

Study to monitor swan health

Field crews will be sampling and tagging swans in mid-March

Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup

March 2022



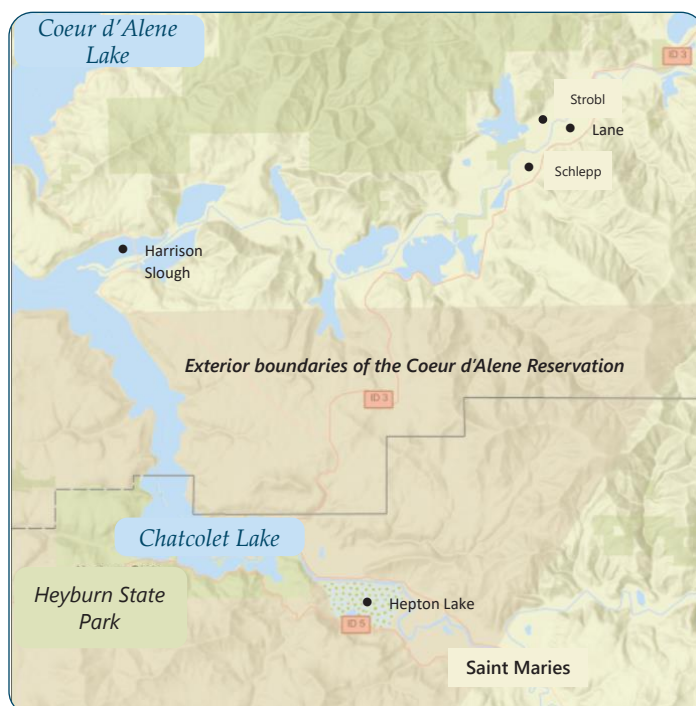
Tundra swans resting in the east field of the Schlepp Wetlands captured by a US Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife game camera.

The Lower Basin of the Coeur d'Alene River consists of thousands of acres of wetland habitat that lie along the migration corridor for the Tundra Swan. Over 150 years of mining in the Silver Valley has deposited contaminated mine tailings and sediment into the marshes and floodplains of the Lower Basin. Over 95% of the wetland areas within the Lower Basin contain sediment that is toxic to wildlife. As swans and other waterfowl, dabble and forage in the water, they swallow high levels of lead found in the sediments. This leads to the deaths of many birds every migration season.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is working to create clean feeding habitat in the Lower Basin, like the Schlepp Wetlands Restoration area, which has over 400 acres of a clean and productive wetland habitat used by swans.

EPA is collaborating with Idaho Fish & Game, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to measure how and where swans are exposed to contaminated sediment, and if their overall exposure to lead is decreasing due to feeding in clean wetlands such as the Schlepp Wetlands. During the swans' stopover in the Lower Basin, they frequently move between wetland areas.

This study is investigating ways to measure lead exposure by collecting sediment and swan feces where swans are observed foraging in wetlands, then comparing them to swan blood lead levels at uncontaminated and contaminated locations.



During the week of **March 7 - 11, 2022**, a team of biologists will be sampling sediments and fecal samples from the surfaces of wetlands where swans were recently observed. Swans will be captured to collect blood and fecal samples and affix marking devices, such as colored neck collars and satellite collars. These marking devices will provide a better understanding of how swans use the Lower Basin. Biologists will be capturing swans after dusk using airboats and spotlighting so they can be safely sampled and released.

Results of this study are expected to support the use of waterfowl feces as a long-term monitoring tool to track waterfowl health and exposure to lead as the basin is cleaned up. The study report will be distributed and publicly available when finalized.

More information and contacts on next page ⇨

For more information, please contact:

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Visit the Restoration Partnership website for information on the Schlepp Wetlands Restoration area:
<https://www.restorationpartnership.org/schlepp.html>

If you need materials in another language or an alternative format, please contact Meshach Padilla at 1-800-424-4372, Ext. 2762



◀ *The study will use satellite collars or colored collars that are one of four color combinations with numbers from 001R through 010R for each color.*

Please report dead swans that appear to have colored neck collars or satellite transmitters to Mark Jankowski • 206-553-1476