

Introduction

Trumpeter Swans were never reported nesting in the Keweenaw peninsula through the 17th through 20th centuries. Sometime around 2010 they started nesting successfully in the Ottawa National Forest along Forest Highway 16 in Ontonagon County. It seems possible that they also began nesting in the south end of Prickett Lake about that same time. The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community had introduced Trumpeters in Baraga County, including Prickett Lake, in the early 2000's.

I had been keeping very close watch on the Sturgeon River Sloughs Wildlife Area in Houghton / Baraga counties since 1996 and had never had Trumpeters there until 2007. They began to breed successfully there in 2013. By spring of 2020 I had noticed Trumpeters were appearing at more and more locations in the Keweenaw and I decided to conduct an intensive survey of Keweenaw, Houghton and Baraga counties for nesting Trumpeters.

Methods

Beginning in mid-April I began visiting known Trumpeter sites, checking on sites with Trumpeter pairs reported on Copper Birding's listserv and checking what I thought were suitable wetlands for Trumpeters. Those sites totaled 57. Once I had a list of occupied sites, I made repeated visits to document nesting success and also placed game cams at two sites. I made just over 100 repeat visits to those successful sites through the third week in September.

Results

Total Pairs	28
Nesting Pairs	19
Pairs with young	15
Pairs with fledged young	5
Total initial cygnets	63
Final cygnet total	11

I located at least 28 pairs of swans and of those, 19 pairs seemed to begin to nest. Of those 19, 15 pairs hatched young. The highest total of cygnets was 64. By 19 September only four pair still had young with 11 cygnets total. One successful nesting occurred in Keweenaw and Baraga and two successes in Houghton county. In addition to the successful nestings there were several places where Trumpeter pairs were seen consistently and it seems likely (from my past experience) that those sites may well have successful nesters on 2021. Several odd cases occurred including: in Houghton County one probable nesting pair had the dam of their pond breached and the catastrophic water level drop killed any nesting, in Herman in Baraga county I was sent a photo of obvious Trumpeter cygnets on a paved road. I had checked a nearby pond previously and seen no swans. I have no idea where those cygnets came from or their fate. No adults were seen by the photographer.

While my survey was focused almost exclusively on the three Keweenaw counties I also checked a wetland in the Porcupine Mtns State Park where I had seen Trumpeters a few years previously. I didn't detect swans on that beaver pond but on my way out I came across a pair with two young on 2 September on a connected body of water.

The Trumpeters in the Keweenaw in 2020 seemed to prefer large beaver ponds or small lakes with plenty of emergent vegetation. The sizes of the water bodies they nested on varied from 7.5 to 112 acres. The average size was 27 acres. Leaving out the three "lakes" produced an average of 15 acres.

Keweenaw Trumpeter Swan Survey 2020

Joseph Youngman

The following pages have tables showing information on breeding pairs and a table listing all waterbodies that were checked for swans.

		PAIR SEEN	On NEST	YOUNG	OTHER ADULTS?	INITIAL YOUNG COUNT	YOUNG AS OF 25 JULY	YOUNG AS OF 16 AUG	YOUNG AS OF 23 AUG	YOUNG AS OF 6 SEPT	YOUNG AS OF 19 SEPT	CONSISTENT PRESENCE	Date Failed	Pond Size
Meadow Lake	K	X	X	X	X	5	5	5	0	0		X	23-Aug	70
Thayer Lake	K	X	X	X		6	3	3	3	3	3	X		112
Swedetown	H	X	X	X		2	1	1	1	1	1	X		13.3
Ruby Marsh	H	X	X									X	12-Jun	9.7
Superior Pond *	H	X										X		19.3
Kuntze	H	X	X	X		6	5	5	5	5	5	X		7.5
Mud Lake	H	X										X		28.5
Myllala Road	B	X		X		4			4	0		X		13
Section 26	H	X	X	X		4	4	4	4	4	2	X		15
South Laird 5	H	X	X	X		6	0					X	23-Jul	12
FH-16	H	X										X	2-Jun	12
Prickett LakeN32	H	X	X	X		5	5					X	9-Aug	24 ?
NC31	H	X	X	X		4						X	23-Jul	18.2
NE31	H	X	X	X		5						X	17-Jun	11.2
Section 30SE	H	X		X		3	3	1	1	1			11-Sep	6.7
Section 32	H	X	X									X	17-Jun	14
Section 30	H	X	X	X		4	4					X	16-Aug	12
Bumper Marsh	B	X		X		4	4					X	17-Aug	30.2
Delene Ponds	B	X		X		2	1					X	17-Aug	14.8
May Lake	B	X			X							X		108
Bella Lake	B	X												
													avg	27.6
Boston Pond	H	X												15.4
Little Traverse	H	X												
Portage Sports	H	X												
Herman Road	B			X		4								
Pike Lake	H	X												
Arnheim	HB	X			X									
M-38	H	X												
Prickett LakeS32	H	X												
						64	35	19	18	14	11			
Big Carp River	O	X		X					2	2				

