

# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

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## LARGEST AMERICAN WILD FOWL MAY YET SURVIVE

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Trumpeter Swans in U. S. Increase  
37 Percent, Says Biological  
Survey; Still only 158

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Trumpeter swans, largest North American wild fowl, once considered on the road to extinction, may yet be perpetuated, says the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

This summer's census revealed at least 158 birds in the United States, an increase of 43 from last year, or more than 37 percent.

Ninety of the birds were counted on or near the Red Rocks Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, administered by the Biological Survey in southwestern Montana. The other 68 were seen by naturalists of the Department of the Interior during a simultaneous census in and about Yellowstone National Park.

Great hope is seen in the fact that the count this year included 77 cygnets, or young swans, as compared with only 41 last year.

Apparently, says the Biological Survey, most of the birds that are not breeding remain on lakes in Yellowstone Park in summer, while the majority of the breeding birds use the Red Rocks Migratory Waterfowl Refuge. These two nearby areas on which the birds are protected and between which they may migrate give hope that the threatened extermination of the trumpeter swan may yet be averted. They are found nesting in no other region in this country.

### Refuge Primarily For Swans

Although more than 200 species of birds use the Red Rocks Refuge, including many nesting ducks, the Biological Survey considers the area of particular importance because of its value to these swans. Developments for the benefit of these birds have been made since the establishment of the refuge by Executive order on April 23, 1935, although the area was chosen partly because of its natural fitness.

A small dam holds water at a fairly constant level. Twenty-four artificial nesting islands have been constructed and anchored in place, and the Survey is also improving vegetation by eliminating grazing and is carrying on erosion control activities.

Refuge officials guard the swans' nesting areas with special care.

"From the time the ice leaves the lakes until the first of August when the young birds are fairly grown," says A. V. Hull, refuge manager, "I do not permit anyone to venture on the lakes where the swan nest. I do not go on the nesting grounds at all myself for fear that the sun rays may injure the embryo within the eggs, also for fear that an overcast sky or storm may chill the eggs before the adult swan returns to the nest."

Mr. Hull attributes this year's increase of young birds "to the fact that we have been able to administer the area to the best interest of the swan. There has been no disturbance whatsoever on the nesting grounds, while in past years livestock and persons have disturbed the birds a great deal."

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: EDITORS: Additional information on :  
: the trumpeter swan follows. :  
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Trumpeter swans are the largest North American wild fowl, tipping the scales at more than 30 pounds. In size and splendor the whistling swan is so nearly an equal that the two birds can hardly be distinguished at a distance, but the trumpeter swan has a windpipe which has "just one more convolution, which enables it to produce a louder and more far-reaching note on a lower key, with the musical resonance of a French horn."

In early times the trumpeter swan probably bred south to Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Montana, and Idaho. Even as late as 1871 it raised young in Iowa, and in 1886 in Minnesota. Now it is confined in this country to the region about northwestern Wyoming and southwestern Montana, and in Canada to possibly not more than a single lake area in British Columbia.

John James Audubon, trying to give readers "a perfect conception of the beauty and elegance" of the trumpeter swan, said in part:

"You must observe them when they are not aware of your proximity, and as they glide over the waters of some secluded inland pool. On such occasions, the neck, which at other times is held stiffly upright, moves in graceful curves, now bent forward, now inclined backward over the body. Now with an extended scooping movement the head becomes immersed for a moment, and with a sudden effort a flood of water is thrown over the back and wings, when it is seen rolling off in sparkling globules, like so many large pearls. The bird then shakes its wings, beats the water, and as if giddy with delight shoots away, gliding over and beneath the liquid element with surprising agility and grace. Imagine . . . that a flock of 50 swans are thus sporting before you, as they have more than once been in my sight, and you will feel, as I have felt, more happy and void of care than I can describe."