

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
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Federal Agencies Partner with Industry to Protect Trumpeter Swans- Ameren Missouri Begins Installing 1,000 ‘Swan Diverters’ on Power Lines

Ameren Missouri, with oversight from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), have begun installing 1,000 “swan diverters” on several miles of high-voltage “transmission” power lines that cross the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary on the Mississippi River, near West Alton, Mo. in an effort to protect Trumpeter Swans.

The devices—each about 12 inches long and resembling a giant yellow corkscrew—will be installed by workers from helicopters hovering above the USACE sanctuary. They will be placed on the highest static wires of non-electric transmission towers—towers that are designed to absorb lightning strikes—as a means of alerting swans.

Each winter, about 500 swans from Upper Midwest breeding grounds winter at the sanctuary. Agents from the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, USACE and officials from Ameren Missouri became concerned about evidence of swans being injured or killed by flying into the transmission wires. With the diverters in place, the birds should be better able to see the structures and fly over or under them.

Nearly extinct at the turn of the twentieth century, over the past 30 years, Trumpeter Swan populations have risen by about 400 percent, due to the conservation efforts of USFWS, the Trumpeter Swan Society, various state department of natural resources, conservation areas like the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary and concerned citizens.

John Christian, Assistant Director for Migratory Birds and State Programs, USFWS noted that this growing winter population supports the Mississippi Flyway Council’s efforts to disperse the wintering

population of this Upper Midwest nester to suitable sites well south of the breeding range where they find both abundant forage and a more hospitable climate.” Christian added that “we are most pleased to see industry partnering on protecting these majestic birds.”

Charlie Duetsch of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers adds that helping the wintering swans is in line with the sanctuary’s and the Corps’ commitment to stewardship, environmental education and expanded outdoor recreation opportunities.

“The swan project allows us to balance the role of the rivers in a national transportation corridor, the environmental attributes of the area and the modern-day need for power,” he says. “It’s a very unique and creative project.”

Andy Buhl, Assistant Special Agent in Charge for the Midwest Region of USFWS praised Ameren Missouri’s efforts saying “We encourage industrial companies to coordinate with the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop best practices to avoid the take of migratory birds and other protected wildlife.”

Ameren Missouri, founded in 1902, provides electric and gas service to approximately 1.2 million customers across central and eastern Missouri, including the greater St. Louis area.



Photo by Trisha Shears

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov>.