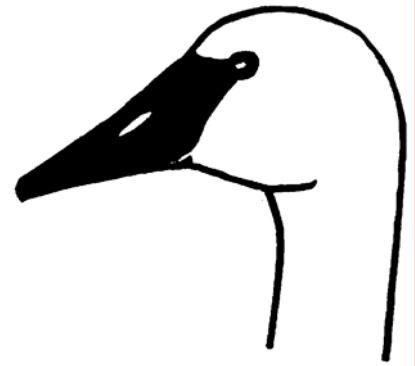




TRUMPETINGS

Voice of The Trumpeter Swan Society
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Vol. XV. No. 2

JULY 2005

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Have you ever thought about helping TTSS by serving as a Board member? This fall we will be electing 10-15 Board members to govern TTSS for the next 2 years and we need to have all candidates identified by late August. Although our part-time staff implement our programs and handle the day-to-day administrative tasks, the Board of Directors is responsible for choosing our program priorities, overseeing our finances and administrative policies, and ensuring that TTSS is run effectively and efficiently. We strive to find Board members from throughout the U. S. and Canada. First and foremost, we seek potential Board members who care deeply about Trumpeter Swans and our efforts to improve the security of wild Trumpeter Swan populations and their essential habitats. Administrative skills such as public relations, finance, fundraising, or legal knowledge are helpful, but not required. Your interest and willingness to participate are most important. The Board meets by teleconference call 4 times per year and in person every 2 years at the Society's biennial conferences. If you would like to learn more about serving on our Board, please contact Madeleine Linck at the main office, and we will try to answer all your questions.

Preparations for the 20th TTSS Conference that will be held in Council Bluffs, Iowa, 20-22 October 2005 are well underway. Co-hosted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the focus of this conference will be on the Interior Population (IP) of Trumpeter Swans. There will be status reports from all the IP restoration projects. In addition and of great importance, there will be a working session/discussion to develop a plan for the promotion of migration. There will be presentations on the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast Trumpeters as well, including the latest findings about the lead poisoning crisis in the Pacific Northwest. The conference will include a field trip day where the Iowa DNR will conduct a release of Trumpeter Swans, give participants a tour of the unique Loess Hills of western Iowa, provide lunch at the Hitchcock Nature Center, and visit the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge along the scenic Missouri River Valley.

Xcel Energy Foundation is generously helping to sponsor the conference and Xcel Energy staff will give a presentation on power lines and swans. A registration brochure has been included with this issue of *Trumpetings*. Make your plans to attend now and

participate in making Trumpeters more secure. I look forward to visiting with you there.

Ruth Shea

CINNABAR FOUNDATION WILL DOUBLE YOUR GIFT TO TTSS! - The Cinnabar Foundation of Helena, Montana, has offered TTSS a dollar-for-dollar matching grant of \$2,000 to help fund our efforts to restore Trumpeter Swan nesting habitat in Montana's Centennial Valley. To receive the grant, we must first raise the matching funds and then Cinnabar will double them! Please help us meet their challenge by September 15, so that the habitat work can begin this fall to get important wetlands ready for the nesting season next spring.

Many people know about Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in southwestern Montana, and the crucial role it played in saving Greater Yellowstone's Trumpeters when it was established in 1935. Few people realize, however, that the wetlands on private ranches and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands in the valley west of the Refuge were also very important nesting sites. Over 30 ponds and river oxbows in the western Centennial Valley once held nesting swans. Today, many have been degraded and are no longer productive. Through our 3-year Centennial Valley Project, TTSS will be working with landowners, the BLM, and Montana Wetland Legacy to improve water supplies, emergent vegetation and nesting islands so these sites can once again become productive. If you would like to help this effort, please send your donation to TTSS by September 15 and note that it is to help meet the Cinnabar Foundation Challenge.

PACIFIC COAST POPULATION NEWS

25th Anniversary of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) – A celebration took place July 6-7, 2005, in Anchorage, Alaska, to commemorate 25 years of ANILCA that created over 100 million acres of national parks, national wildlife refuges, and national forests in Alaska. Former President Jimmy Carter who signed ANILCA into law spoke to the conference attendees. TTSS Director Jim King of Juneau participated in the gathering and the following is an

excerpt from his and co-author David Cline's presentation.

