

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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TRUMPETER SWAN NO LONGER RARE AND ENDANGERED, SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE REPORTS

The trumpeter swan is no longer a "rare wildlife species" because of a successful conservation program, Director John S. Gottschalk of the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife said today.

"Trumpeters are now located in several widely scattered geographic areas and their environments are not seriously threatened," Dr. Gottschalk said. "This swan is, therefore, no longer in danger of extinction, nor can it be considered rare according to the definition in the Bureau's Red Book of Rare and Endangered Fish and Wildlife in the United States."

Bureau biologists counted 3,641 trumpeters in the United States during their 1968 fall aerial survey and concluded that the total population probably is between 4,000 and 5,000. Additional trumpeters are in Canada.

At one time these majestic birds were eagerly sought by feather traders and others were shot for meat. In 1932, only 69 trumpeters were left in the 48 contiguous States. These were in the Yellowstone-Red Rock Lakes-Jackson Hole region of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming.

The Red Rock National Wildlife Refuge in Montana was established in 1935; transplants to other refuges began in 1939.

During the recent survey, trumpeters were seen in South Dakota (76), Oregon (51), Washington (37), Nevada (34) and Minnesota (16). All of these are transplants or offspring of transplants. Except in Minnesota, all were on or near national wildlife refuges.

Counts in other States were: Alaska (2,842), Montana (365), Wyoming (126), and Idaho (94).

In addition, about 50 zoos in the United States now have this swan. Some trumpeters have lived 30 years in captivity; their life span in the wild is unknown.

"This is an example of conservation interests bringing about an action program that successfully prevented the loss of one of America's greatest wildlife species," Dr. Gottschalk said, "and we are proud of the role our refuges have played in this restoration."

The Federal wildlife chief said that special restrictions on the display, propagation, sale and exchange of trumpeters held by private institutions are no longer needed.

But he added: "We will continue to monitor swan populations, and we intend to increase our efforts to restore trumpeters in appropriate parts of their former breeding range."

Trumpeters are the largest North American bird in terms of weight. Males sometimes reach 30 pounds. Whooping cranes are taller, but weigh only about 17 pounds. Trumpeters are appropriately named because their calls are loud and resonant, reminding some observers of a trumpet and horn fanfare of a symphony.

