



## Zoos and Trumpeter Swan restorations



*Trumpeter Swan family at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (CMZ). The three cygnets hatched earlier this year arrived in Iowa in early October and will be released in spring 2017 as part of the Iowa restoration program. The adult female (no tag) is eight years old and came to CMZ in 2010. The adult male (green tag) was hatched at CMZ in 1997 after being collected as an egg from Alaska. He was released in Ohio and then came back to CMZ in 2007 after being injured. He is nineteen years old. Photo courtesy Cleveland Metroparks Zoo*

### *Zoos have played a vital role in bringing the magnificent swan back to its historic range*

#### **How it began**

Carol Hesch, Assistant Curator for the Memphis Zoo, shared with zoo donors the story of the zoo's role in Trumpeter Swan restoration. "12:20 PM, Aug 30, 1966, the Memphis Zoo (Overton Park Zoo) received a telegram from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Monida, Montana, alerting zoo officials that their pair of Trumpeter Swans will be sent via rail car from Monida, Montana to Salt Lake City, and then flown by air to Memphis. This was the start of Trumpeter Swans at the Memphis Zoo."

"The United States Fish and Wildlife loan program was sending Trumpeter Swans to the zoos to increase productivity in captivity of this species. During this program, the first captive swans in captivity in 100 years were produced. Trumpeters were rare at this time, as all swan populations except for the Red Rocks group were virtually extirpated from the continental United States."

During the 1960s and 1970s, a number of zoos received Trumpeter Swans from Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. However the program was discontinued as the number of swans at the Refuge began to decline.

#### **Zoos help State Restoration Programs**



*Cygnets on exhibit with their parents at the Kansas City Zoo. Kansas City hatched and raised cygnets this year that will be part of Iowa's Trumpeter Swan restoration program. Photo courtesy of Kansas City Zoo*

Zoos played an important role in Trumpeter Swan restoration programs as far back as the 1980's. Through the years, they worked with state wildlife and natural resource departments in several different states across the country.

For example, the Minnesota Zoo, Watertown Zoo, Chicago's Brookfield Zoo and Tulsa Zoo contributed to Minnesota's restoration program. Wisconsin's major zoo partners were the Milwaukee Zoo, with the Brookfield Zoo and the Minnesota Zoo hatching eggs from Alaska and providing cygnets. Michigan's important partners were the Detroit Zoo and Binder Park Zoo.

Our ongoing Oregon Restoration Project has used cygnets from Kansas' Topeka and Lee Richardson Zoos, the Anchorage Alaska Zoo and the Cincinnati Zoo.



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### Iowa's Restoration Program and the role of zoos

In the last twenty years Iowa's restoration program has released hundreds of swans from at least 17 zoos. Dave Hoffman, of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (and Vice President of The Trumpeter Swan Society) estimates that at least a quarter of the birds released in Iowa have come from zoos.

This year four zoos are participating in Iowa's Trumpeter Swan restoration program. Kansas City Zoo, Green Bay Wisconsin's NEW Zoo, Maryland Zoo and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo will be contributing fifteen cygnets for release into Iowa in 2017. This will be the first time Maryland Zoo and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo work with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Both are excited to be part of this new partnership.

The zoos have been working closely with Dave Hoffman to coordinate the transfers of swans into Iowa. Dave has been integral in making the process easy and efficient as zoos have different logistical and administrative needs.

As a part of these restoration efforts, zoos are able to help this species in the wild and connect zoo guests with conservation initiatives right here in North America. This creates a very powerful personal connection for people that will fuel future conservation action.

Tiffany Mayo, from Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in Ohio, is the new Trumpeter Swan Species Survival Program Coordinator and Studbook Keeper for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Cleveland Metroparks Zoo played a major role in the Ohio Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program.

With these programs, zoos strive to create sustainable captive populations and work to bolster wild populations. As Tiffany works more with the program, she hopes to continue to help coordinate zoo participation in Trumpeter Swan restoration, expand Trumpeter Swan populations within the AZA and educate people on the importance of zoos supporting these programs. ♦

*Our thanks to Tiffany Mayo for her major contributions to this article and the photos. Tiffany recently became a TTSS member!*

*Right: In early October, 2016, Dave Hoffman of the Iowa DNR received the three cygnets from CMZ. The cygnets will spend the winter in Iowa and be released in the spring. Photos right: courtesy of Cleveland Metroparks Zoo*



*In 2002, Carol Hesch, Assistant Curator at the Memphis Zoo, handed over a cygnet hatched and raised at the Memphis Zoo to the Iowa DNR for release. To date, Memphis Zoo has sent an incredible 44 Trumpeter cygnets to the Iowa DNR to be part of the restoration program. Photo courtesy of the Memphis Zoo*



*Rachel Peters, one of the Trumpeter Swan keepers at the Kansas City Zoo (KCZ), is super excited to be releasing cygnets hatched and raised at KCZ at the temporary holding facility in Iowa. They are set to be released into the wild in Iowa in spring of 2017. Photo courtesy of Kansas City Zoo*



*Above: Animal keepers Tiffany Mayo and Maria Clapp put a temporary leg band identifier on one of the Trumpeter Swan cygnets at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (CMZ). CMZ sent three cygnets to Iowa this fall to be released in spring 2017 as part of Iowa's restoration program.*