

The Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration program is a volunteer not-for-profit organization. Donations are always appreciated to assist in the purchase of wing tags and banding materials as well as to provide medical care for sick and injured Trumpeter Swans.

Donations can be made to: Trumpeter Swans  
c/o Amherst Wildlife Foundation  
Mrs. Myrna Wagner  
26 Swanhurst Blvd.  
Mississauga, ON L5N 1B7

Cheque is payable to Amherst Wildlife.  
Please state that the donation is for the  
Trumpeter Swans.

Official Tax Receipt for donations \$20.00 or more.



Photo by Peter Harvey

Volunteers Beverly Kingdon, Ray Kingdon, and Kyna Intini banding and tagging swan #118 at LaSalle Park in Burlington, Ontario.

It is illegal to shoot any Swan in Ontario under the Migratory Birds Convention Act 1999. If you see someone shoot or try to harm a swan, please report it immediately to the authorities.

Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources TIPS line at: [1-877-TIPS-MNR \(847-7667\)](tel:1-877-TIPS-MNR).

### FEEDING THE SWANS

Please remember: although we understand people like to feed the swans, it is important they maintain a diet strong in natural wild forage. Please do not overfeed. Never feed them moldy bread, only clean “untreated” dry corn.

### TO OUR FISHERMEN FRIENDS

Please use lead-free tackle. When a swan ingests a lead sinker while tipping and feeding, it dies a slow and painful death. Please attempt to retrieve your lost lures. Every year we rescue many swans with fishing lines, hooks, and lures attached to them. We have also euthanized swans that have accidentally ingested them.

### LEAD KILLS SWANS!

## **Please Report Sightings of Trumpeter Swans**

Please send your report to one of the following locations:

Ontario Trumpeter Swan Restoration  
by email to

[trumpeterswan@live.com](mailto:trumpeterswan@live.com)

You may also report on our  
Facebook group page:

[Ontario Trumpeter Swans](#)

Please Include

Date, Location/GPS Coordinates,  
Wing Tag # or Leg Band #



### ONTARIO REINTRODUCTION PROGRAM

The restoration program in Ontario was initiated by retired Ministry of Natural Resources biologist, Harry Lumsden, in 1982, along with the Trumpeter Swan Society, with the objective to “restore the species to as much of its former range as possible.”

Mr. Lumsden began a captive breeding program which has since released 584 captive-reared swans in 54 locations around Ontario. The captive rearing program was accomplished with the help of a group of cooperators who provided housing and feed for the captive pairs.

Initially there were concerns about the birds’ natural instinct to migrate being lost, but the first pair of introduced swans to mate in the wild and migrate naturally out of release site (e.g. Wye Marsh) occurred in 1993.

In 2007 the Ontario population stood at 700 birds, and was declared self-sustaining but fragile.

The current population estimate is 800-1000 birds and growing.

## HISTORY

Trumpeter swans are native to the entire North American continent.

They were extirpated from Ontario and much of North America in the 1700-1800s. With the introduction of guns, hunting of swans increased.

During this time they were hunted for the fur trade as well as for food. The Hudson's Bay Co. sold 108,000+ swan skins to London, England to be used for quill pens, powder puffs, trim for clothing, and cured leather for purses.

1886 - Last recorded swan in Ontario is shot at Long Point.

1932 - Small surviving populations were found in Canada and the United States; these were put under government protection.

Subsequently, breeding programs were started in Canada and the United States.

## SWAN BIO

The adult trumpeter swan is the largest swan in the world, with black bill, legs, and feet. Their feathers are completely white, although the head and neck can sometimes become stained a rust colour because of iron-rich water in which they may feed.

The female swan, called a 'pen', can weigh 20-25 lbs. (9-11.3 kg), and the male swan, the 'cob', can weigh 20-30 lbs. (9-13.6 kg).

Trumpeter swans are the largest waterfowl in North America, with a wingspan of up to 8 feet (2.5 meters).

They live an average of 12 years in the wild, but can live to be 30 in captivity.

The voice is a resonant, sonorous, loud, low-pitched, bugle-like call.

Trumpeter swans are well-adapted for the harsh environments in which they sometimes live. Their unusually dense layer of down, which can be up to 5 cm (2 in.) thick, seems to make them almost impervious to the cold. It is not unusual for Trumpeter Swans to tolerate extended periods with temperatures as low as -30°C (-25°F).

## BREEDING

Trumpeter swans prefer to nest in wetlands with a water depth of 1-5 feet (0.3-1.6 meters) and a mix of emergent and submergent vegetation.

They begin to build and repair nests in mid-April.

The nest diameter is around 6 feet (1.8 meters).

The nest can be built on emergent vegetation, either floating or anchored or on top of a beaver or muskrat lodge. It may also be built on top of a previous year's nest.

3 to 8 eggs are laid in late May.

Incubation lasts approximately 33 days, and the young are fully fledged in 15 weeks.

A baby swan is called a 'cygnet'.



Harry Lumsden and Trumpeter Family

Photo by Susan Best

## FEEDING

Adult swans eat mostly submerged and emergent vegetation, supplemented by many invertebrates consumed incidentally as well as occasional small fish and fish eggs. Some of the plants they eat include: horsetail, sedge, bulrush, water milfoil, duckweed, and pond lily.

In winter, swans will graze in upland habitats eating grasses, grains (e.g. waste grains in corn or wheat fields), and tuberous crops (e.g. potatoes).

A swan's long neck allows them to reach below the water surface to eat plant stems and roots. Tipping up allows them to reach further under water. Paddling with their large feet helps to stir up sediment and expose tasty morsels. Adults will paddle to stir up food for the cygnets, and also themselves.

Young, rapidly growing cygnets need a diet high in protein during the first few weeks of life. This is obtained by eating aquatic invertebrates. Gradually they change to eating a vegetable diet similar to that of adults.

## PRESENT DANGERS TO THE FUTURE OF SWANS

Lead poisoning from ingesting spent lead shot and lead fishing sinkers.

Collisions with unmarked power lines.

Loss and degradation of wetland habitat and wintering grounds.

Human interference such as harassment by boaters, snowmobiles, personal water craft, dogs and illegal killing of swans.

Natural predation by wild animals, birds and diseases.