NORTHERN ROCKIES TRUMPETER SWAN STEWARDS

Collaboration * Action * Community

a program of
Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative
PO Box 2705, Jackson, WY 83001
http://nrccooperative.org/nrtss/

Ruth Shea, Director
ruth@nrccooperative.org
208-785-0314

Drew Reed, Stewardship Coordinator
wdrewreed@gmail.com
307-690-9184

Helping to securely restore Trumpeter Swans in Greater Yellowstone and the western US

2016 PRIORITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: THANKS TO ALL OUR PARTNERS!!

1. Create a regional Swan Stewards network of private and public entities to increase understanding of Trumpeter Swans and build effective partnerships for their long-term conservation.
   a) worked with over 100 entities including federal and state agencies, land trusts, other NGOs, wetland owners, water managers, power companies, schools, and volunteers
   b) focus was to increase understanding of Greater Yellowstone’s Trumpeter Swans and find new ways to work together to benefit the swans

2. Improve nesting habitat
   a) improved nesting habitat at 5 territories: Palisades, Upper Slide L., and Teton Science School wetland, WY; and Railroad Pond (CTNF) and McGrath’s pond (Swan Valley, Idaho)

3. Reduce significant mortality factors
   a) Our SwanSafe community partnership helped raise $53,682 and worked with Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative to bury ¼ mile of swan-killing powerline at Miller’s Pond in Teton Basin.

4. Assist managers facing increasing conservation challenges and shrinking budgets
   a) helped IDFG create the Upper Snake Beaver Cooperative to use beaver to help restore wetlands and depleted water tables.
   b) provided swan information and program assistance to IDFG, WGFD, GYTSWG, USFS, USNPS, FWS (Partners, Migratory Birds, Refuges) and Teton Regional Land Trust
   c) Monitored CTNF, other core Idaho and core Wyoming swan territories, identified problems and improvement opportunities, made recommendations to managers
   d) tested use of trail cameras to monitor Wyoming nest sites

5. Package knowledge of Trumpeter Swan biology and management in formats that will be most useful to future swan conservation efforts
a) helped with RMP management plan revision
b) began draft timeline of RMP/US management 1919-present
c) began manuscript on Historical Ecology of YNP Trumpeter Swans 1870-present
d) whenever possible provided information to aid the next generation of swan managers

2017 PRIORITIES

Population
1. **Resiliency Project (assess impacts of winter 2016-17 on nesting pairs)**
   a) help ensure that 2017 nest monitoring will be sufficient to assess the survival and productivity of the Greater Yellowstone nesting component following the very severe winter 2016-17.
   b) obtain sufficient funding for nest monitoring at RRLNWR and GLNWR where recent funding cuts have prevented nest monitoring; if necessary provide retired agency staff to conduct aerial surveys
   c) work with RRLNWR and BLM to promote the continued growth of the Centennial Valley flock and encourage pioneering of vacant suitable habitat in the Centennial Valley and in Island Park
   d) summarize knowledge of Montana’s Paradise Valley flock and identify opportunities to increase their benefit to the overall Greater Yellowstone population

Habitat Improvement
2. **Henrys Fork Headwaters Partnership**
   a) work to restore water levels and aquifer recharge capacity at historic swan nesting territories to increase habitat connectivity from RRLNWR to YNP and southward towards Teton Basin. Partners: with IDFG, USFS, USFWS, Nature Conservancy, EarthFire, water managers and others
   b) evaluate various methods to increase wetland quality and quantity through beaver restoration
   c) Provide partner match and assistance on two outlet structure NAWCA projects on CTNF

3. **High Divide Project (western CV northwesterly toward Blackfoot Restoration Flock)**
   a) Document recent Trumpeter Swan sightings in the High Divide; develop a swan reporting network
   b) Work with USFWS Partners program and MFWP to ground truth mapping of potential suitable swan wetlands and prioritize for potential improvement/conservation
   c) Work with landowners, local land trusts and agencies to conserve and improve priority wetlands
   d) Use Jim Roscoe’s studies of western CV habitat to help develop habitat improvement strategies.

4. **Wyoming core** – continue working with WGFD, USFWS, GTNP to identify habitat improvement possibilities and implement projects

5. **YNP**: develop maps of most productive historic nest locations and work with USNPS to identify potential strategies to encourage swan use; provide input to minimize impacts to swans from the Grebe Lake fish poisoning project

6. **Grays Lake Reconnect**: work with water managers and water users to explore potential solutions to the 90+ years of resource damage caused by the Clark’s Cut trans-basin diversion

Monitoring
1. **Eastern Idaho** - Continue monitoring of nesting through USFS CCS partnership
2. **Wyoming** - Continue to assist WGFD with monitoring of core territories in Jackson Hole and use of trail cameras
3. **Refuges** - Assist FWS to monitor nests at RRLNWR and GLNWR