



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to PM's, MAY 3, 1956

NEW TRUMPETER SWAN NESTING AREA DISCOVERED IN ALASKA

The discovery of a new nesting area for the trumpeter swan--this one in the lower Copper River Basin in Alaska--has been reported by a Fish and Wildlife scientist.

Hitherto, there were only two known nesting areas for the trumpeter swan on the North American continent--one in the Saskatoon Lake area in western Alberta and the other in the Red Rock Lakes area in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

The discovery of the new nesting areas was made in 1954 and 1955 by Melvin A. Monson, a fishery biologist for the Fish and Wildlife Service, in the course of a salmon study he was making in the Copper River area. This is the second important development in trumpeter swan management in recent months, the first being definite proof secured last December that there was a transfer of birds between the American and Canadian flocks.

Several nests were discovered in the vicinity of the Bremner and Tasnuna Rivers in the Copper River drainage. The Copper River is not far from the Canadian border.

Proof that the nests were those of the trumpeter swan was furnished by the birds themselves and by measurements and identification of several unhatched eggs.

Fish and Wildlife Service officials hail the discovery of the new nesting area because it marks an extension of the range of the trumpeter and because it lessens the danger of disaster striking the species through some breeding ground catastrophe.

Wildlife specialists have sought to extend the range of the swan and increase the breeding grounds by transplanting Red Rock Lakes trumpeters in other parts of the West. Since 1939 there have been a few trumpeters nesting in Jackson Lake,

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Wyoming, the farthest south extension of the Red Rock flock. Service officials are hopeful that the current efforts to establish the swan in the Malheur Lake area in Oregon by planting full wing cygnets will be successful.

Old bird literature indicates that about 100 years ago the trumpeter swan had nesting areas on the Yukon River in northern Alaska but present-day biologists are inclined to think that these reports are in error.

For many years the American and Canadian bands of trumpeters had been thought to be fairly well "anchored" to their respective habitats. Some years ago it was noted that in winter as many as 300 trumpeters frequented islands in the extreme southern portion of Alaska but these were believed to be a unit of the Canadian flock. And while the adult birds were seen in southeastern Alaska often and in numbers no nesting area had ever been found there.

Some months ago a dead trumpeter which had been tagged near Grande Prairie in western Alberta was found in Idaho near the Montana line and not far from the Red Rock Lakes Refuge. These spurred a special winter survey of the area and as a result several other trumpeters bearing the yellow leg band placed by the Canadian Wildlife Service, were found with the American flock.

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