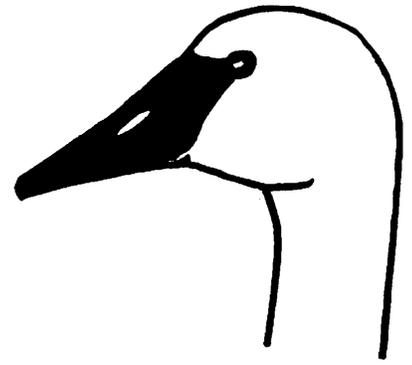


# TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society  
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**November**

**ANNUAL APPEAL AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS -**

As nesting lakes freeze and swans move to their wintering areas, it is once again time to look back on our program highlights and to ask for your support for the work planned for the coming year. At a time when our own security is at risk, the dangers facing America's wildlife, including Trumpeter Swans, are also more apparent than ever. Some of those threats are far beyond our control. Nevertheless, there is much we can do to make Trumpeter Swan populations more resilient and secure.

We include our Annual Appeal in the fall issue of *Trumpetings* to reduce mailings. We thank you for your past support of TTSS and ask you to take a few moments to make your annual contribution to the work of your Society. During these troubled times, it is likely that agency funding for trumpeter management and habitat protection will decline. TTSS will increase its efforts to keep restoration and management programs moving forward by seeking every opportunity to create effective agency/private partnerships.

During the past year, we developed and strengthened partnerships with other conservation groups, universities, and federal, state, and county agencies. Working closely with these partners, we were able to design, assemble the resources, and implement habitat improvement projects at Hines Marsh in western Washington, and at three nesting lakes on the Targhee National Forest, in eastern Idaho. Through our Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Initiative, we monitored nesting trumpeters and worked with agencies to ensure long-term protection and suitability of nesting territories in Idaho. In Washington, TTSS led efforts to document the extent of trumpeter deaths from lead poisoning last winter, conducted necropsies on nearly 175 swans, and continued to work with U.S. and Canadian agencies to reduce future lead poisoning.

We participated in agency meetings to develop strategies to reduce the vulnerability of Tristate and western Canadian trumpeters. We were very involved in discussions to improve administration

of swan hunting and prevent harvest of southward migrating trumpeters. We promoted the use of the National Wildlife Refuge System to provide secure habitat to expand trumpeter migration and winter distribution. TTSS helped to sponsor and participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> International Swan Symposium at Airlie, Virginia. We published a special edition of *North American Swans* containing papers presented at our 17<sup>th</sup> Conference, and worked with the U.S. Forest Service to develop a middle-school curriculum on Trumpeter Swans and their habitat needs.

In the coming year, our education and coordination efforts will continue through our website, publication of *Trumpetings*, *North American Swans*, participation in agency planning processes for trumpeter management, and providing data and technical assistance to managers. We will continue to be deeply involved in efforts to expand the winter distribution of Rocky Mountain Trumpeter Swans southward and to prevent further decline of the Tristate nesting population.

Other priorities will include planning for the 19<sup>th</sup> Society Conference, protecting swan habitat through our Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Initiative, identifying potential winter sites and techniques to increase migration of the Interior Population, and assisting efforts to build a secure nesting population in Ontario. Developing a Strategic Plan for our future program priorities and strengthening our endowment, The North American Swan Fund, will also be top priorities in 2002.

Through your generous response to our Annual Appeal, you are helping to make Trumpeter Swan conservation happen. Perhaps you know a friend or relative who would like a gift membership. You might prefer to make a gift to our North American Swan Fund, where a life membership or designated contribution will forever benefit swan research, habitat protection, and public education.

We thank you for your support of TTSS.

Ruth Shea, Executive Director

*All contributions from U. S. citizens are tax deductible. We are once again combining membership renewal with our annual appeal. Your membership label indicates the year through which your membership is current. Please be sure to check the appropriate box for proper credit.*

**LAWSUIT FILED ON RMP SWAN MANAGEMENT ISSUES** – On October 3, The Fund for Animals, The Biodiversity Legal Foundation, the Utah Environmental Congress, The Humane Society, and two individuals filed suit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Secretary of Interior. The suit alleges that the decision to allow legal harvest of Trumpeter Swans in the Pacific Flyway failed to comply with federal laws and migratory bird treaties and that USFWS has failed to respond to the September 2000 petition to list the Tristate Population of Trumpeter Swans, as required by the Endangered Species Act. TTSS has an electronic copy of the formal complaint available upon request.

While the Board and staff of TTSS share many of the concerns expressed in the suit, TTSS will limit its role to providing data and expert advice and will work with all concerned parties to reduce the vulnerability of RMP trumpeters. TTSS expertise lies in its detailed knowledge of trumpeters and their habitats. The Board and staff believe that TTSS can best serve RMP trumpeters by working to ensure that current efforts to develop Trumpeter Swan management plans in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and in the Pacific Flyway, are completed as soon as possible and implemented effectively. We will also continue our lead role in coordinating partners to complete on-the-ground projects through our Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Initiative, while we await a court ruling on the legalities of recent RMP management processes and decisions.

