? NEED TO RENEW? GIFT SUGGESTION?

Student/Retired__\$15 Regular__\$25 Family__\$30 Organization__\$50 Supporting__\$100 Life Member__\$500 [to Endowment Fund]

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WELCOME ALL!

19TH CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS - The Selected Papers of the 19th TTSS Conference held in Richmond, British Columbia, in February 2003 is still available. Copies will be sent to current TTSS members who request them. So, be sure to see that you are up to date on your membership and then e-mail, call, or include a note with your renewal/donation. We will be happy to send you a copy. We are sure you will find the 32 papers and abstracts on the Pacific, Rocky Mountain, and Interior Populations of Trumpeter Swans as well as presentations on Tundra and Mute Swans to be very informative.