

# Trumpeter Swan

**Scientific Name:** *Cygnus buccinator*

**Class:** Aves

**Order:** Anseriformes

**Family:** Anatidae



Trumpeter swans are the largest of all waterfowl, measuring 60 to 72 inches in length and weighing 19 to 28 pounds. They have a totally white body with black legs and a black bill with a narrow red border along the edge of the lower mandible. Females are identical to males, though slightly smaller. The trumpeter has the loudest voice of all swans. Its horn-like call is deep and resonant.

The trumpeter swan was listed as an endangered species from 1931 to 1971. As early as 1700 the future of these elegant birds was in jeopardy. Demand for their down for use in pillows, quilts and powder puffs, as well as their feathers for hats, threatened this species with extinction. In 1935 a survey in the United States and Canada revealed only 200 trumpeters left. Cleveland Metroparks Zoo participates in a reintroduction program for this species.

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## Range

Their Range is southern Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta and Wyoming.

## Habitat

They inhabit quiet waters of lakes, marshes or sloughs that are not subject to wave action.

## Gestation

Incubation: 33-40 days

## Litter

Clutch: 4-8 eggs

## Behavior

Trumpeters travel in small groups consisting of families and pairs. They are aggressive when claiming territory. Pairs claim nesting grounds far from other nesting pairs, choosing sites where food is available and where small bays can serve as a defense. More swans die from illegal shooting and lead poisoning than from any other cause. If their feeding grounds freeze over for long periods of time, starvation can lead to death.

## Reproduction

Trumpeter swans' mate for life, mating for the first time in their third year. They may use the same nest each year. The average nest is 3 feet wide (sometimes wider) and 3 feet high. Eggs are laid in April or May with the female doing most of the incubation. Cygnets bred in Alaska can fly in 84 days; those from Wyoming and Montana take 100-120 days to fly. Grayish cygnets hatch in June after 33 to 37 days, and weigh about 7 ounces at hatching. Cygnets forage on such animal life as aquatic insects and mollusks in the early weeks.

## Wild Diet

Leaves and stems of pondweed and crowfoot, tubers of arrowhead and shoreline plants and seeds of water lilies and sedges