**SWANS AND THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE DROUGHT** – As Tristate and western Canadian trumpeters gather in Greater Yellowstone this fall, they will be greeted by record-low water levels in many of the region's reservoirs with predictions of record-low winter flows in most rivers, particularly in eastern Idaho. Regardless of winter severity, winter habitat will be substantially reduced. Much of the usual fall habitat on the larger lakes and reservoirs has been reduced to mud-flats and all lakes and rivers will be more susceptible to freezing due to reduced water depths and velocities. Conditions are extremely poor on the Henry's Fork, with Island Park Reservoir (which provides water to the Henry's Fork) nearly empty and projected water-releases the lowest in decades. The stage is set throughout eastern Idaho for high mortality of wintering trumpeters, unless weather is unusually mild. The drought extends throughout much of the Intermountain West, reducing habitat options for trumpeters that attempt to migrate beyond Greater Yellowstone.

TTSS has urged the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to work aggressively to increase trumpeter

distribution southward to include Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in northern Utah, and other potential migration and winter habitats south of Greater Yellowstone, and to prohibit any harvest of trumpeters south of Greater Yellowstone. However, despite our efforts, all discussion of strategies to use Bear River Refuge as a focal area for expanding southward migration continues to be stymied by the presence of the general swan hunt, and quota harvest of trumpeters in Utah and Nevada has been re-authorized for at least another year.

**19<sup>th</sup> TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN BRITISH COLUMBIA** – Although it seems a long way off, please mark your calendars for the next Society Conference to be held in the area of Vancouver, British Columbia, February 5 - 8, 2003. The exact meeting site has not yet been selected, but the hope is to be near the Canada/United States border. Director Martha Jordan is chairing the Conference planning committee. More specific details and registration information will be included in future issues of *Trumpetings*. As always, we welcome suggestions for possible topics, speakers and field trips.

**GREATER YELLOWSTONE TRUMPETER SWAN INITIATIVE** - Executive Director Ruth Shea has been working for the past 3 years with agencies in eastern Idaho to inventory all previously used and potential Trumpeter Swan nesting habitat, document the history of use at each site, identify factors that are reducing nest success or preventing use, develop site plans for the long-term management of each territory, and implement projects to improve habitat conditions. The U.S. Forest Service, Caribou-Targhee National Forest (NF) and the Idaho Department of Transportation have been enthusiastic partners in this effort. This past summer, with funding from the Waterfowl Research Foundation and the Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee, beaver-proof water control structures were installed at two previously productive nesting lakes where cygnet production has declined due to inadequacies of the old outlet structures. Nesting islands were also created or improved at two lakes, and another lake was drawn down to reduce water-lily density and stimulate greater abundance and diversity of aquatic plants. Additional nesting islands will be built next summer.

Dr. Leigh Frederickson of the Gaylord Memorial Lab in St. Louis, Missouri, helped advise in the planning of these projects and now has a graduate student, Adonia Henry, who will be studying the ecology of these and other nearby lakes on the Caribou-Targhee NF. In addition to increasing our

understanding of these lakes, her work will help document the initial habitat response to these improvement projects and provide insight into how best to manage water levels, where control is possible. We thank all who have helped make these projects and research possible.

#### **NORTH AMERICAN SWAN FUND PREPARES TO SUPPORT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

- TTSS established the North American Swan Fund (NASF) in 1991 to fund research, education and habitat protection, including land acquisition for the benefit of North American swans. Last year, NASF was incorporated into The Minneapolis Foundation, a non-profit community foundation, so as to benefit swans in perpetuity. In October 2001, TTSS received its first payout of just under \$2,500.00. TTSS Director Jim King is chairing a committee to explore funding graduate research proposals. Two Ph.D projects are being considered in Alaska and in Canada. The TTSS Board also agreed that \$500 will be allocated towards TTSS publications, fulfilling the education component of this endowment fund. Graduate students planning swan research projects are encouraged to apply to the Society for future funding. Jim King may be contacted at 907-789-7540 or by email: kingfarm@ptialaska.net

**OHIO TRUMPETER SWANS** - Since 1996, the Ohio Division of Wildlife has released 125 Trumpeter Swans, including seven birds which were released at Grand River Wildlife Area in northeast Ohio this past spring. Dave Sherman, Swan Coordinator, reported that Ohio's spring survey indicated about 65 trumpeters reside in the state. Production was excellent this summer with 17 pairs seen throughout the state, and 11 pairs nesting in nine counties. Eight nests successfully hatched 31 cygnets, and reports indicate that approximately 21 of the cygnets have successfully fledged.

