Why Are Mute Swans a Problem?

1) Mute Swans Endanger Native Wildlife

One of the world's most aggressive waterfowl species, especially while nesting and raising their young, mute swans drive out native waterfowl and other wetland wildlife with their hostile behavior. Mute swans will chase native breeding birds from their nests.

Photo by Tom Marriage

Some birds at risk include: common loons and trumpeter swans (both threatened species in Michigan), Canada geese and native ducks.

2) Mute Swans Destroy Wetland Habitat

A single mute swan can consume four to eight pounds of plants a day. They uproot and destroy these wetland plants that are a main food source for native birds and cover for native fish and invertebrates. Continuous feeding by a flock of mute swans can destroy an entire wetland ecosystem.

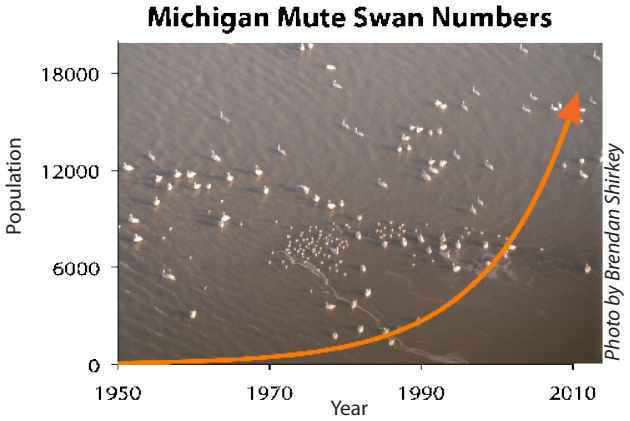
3) Mute Swans Threaten Humans

These large birds show little fear of people. Each year the DNR receives reports of mute swan attacks on people in boats and on shore.

If we do nothing, the damage and conflicts mute swans create across the state will have long-term effects.

How Big Is the Problem?

In ten years, the number of mute swans has nearly tripled.



What Can You Do?

You and your neighbors can help protect Michigan's natural resources by controlling invasive mute swans on your lakes and wetlands. Contact a DNR office near you to find out how or visit our website at www.michigan.gov/muteswans

Mute swan attacking canoe group.

Nik Taylor Photography

Large flock of mute swans destroying native wild rice.

Mute swan chasing family of Canada geese.

Lori Niedenfuer Cool , Copyright 2007, The Grand Rapids Press. All rights reserved; used with permission

Mute swans were introduced to North America in the mid-1800s to decorate parks and estates, and later brought to Michigan in 1919. These captive swans escaped and established a feral population. With their numbers growing quickly, this non-native invasive species is causing conflicts and damage across the state.

Protecting Our Trumpeter Swan

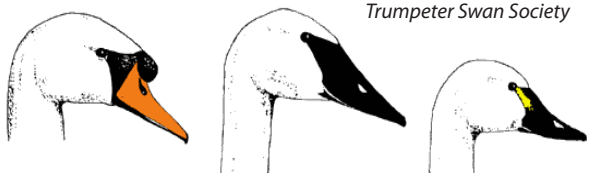
A Native Beauty Threatened

The trumpeter swan is native to Michigan, and is on our state's threatened species list. It has been on the road to recovery; however, the increasing presence of the invasive mute swan is threatening the breeding success of this native bird.

To ensure the protection of the trumpeter swan, the mute swan population must be drastically reduced.

How Can You Tell Them Apart?

The most notable difference between the mute swan and the two native swan species found in Michigan (trumpeter swan and tundra swan), is that adult mute swans have orange bills.



Mute Swan Trumpeter Swan Tundra Swan

Other tips to identify mute swans include:

- A black knob on the top of their bill
- "S" curve of the neck (trumpeter swans have a "C" curve)
- A quieter bird (trumpeter swans have a loud "trumpet" call)

Invasive = **orange**, native = **black**

What Is the DNR Doing?

- In the 1960s, the DNR expressed concerns over expanding mute swan numbers and began local control activities.
- The DNR's long-term goal is to reduce Michigan's population of this invasive species to less than 2,000 by 2030.
- Though hunting mute swans is not allowed, the DNR issues permits to remove mute swans and/or their nests and eggs.
- There are many conservation groups that support DNR's drastic reduction of mute swans numbers such as: The National Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, The American Bird Conservancy and many more.
- Decreasing mute swan populations, and therefore reducing conflicts, is only possible with help from local landowners.

To learn more about the invasive mute swan problem, visit **www.michigan.gov/muteswans** or call 517-373-1263.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations.

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Mute Swans

Invading Michigan's Waters

A growing threat to native animals, habitat and humans

Photo by Jessie Turner