

## Trumpeter Swan Re-introduction Program

The trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) has white feathers, jet black bill, and a wingspan around 8 feet. Trumpeter swan habitat includes riverine wetlands, lakes, ponds, and marshes. Trumpeter swans establish life long mates at approximately 3 years of age and nest the following year.

Two explorers, Hennepin and LaSalle while traveling through Michigan on Lake St. Clair in August 1679 wrote that among the game were, “swans in abundance”. Also, Antonie Cadillac, while on the Detroit River in 1701, stated in reference to swans that there were, “such large numbers that the rushes among which they are massed might be taken for lilies”. Unfortunately the last known specimen of the trumpeter swan was harvested in Michigan on November 20, 1875 at St. Clair Flats. In 1932, fewer than 70 trumpeter swans were known world wide. We now know that several thousand trumpeters survived in remote parts of Alaska and Canada.

The goal of the trumpeter swan re-introduction program is to establish flocks that will help create a breeding and migratory populations within the 1836 Ceded Territory.

Since the start of the LRBOI trumpeter swan re-introduction program in 2003, a total of 22 swans have been released. The trumpeter swans that have been released are comprised of 13 females and 9 males, ranging from 1 to 2 years old. These trumpeter swans were purchased from Michigan State University Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. All of the trumpeter swans have been released within the 1836 Ceded Territory in hopes of establishing a breeding population. Two of the swans have died since release, one from hitting a power line and another from unknown causes. Observations have revealed most of the swans have stayed at the release sites all summer long. Hopefully as these birds mature, they will return to suitable areas within the 1836 Ceded Territory to breed.



A female returned to release site in the fall 2005.

Michigan State University conducted a survey in 2004 to determine the status of trumpeter swans in the State of Michigan. As of September 1, 2004, 499 adults and 156 cygnets were known to be alive. A total of 297 were in the Upper Peninsula, 172 in the Northern Lower Peninsula, and 186 in the Southern Lower Peninsula of Michigan. About 326 of the known trumpeter swans are within the 1836 Ceded Territory.