Winter Refuges for Wild Swans

Half of North America's Tundra Swans and 80% of the world's Trumpeter Swans nest in Alaska. They are part of the avifauna of two national forests, 10 national parks, 10 state refuges/parks and 13 national wildlife refuges. Swans from these 35 protected areas can no longer winter in the temperate estuaries of the U. S. and Canada which historically was their first choice. In the 19th century, Tundra Swans were grossly reduced and Trumpeters nearly exterminated. Their partial recovery during the 20th century depended on learning to feed on agricultural lands. In England and Japan, farmlands with visitor centers have been developed to attract wild wintering swans and people into a close, mutually beneficial association. The swans pay their own way by luring people to gift shops and teashops. This is an opportunity we have not tried in North America. To ensure the permanent presence of these most massive of the world's flying creatures in Alaska's protected wild lands, we must not leave them entirely at the mercy of agribusiness for their winter sustenance.

Alaska survey data analysis – Researchers at the University of Alaska Fairbanks have initiated an analysis of the long term survey data for Alaska Trumpeter Swans, which was collected primarily by TTSS Director Jim King and Bruce Conant, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists stationed in Juneau. Doctoral student Josh Schmidt and his advisor, Dr. Mark Lindberg, are examining state-wide swan counts dating back to 1968 and other survey data to determine trends in population size of Trumpeters and factors that may affect how fast swans increase or possibly decrease in abundance. Trumpeter Swans have expanded their range in Alaska during the last several decades which may be related to climatic change. Preliminary results indicate that rates of growth and expansion may be slowing in more recent years. This work is funded by the State Wildlife Grant program administered by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The work will be completed in 2007. Josh Schmidt will be giving a presentation at the TTSS 20th Conference.

Trumpeter Swan surveys on the Chugach National Forest 2004 – Trumpeter Swan aerial surveys were conducted during May and August 2004 on the Copper River Delta and surrounding areas of the Chugach National Forest in southcentral Alaska. The surveys were accomplished through cooperation between the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U. S. Forest Service. In May, 940 white (adult and subadult) swans and 161 nests were counted. In August, 970 white swans and 189 cygnets in 59 broods were recorded. Production was average. Nest success was 0.37, mean brood size was 3.2, and young made up 16% of the early fall population. The total fall population decreased 2% from 2003 and was 33% above the mean. There are now 55 comparable swan surveys in 29 different years

for this area. Continuation of a standardized Trumpeter Swan survey program is recommended. The size of the fall swan population in this survey area has fluctuated between 500 and 1200 birds since the surveys began in 1968. For the complete survey report, you may contact Deborah Groves at USFWS, 3000 Vintage Blvd., Suite 240, Juneau, Alaska 99801.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN POPULATION NEWS

Idaho nest monitoring - Although the drought continues in Idaho, above average spring rains have improved nesting conditions at most Trumpeter Swan territories. Nest monitoring conducted by TTSS with support from the U. S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has so far confirmed 24 active nests in eastern Idaho. At least 28 cygnets had hatched from 15 territories where monitoring of the hatch has been completed. As of 7 July, two late nests were still incubating and results of hatching were not available from Grays Lake NWR. Due to low water and other habitat problems, on 25 May, the FWS salvaged 23 eggs from the seven known nests at Grays Lake NWR, but left one egg in each nest. As in past years, the salvaged eggs will be hatched and reared by the Wyoming Wetland Society in Jackson, Wyoming, for release in the restoration effort at Bear Lake NWR, in southeast Idaho. Efforts to document the fate of the eggs that were left in the Grays Lake nests are currently underway.

Trumpeters return to the Blackfoot Valley of Montana - Due to the efforts of many partners, including Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, USFWS, Montana Wetland Legacy, Wyoming Wetland Society, many private landowners, TTSS, and others, 10 Trumpeter Swans were released in western Montana's Blackfoot Valley in late June. This is the first step in private and agency efforts to restore a nesting flock in this area. Last year, there were only about 65 nesting pairs of Trumpeters remaining in the entire western U. S. This project is attempting to rebuild swan use of excellent wetlands in western Montana. All 10 swans appear to be doing well and are being closely monitored. They should regain flight by late July when their molt is completed and will have the chance to start exploring the area. We'll keep you posted on their progress on our website and at our conference this fall.

Winter 2005 RMP Trumpeter Swan survey – The following summary comes from the April 2005 report prepared by James Dubovsky, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS Migratory Birds and State Programs. The 2005 Mid-winter survey was conducted between 25 January and 7 February. Habitats continued to be quite dry during winter and much of the Tristate area remained in a drought. Generally temperatures during Winter 2004-05 were slightly warmer than average.

Observers counted 5,361 swans (white birds and cygnets) which was a 17% increase from the 4,584 swans counted in February 2004. The number of birds wintering in areas near restoration flocks was higher than counts in recent years, largely due to more complete survey coverage in the Summer Lake Wildlife Management Area, Oregon, this winter. However, counts at Malheur NWR, Oregon, remained near historic lows, and the count at Ruby Lake NWR, Nevada, was the lowest since 1995. Increases in total swans were up 20% in Idaho, up 25% in Wyoming and down 7% in Montana.

