



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Immediate Release

HUNTERS' HELP NEEDED TO RESCUE TRUMPETER SWANS

Conservationists, alarmed at the slow rate of increase of the trumpeter swan, rarest American waterfowl, are seeking from sportsmen the same type of vigilant cooperation given in 1934 when its chances of surviving the hunting season were precarious.

Sportsmen in Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah, where the swans occur during hunting seasons, are urged to take special precautions to prevent the shooting of this rare bird, according to the United States Department of the Interior.

The interest aroused by Secretary Harold L. Ickes and other conservationists in 1934 stayed the threatened extermination of the trumpeter swan and resulted in an increase of the scant remnant, say naturalists of the Department who have been watching the bird's struggles for existence.

Disappointment, however, is reported in the small gains made by the swans during the past few years, and renewed and increased vigilance is urged.

There should be a normal increase annually of at least three cygnets to a pair, according to the naturalists, but the actual increase has been substantially smaller than this expectation.

With the exception of five that have been transplanted to other wildlife refuges, the entire population of trumpeter swans in the United States during breeding seasons is in Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Montana, and Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming. A recent census revealed that 190 birds reported last year had increased by only 21, making the national total only 211.

Hunters' Cooperation Imperative

Survival of this rare, stately species, it is emphasized, depends on the continued watchfulness of sportsmen for many an open season to come. Loss of only one bird, say the naturalists, often means the loss of an entire breeding pair as far as increases are concerned, because the trumpeter swan mates for life and seldom takes another companion when its mate is killed.

Trumpeter swans are shot only when they are not recognized, according to the statements of hunters who have made this mistake in the past. Most of the hunters involved have reported confusing the big white swan with the snow goose, but the naturalists point out that with care these two species can readily be distinguished. The snow goose is much smaller and has black tips on the wings.

In Idaho, where the swans occur in largest numbers on areas used by hunters during the waterfowl season, the danger of swan losses through confusing these two birds has been reduced by closing the season on snow geese in that State.

Wildlife experts of the Department of the Interior, as well as State officers with similar aims, are hopeful that general dissemination of the facts regarding the trumpeter's stand against extermination, before and during the hunting seasons, and the continued cooperation of sportsmen will insure the swan maximum protection in the approaching waterfowl seasons.

#####