

## **GREATER YELLOWSTONE TRUMPETER SWAN WORKING GROUP**

### **Introduction**

Fewer than 100 trumpeter swans were found in the lower 48 states at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; their home was the Greater Yellowstone (GY). The GY still supports a local breeding population, the source for most swan restoration projects in North America.

The GY over-winters 5,000 plus swans from Western Canada and the GY but the resident adult population totals fewer than 500 swans. A recent genetic study found no significant differences between swan nesting in Canada and the GY, but there appears to be no or insignificant recruitment from the Canadian nesting population into the GY. The GY adult swan population remains relatively stagnant, while the Canadian flocks continue to increase.

### **The Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Working Group (GYTSWG)**

The Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Working Group (GYTSWG) first met in 1997 to address trumpeter swan management specific to the Greater Yellowstone (GY). The GYTSWG addresses trumpeter swan issues and concerns, population dynamics and habitat management opportunities.

The GYTSWG includes experts with unmatched technical expertise in the history and management of Trumpeter Swans in North America, and manages the longest - running population data set of the species.

The GYTSWG meets annually to:

- Coordinate GY swan habitat and population data.
- Identify and coordinate regional habitat management issues and enhancement opportunities.
- Serve as technical advisors to private landowners interested in the conservation of swans on their land.
- Coordinate federal land management of GY trumpeter swans.
- Provide specific regional perspectives and land management input to FWS Migratory Bird Office.

### **Committee Representation**

- Yellowstone National Park
- Grand Teton National Park
- Caribou-Targhee NF
- Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge
- National Elk Refuge
- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Idaho Fish and Game Department
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- USGS researchers
- Montana State University researchers
- The Trumpeter Swan Society
- Montana Wetland Legacy Program
- Salish-Kootenai Federated Tribes
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- Gray's Lake National Wildlife Refuge
- Pacific Flyway Council

## **Past Accomplishments**

1. Annually synthesize local population and habitat status data for the GY region.
2. Developed winter and nesting habitat evaluation protocols for the region.
3. Provided technical input in the development of the USFWS Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan (TSIP), developed to coordinate conservation objectives and avoid the need to list the species.

## **Current Committee Focus**

- Review the draft Pacific Flyway Rocky Mountain Trumpeter Swan Management Plan revision.
- Coordinated data gathering and analysis.
- Carry out the Trumpeter Swan Implementation Plan.
- Identify and coordinate swan nesting and winter habitat projects on private and public lands.
- Facilitate scientific input into discussions on population status determination and long-term conservation objectives for the GY population.
- Provide technical expertise to restoration, protection and enhancement projects.
- Identify and develop public education/awareness tools.
- Work with the USFWS Pacific Flyway Plan implementation that leads to expansion of nesting and wintering birds out of the GY into hospitable environments.

## **Challenges**

Trumpeter swans are managed as a sensitive species on forests or species of special concern in the parks. As a continental migratory waterfowl species they are the primary management responsibility of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Species management is conducted through flyway councils composed of USFWS and state waterfowl biologists. In this context, challenges include:

- Engaging a body of cooperating biologists dedicated to the conservation of GY trumpeter swans.
- Positively influencing management of GY trumpeter swans by the FWS.

## **For additional information contact**

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