The annual mid-winter survey includes great number of migrants that fly south from western Canada to join the resident flocks of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming which totaled only 385 swans in Fall 2004. The increasing winter concentration of almost all the western Canadian Trumpeters in the Tri-state area is a serious management concern, due to their vulnerability to mortality during a severe winter.

INTERIOR POPULATION NEWS

Trumpeter Swan restoration mushrooms in Iowa - Trumpeter Swan restoration efforts are moving along ahead of schedule in Iowa. After reaching our first goal of 15 free flying nesting pairs of Trumpeter Swans, Iowa's new goal was to have 25 pairs by the end of 2006. Thus far, we have 24 pairs and the likelihood of having another pair or two yet this summer is very possible. Also, a pair of Iowa-released Trumpeters have successfully hatched near Dawn, Missouri, a few miles south of Chillicothe, Missouri. It seems only appropriate that this successful nesting occurred at a place call "Dawn." This is perhaps an omen of things yet to transpire in Missouri as far as Trumpeter Swans are concerned. They nested unsuccessfully in that vicinity last year. Several Iowa-released Trumpeters have also extended the nesting range several miles southward in Minnesota and Wisconsin making Iowa a major contributor to the Interior Population of Trumpeter Swans. The Trumpeter Swan project in Iowa has taken on a whole movement of its own, growing in so many ways and some extremely exciting possibilities. I would hazard to guess that the Iowa Trumpeter Swan Restoration Project has more private support than most other swan restoration projects. Our nesting pair numbers may be approaching those of several Rocky Mountain States' nesting pairs. Also, wintering swan numbers increased to record numbers last winter. I would also predict that the Iowa program is within 2 years of sustainability, unless something catastrophic

occurs. Iowa is often referred to as the most changed landscape in the nation with well over 95% of its original 2 ½ million acres of glacial wetlands being drained. It is a great feeling to think that we are bringing back this magnificent charismatic mega-fauna to the state. It also appears that Trumpeters may be far more adaptable than many of us had first thought. Let's all keep on "trumpeting the cause" for wetlands, Trumpeter Swan restoration and other conservation causes.

Ron Andrews, Trumpeter Swan Restoration Coordinator

In Minnesota, a July 2, 2005, aerial survey by Three Rivers Park District Volunteer Dr. Arnie Fredrickson of Minneapolis covered the western Minneapolis metro counties of Carver, Hennepin, and Wright. Thirty pairs of Trumpeter Swans with cygnets were observed with another 15 additional pairs seen on territories. A minimum of 106 cygnets were counted. However, it was difficult to make an accurate total count of cygnet numbers from the air as the swan families were often on land within heavy vegetation or the young were being brooded. Dr. Fredrickson is now following up with ground checking of the flown sites, and other wetlands where additional broods have been reported by local residents. He will continue to monitor broods to get a more accurate estimate of cygnet survival. We will hear more complete details and see some excellent aerial photographs at the TTSS upcoming 20th Conference.

In Wisconsin, preliminary reports from Sumner Matteson give an early count of 86 active Trumpeter Swan nests in the state of Wisconsin. State budget restrictions, however, have curtailed the swan monitoring program since last year. Sumner has been monitoring the central half of the State and Pat Manthey is covering the northern half of the State.

In Ontario, Harry Lumsden reports that an aerial survey was flown by helicopter in the Kenora District in far southwestern Ontario (north of the Lake of the Woods) on the 10th of June. Fifty swans and one nest were observed. A nest was also seen in the Fort Frances district, well south of the Kenora swan population, close to the Minnesota border. A more complete report of Ontario's Trumpeters will be given in the fall at the 20th TTSS Conference.

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Student/Retired __\$15 Regular __\$25 Family __\$30 Organization __\$50 Supporting __\$100 Life Member __\$500 [to Endowment Fund]

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LET'S GET THE LEAD OUT! Anglers can now use sinkers and jigs made from non-poisonous materials that help prevent lead poisoning in waterfowl. Sinkers and jigs made from tin, bismuth, and steel can be bought at sporting goods stores or on the Web. Just one lead sinker can poison a loon! In Minnesota, the Office of Environmental Assistance and the DNR are partnering with retailers and outdoors groups to offer free lead tackle exchanges across the State. A complete list of lead tackle exchange events can be found at www.moea.state.mn.us/reduce/sinkers.cfm.