

Trumpeter Swan

(*Cygnus buccinator*)



Flora
Fauna



How to Identify:

- This is the largest waterfowl of North America and one of the heaviest flying birds.
- They are large white birds with solid black bills. The other swans that you may see may be Tundra Swans, who are smaller with yellow in their black bills or Mute Swans, who have orange and black bills and a bump at the top of their bills.
- Male Trumpeter Swans are a bit bigger than the females and are called cobs. The females are called pens. The babies are called cygnets and have gray feathers up through their first year. Both parents take care of the babies.

The Trumpeter Swan is the largest swan in the world!

Explore Idaho
with Scout the Fox!

Scout



Trumpeter Swan

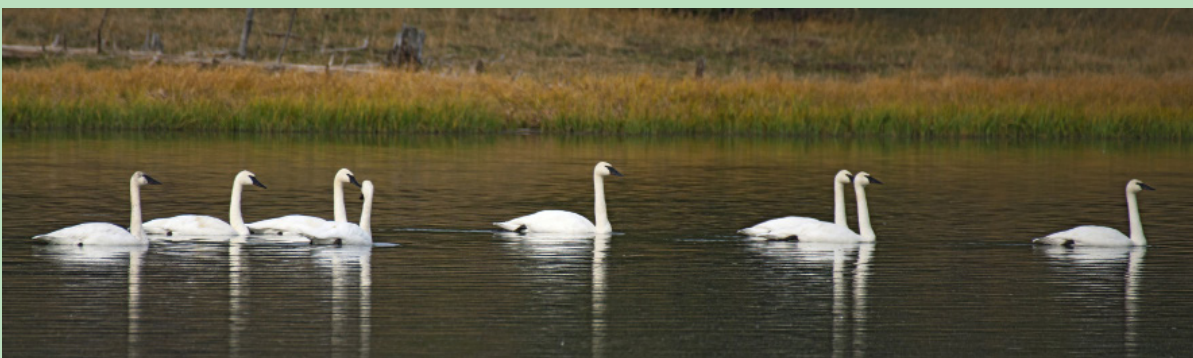
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More Keys to Identification

- Trumpeter Swans are considered adults when they hit between 3-6 years old. Before that they are known as subadults and they will hang out in groups until they pair bond with another swan to reproduce. They will mate for life.
- Trumpeter Swans may stain their head and neck a brown color. This is because of how they eat. They flip upside down, with their head touch towards the bottom of the lake and their tail feathers up in the air, like a duck! The dirt and algae in the water will slowly stain their head over time.
- If you cannot tell if the swan your looking at is Trumpeter Swan, listen to its call. They have loud, low, bugle calls that can be heard from 2 miles away! The Tundra Swan, who looks similar to a Trumpeter Swan, has a much more high-pitched call, and the Mute Swan makes hissing or snorting sounds.



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Habitat

- Trumpeter Swans almost went extinct in the early 1900s as hunters wiped most of them out of North America. Today, we can find them in the Northwest United States and Canada, as well as some parts of Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ontario. Hunting Trumpeter Swans is now illegal throughout the United States.
- In Idaho, we can find them in the eastern, southern, and northern parts of the state. They prefer the northern part of the state for the spring and fall, the southern for the winter, and the eastern portion for breeding and non-breeding times. At Harriman State Park of Idaho, we can find some of our resident swans year-round. Other swans may migrate in from Canada for the winter.
- These birds prefer to live in areas with water, such as rivers, lakes, and wetlands. They are often found in freshwater systems. They can be found also in prairies and open woods. In the winter they can be found in estuaries, where the rivers meet the sea.



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Fun Facts

- Baby swans grow quickly! By 10 weeks old they will have all their feathers and be half their full size. They will stay gray until their second winter.
- They normally fly by about 13 to 15 weeks, depending on where they live.
- They don't have any teeth. They filter their food, which is mostly aquatic plants, through their mouth.
- They will mate for life, but they don't mate when they first meet. Instead, they pair up at about 2 to 4 years old and they will nest for the first time at 4 to 7 years old. They may make nests on beaver or muskrat lodges and make it out of plant material.



FUN FACTS!

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Help Protect the Trumpeter Swan

- Trumpeter Swans are a conservation success story. There were only 69 left in the lower 48 states by 1935, now there are over 30,000.
- Lead poisoning is still a problem.
- One of the biggest threats to Trumpeter swans is climate change, so one of the best things we can do to protect them is to combat climate change. We can do this by reducing our carbon footprint through producing less waste, driving less, and using less energy.
- We can protect the wetlands where they like to live by supporting local parks and wildlife refuges that give these swans a home. Harriman State Park of Idaho has devoted its lakes and Thurmon creek to the birds, which has given the Trumpeter swans a safe space to raise their babies without being disturbed by humans





Portals to Parks



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ACTIVITY TIME

1. How does protecting wetlands and wild areas protect the Trumpeter swans?

2. Why would the bright, white Trumpeter swan get a brown head?

Thanks to the Audobon Society and the Trumpeter Swan Society for the information!

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
parksandrecreation.idaho.gov