The birds are expanding their range in Ohio with swan observations occurring in 50% of the counties. Ohio has become an exporter of swans with reports of eight to 10 trumpeters taking up residence in either Michigan or Ontario. The birds have also continued to expand their migration routes. During the first years of Ohio's program, few of the swans left Ohio during winter. This past year, however, reports of Ohio swans were received from Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia.

#### **TRUMPETER PRODUCTION IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO**

- Harry Lumsden, Coordinator of Ontario's Restoration Program, reports that 2001 was an above average year for production among wild trumpeters in Southern Ontario. Eighteen out of 29 known nesting pairs hatched cygnets with an average brood size of 3.8. Fifty cygnets were alive as of 1 September. Additional pairs with cygnets will likely show up at traditional wintering locations. Also, Ontario's captive breeding program had its most successful year yet. Of 25 pairs held by program cooperators, 20 pairs laid 130 eggs and 79 cygnets hatched. Sixty-four

cygnets (81%) survived as of 1 September. Thirty-four 2-year-old captive swans were released into the wild during 2001. To measure survival and productivity, banding and marking birds with wing tags will continue to be a priority. There were an estimated 348 free-flying Trumpeter Swans in Southern Ontario as of 1 September. More program details will follow in *North American Swans*.

**MINNESOTA UPDATE** - The Minnesota DNR and Hennepin Parks have been tracking nesting pairs of trumpeters, but it has been difficult to cover the entire state. A preliminary tally indicates 80 pairs with broods. A more complete count will be possible as swans arrive at traditional wintering sites. Cottonwood County in southern Minnesota had its first successful nest this year. A DNR summer aerial survey observed 43 pairs with broods in northwest Minnesota. During the past few years, Hennepin Parks has had nine territorial pairs in five of its Park Reserves. However, due to the territorial nature of swans, the parks appear to be saturated. One 18-year-old male in Crow-Hassan Park Reserve will not allow any other trumpeters anywhere within "his" 2,600-acre park. Thus, pairs have established nesting territories in counties immediately west and south, mostly on private land. The delighted landowners provide excellent updates. There were 28 territorial pairs in five Twin Cities metro counties in 2001.

**OBSERVATIONS OF ULTRALIGHT SWANS REQUESTED** - The Trumpeter Swan Migration Project (TSMP) of Environmental Studies at Airlie is asking for help from the public to help track juvenile Trumpeter Swans trained to follow an ultralight aircraft in Airlie, Virginia, and western New York. The young swans had been shown a migration route, New York to Maryland, in December 2000, and spent the winter in Chesapeake Bay at The Wildfowl Trust of North America, Grasonville, Maryland. Twelve swans survived the winter and were relocated to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation's Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area near Buffalo, New York, in May when none initiated a return flight to their former summer training area.

These "UltraSwans" have completed their molts and are now exploring the local area near Buffalo. TSMP staff would appreciate receiving information regarding their movements between Buffalo and the Chesapeake Bay. It is hoped that, when the weather freezes up, the swans will fly south, from western New York across Pennsylvania to the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. All the swans are banded with US Fish & Wildlife Service metal leg bands, along with yellow plastic neck and leg bands. Observations can be reported toll-free at 888-264-4728. For more information on the migration experiment, please visit <http://trumpeterswans.org>

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**WELCOME ALL!**

## TRUMPETING EDITORS

Madeleine Linck  
Ruth E. Shea

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**MEMORIAL FUND MAKES VIDEO AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL LIBRARIES** – Thanks to the generosity of the family of the late Amos D. Faux-Burhans III, TTSS has been making copies of the award winning video *Trumpeter Blues* available free to school libraries. Produced by Trailwood Films and TTSS member Bob Landis, the film follows a year in the life of a family of Trumpeter Swans in the Yellowstone Park region. Although produced in 1987, the narrative is still very relevant and the photography is awesome. Mr. Faux-Burhans was a Society member from Maryland who was especially interested in educating school children about the majestic Trumpeter Swan. Teachers interested in obtaining a copy of the video should please contact the TTSS office.

**TRUMPETER SWANS FOR SALE OR TRADE -**

TTSS has had several requests from members looking to purchase Trumpeter Swans. Our swan breeders list at the office is in need of updating. We would appreciate hearing from private propagators who have trumpeters available. Please include hatch year, sex, wing-condition and terms. Please call, e-mail or drop a note to

**TRUMPETER SWAN PAINTING ON FRONTIER**

**AIRLINES** – A recent visitor to our Website brought to our attention a beautiful painting of a Trumpeter Swan decorating the tail section of a plane in Arizona. To see a photo of the airliner, visit [www.airliners.net](http://www.airliners.net) and do a search under “Airbus 319” and “Frontier”. The trumpeter is one of several species featured on the

Visit TTSS' World Wide Web site at [www.taiga.net/swans/index.html](http://www.taiga.net/swans/index.html)