

Identifying Swans

Trumpeter, Mute, and Tundra Swans all have white plumage as adults and appear similar from a distance. There are, however, several physical characteristics by which these three species can be distinguished.

Tundra Swans and Trumpeter Swans are large pure white birds with long necks, and black bills and feet. They are obviously larger than a snow goose. In their first year of life, swans appear gray and their bills may be pinkish. Tundra Swans are relatively common migrants each fall, especially during November. Both swan species are protected by state and federal laws.

Trumpeter swan family

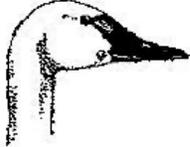


Tundra swan



Mute swan



	Trumpeter Swan	Tundra Swan	Mute Swan
			
Origin	Native to the northern U.S.	Native to the U.S. Population exceeds 10,000.	Not native to the U.S. Population exceeds 6,000.
Status	Special Concern species	Protected species	Invasive species
Wingspan	7-8 feet	6-7 feet	7-8 feet
Weight	21-30 pounds	13-20 pounds	25-30 pounds
Height	4 feet	3 feet	4 feet
Unique trait	Often has a red border on lower mandible. Eye indistinct from bill.	Often has a yellow spot in front of eye. Eye distinct from bill.	Distinct black knob.
Bill	Broad, flat black bill with fine tooth-like serrations along the edges.	Black	Orange
Profile/posture	Straight, sloping profile with bill is heavy and somewhat wedge-shaped in proportion to its large angular head. Holds neck erect.	Curving profile with bill is slightly dish-shaped or conclave and is small in proportion to its smoothly rounded head. Holds neck erect.	Arches wings over their backs and position their necks in a graceful "S" curve with the bill pointed downward.
Voice	Resonant, deep and loud, sonorous and trumpet like.	High pitched, often quavering OO-OO-OO, WHO-HO, or variations.	Often silent, but may hiss, grunt, or snort at low volume.
Behavior	Often seen in family groups of three to five. In winter or during migration will occasionally flock with other birds.	Congregates in large flocks during migration.	Often carries their young on their backs.