

**Contributions
by
Non-Professional
Researchers**

THE WILD SWANS AT LAKE TOFUTSU-KO, HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

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Introduction

Lake Tofutsu-ko is one of many large lakes formed from the sea that dot the sea coast of Okhotsk, Hokkaido. It has an area of 900 ha, National Road 244 and National Railroad Line Semmo run over the land between the lake and the coast. The land surrounding the lake, approximately 2051 ha, has since 1963 been designated a wildlife protection area.

The main species of wild swans at Lake Tofutsu-ko is *Cygnus cygnus cygnus*. *Cygnus columbianus bewickii* is rare.

Fishermen crossing the lake determine when and where the swans will do their feeding.

Occurrence of swans

Wild swans returning from the north annually arrive early in October and number ten birds. From 25 October to 10 November, 1000 to 3000 swans may arrive in a single day. From this point on, the number of swans returning fluctuates until the middle of December, when ice begins to form on the lake and the swans move south. Tagged swans leaving Lake Tofutsu-ko usually stay at Kominato City, in the Aomori District, north Honshu.

In recent years between 40 and 100 swans have remained in the outskirts of Lake Tofutsu-ko, in its nearby marshes and streams. These wild swans have also been seen in several winters when there was no opening in the lake's ice.

Lake Tofutsu-ko thaws at different times every year. As the ice melts, so the number of swans rises. The peak of swans arriving is around 20 April, when numbers reach 4000.

Most wild swans return north (probably Siberia) by the end of April. Most leave Lake Tofutsu-ko early in the morning and in groups of between 400 and 1500. Sometimes there are up to 2000. A family or single birds may remain when all swans usually have left Lake Tofutsu-ko. By the middle of May all swans have gone.

Conservation implications

In recent years there have been many wild swans fed directly by humans. In order to feed the swans we must take into account the extent of ice cover and the

number of swans. Many tourists bring food, for instance bread, which is not appropriate for the wild swans.

As we think about the natural protection of native and wild birds and animals, we realise that we must work diligently to preserve the natural balance between man, the wild swans and the environment.

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THE TRUMPETER SWAN SOCIETY

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Introduction

Cygnus cygnus buccinator is native only to North America. When European settlers arrived, this magnificent bird apparently ranged over much of what is now the United States and Canada. But today, except for isolated regions of the Rocky Mountains, Alaska and Canada, human development of the continent has caused a decline in the number of *C. c. buccinator* to a remnant of the bird's former population. The Trumpeter Swan Society has assumed the responsibility of working with those agencies charged with managing *C. c. buccinator*, such as the US Fish and Wildlife Service, to help assure that *C. c. buccinator* survives and flourishes in the face of further encroachment on wild places.

Its genesis

The Trumpeter Swan Society was founded in the fall of 1968 in Carver Park Reserve about 40 km west of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Fred E King was the Society's first president and acknowledged founding father. A banker by trade and a lover and conserver of natural resources by avocation, it was through his efforts as chairman of the Hennepin County Park Reserve District Board of Commissioners that a *C. c. buccinator* restoration programme was started in Minnesota.

Its purpose

Today, the Trumpeter Swan Society is composed of people from many walks of life. They all share a common interest in maintaining existing wild *C. c. buccinator*