



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### TRUMPETER SWANS---AMERICA'S RARE BIRDS---SHOW INCREASE

The number of trumpeter swans in the United States which in 1935 was 73, has increased to 451 the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior announced today. Since a Federal Refuge was established to protect the trumpeter in 1935, the number has been slowly increasing each year, the August census shows.

The current report showed 329 swans in the Red Rock Lakes area of Montana. Of this number, 80 were cygnets, or young swans. There were 90 swans (23 of them cygnets) in Yellowstone Park and vicinity, and 5 adult swans on the National Elk Refuge. The Oregon and Nevada refuges held 27 adult swans.

Several hundred other trumpeter swans are known to exist in Canada and South-eastern Alaska.

When the number of this beautiful bird started to decline, conservationists launched a campaign for the establishment of Federal refuges and in 1935, the Red Rock Lakes Migratory Waterfowl Refuge, near Yellowstone National Park was set up. This refuge is also important for other waterfowl, moose, and upland game. The trumpeter also nested in Yellowstone, and later swans were transplanted from Red Rock Lakes to the National Elk Refuge in Teton County, Wyoming.

Trumpeters were also transplanted in 1947 to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon and the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Nevada. The birds have not as yet begun to reproduce since they seldom breed until three years or older.

At one time the trumpeter ranged all over the West and midwest: California and British Columbia to Manitoba, Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri. But because the areas the swan preferred were overrun by civilization, the trumpeter began to decline.

The life habits of the trumpeter made them especially susceptible to the dangers of civilization. The birds were disturbed on their nests so frequently, that their eggs would not hatch, and the low swooping flight of the 30 pound birds with their 10 foot wing-spread has always been an easy target to hunters.

Because of the beauty and quality of the swan's plumage, fashion created a demand for their skins. From 1853 to 1877 one company sold 17,670 swan skins. In 1853 the annual total was 1,312 skins, but by 1877 the take was down to 122. Even though other swans were also hunted, the trumpeter because of its beauty was most eagerly sought and with the approaching extinction of the bird the price per skin rose to \$150 a factor which all but finished the species.

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