Ponds checked for Trumpeters in 2020

Houghton County			Keweenaw County		
	30			14	
	Section	T and R		Section	T and R
Deer Lake	5/8	T55 R31	TNC pond	35	T58 R28
Swedetown Marsh *	23	T56 R33	Mud Lake	34/35	T58 R28
Little Traverse	30	T55 R31	Lake Manganese	5	T58 R28
Bear Lake	22/23	T56 R35	Long Lake	1	T58 R31
Boston Pond	8/17	T55 R33	Mud Lake	9	T58 R30
Boston Beaver Pond	7	T55 R33	Copper Falls Lake	13	T58 R31
Ruby Marsh ~	15	T55 R34	Section 1 Pond	1	T58 R29
Superior Pond ~	14	T54 R34	Meadow Lake	23	T58 R31
Mouth of Sturgeon	33/34	T54 R33	Meadow Lake +	8	T58 R29
Eleven Mile Lake	2	T53 R35	Mandan Pond	17/18	T58 R29
Eleven Mile Pond	11	T53 R35	Mud Lake	6	T57 R32
Twelve Mile Lake	10	T53 R35	Thayer Lake *	32	T57 R31
Seventeen Mile Lake	29	T53 R35	Deer Lake	7	T57 R29
Kuntze Farm Pond *	31/32	T53 R33	Section 19 Pond	19	T58 R26
Arnheim Units 3 & 4	31	T53 R33			
Arnheim Units 7 & 8	4	T52 R33	Baraga County	13	
Mud Lake ~	2	T52 R34	Myllala road marsh +	7	T52 R33
Pike Lake	11	T51 R36	Jackson Lakes	1	T49 R34
Section 26 *	26	T51 R36	Bella Lake	28/29	T51 R31
M-38 Pond	4	T50 R35	Delene Ponds +	27	T49 R34
South Laird 5 +	5	T49 R36	May Lake ~	20/17	T47 R34
South Laird Pond	31	T50 R36	King Lake	27/26	T48 R33
S Bob Lake Ponds	10	T49 R37	Parent Lake	9	T48 R33
Prickett Lake S End +	32	T50 R35	Catherines Pond	31	T50 R32
Pond in Section 22	22	T49 R36	Section 28 Pond	28	T49 R32
Pond in Section 32 +	32	T49 R35	Bumper Pond +	30	T49 R32
Pond in NC31 +	31	T49 R35	Net River Flooding	27/28/35	T47 R34
Pond In SW31	31	T49 R35	Saine Lake	34	T47 R34
Pond in NE31 +	31	T49 R35	Saine Pond	27	T47 R34
Pond in Section 30 +	30	T49 R35			
Pond in SE Sec 30~			Ontonagon County	2	
			FH16 Pond ~	36	T50 R37
			Big Carp River *	36	T51 R43

Waterbodies that had successful Trumpeter nesting in 2020 have asterisks *.
 Waterbodies that hatched cygnets but did not fledge any have plus signs +.
 Waterbodies that had steady presence of a pair but no visible young have ~.