



REPORTING MARKED TRUMPETER (and TUNDRA) SWANS – COLLARS, WING TAGS, & BANDS

www.trumpeterswansociety.org

Photo: Ontario's Beverly Kingdon & Kyna Intini mark Trumpeter Swans

We are receiving reports of Trumpeter Swans wearing collars and wing tags this winter as part of our Citizen Science effort, [Trumpeter Watch](#). Reports of all Trumpeter Swans in states near or south of the 40th parallel will help us better understand the winter distribution of expanding Interior Population flocks (Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic Flyways), and the whereabouts of wintering birds of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast Populations of the Pacific Flyway. The program runs for the winter season, Nov. 1 through May 1. As data is available, we will post it on our website and send it on to wildlife biologists and managers throughout the pertinent flyways.



Reports of marked swans are particularly valuable as they allow us to trace the origin of that bird and learn its age and family history. Often swans are seen at a distance, but that extra effort to read numbers on a collar or wing tag can be of great value. If you can take a photo, often the code can be read by enlarging. Here are tips on how to correctly read and report marked birds.

When a collar or wing tag is detected, careful description of the marker (with a backup photo if possible) is important.

All marked swans should be reported to the USGS Bird Banding Lab.

You may email details of your sighting to BBL@usgs.gov. The Bird Banding Lab has an easy online form (<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/homepage/recwobnd.cfm>) for you to report a marked bird as well. The silver leg band can rarely be read on a live bird, but can provide valuable information when a dead bird is found. This is the primary place to report sightings; we appreciate a copy of your details.

Describe the type of marker: Collars are commonly used in the United States and throughout North America. Wing tags, as well as collars, are commonly used in Canada.

State the color: Red, green, and yellow collars are most often used for Trumpeter Swans, while gray, black, and blue collars are most often used for Tundra Swans. Trumpeters are most frequently marked on their summering areas and correct reading of the code is usually needed to determine their origin. For Tundras, gray collars are used for wintering Atlantic Flyway birds; black is for birds marked on migration routes; and blue is for birds marked on Arctic breeding areas. There is an ongoing project on Tundras we are anxious to receive reports on as well as on Trumpeters.

Record the unique Letter (L) / Number (#) combination: Trumpeter Swans have 3 characters with one letter (L##, #L#, ##L). Tundra Swans have 4-character combinations with the letter first (L####), or 3-character combinations with two letters (LL#, L#L, #LL). Each passing year it is less likely, but there may be a few Trumpeters remaining from the old banding protocol that have yellow or black collars with 4-character combinations of LL##. Mute Swans have white collars only, with 4 characters, LL##. There are white, 2-character collars permitted in Utah for both Trumpeter and Tundra Swans.

Note the color of the letter/number code: It will be either black or white.

Marker information is needed in addition to carefully describing the date, location, number, and age (adult = white feathers, cygnet = gray feathers) of other marked or unmarked swans in the group. Notes on behavior are appreciated as well. Be sure to note your name and contact data. An observation form is available on our website in the [TRUMPETER WATCH](#) section.

If you send a copy of your sightings report to us at The Trumpeter Swan Society, we may be able to quickly get information to the biologist most familiar with that group of swans. As the biologist has time, we often learn that bird's history and can pass that information back to the reporting observer.

Here are guidelines (updated October 2011 to add all North American populations) to consider when identifying 'your' marked Trumpeter's geographical location of marking:

GREEN COLLARS:

Green collars with white codes #A# = *Minnesota's Three Rivers Park District (formerly Hennepin Co. Parks) – marked this way through 1997: Minnesota, Oklahoma. Additionally, a few of this series were transferred for use in Alaska.*

Green collar with vertical white codes #A# = *Minnesota, Oklahoma*

Green collars with white codes ##E = *Michigan*

Green collars with white codes #F#, F##, #P#, #V# = Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri by Iowa DNR

Green collars with white codes ##K, ##T, ##U = Wisconsin

Green collars with white codes M##, #M#, ##M = Ohio

Green collars with white codes #P# = Iowa (of special interest since these were Trumpeters released in Arkansas as part of a migration experiment)

Green collars with white codes R## = Nebraska

Green collars with white codes S## = South Dakota

Green collars with white codes A##, E##, H##, J##, N##, P##, V##, #J#, #J#, #P#, P##, V## = Montana, Idaho, Nevada (through Red Rock Lakes NWR)

Green collars with white codes O## = Oregon

Green collars with white codes ##E, #E# = Idaho

Green collars with codes #K# = Wyoming

Green collars with white codes #V#, ##V, X##, #X#, ##X, #H#, ##H, #N#, ##N = Grays Lake Idaho for Idaho, Utah, and Sublette County, Wyoming, and V## coordinated with Red Rock Lakes NWR

Green collars with codes K##, N## = British Columbia

Green collars with white codes ##F = Alaska

Green collars with white codes ##A, ##C = Alaska (Cordova)

Green collars with white codes E## = Idaho, Oregon, Utah (through Grays Lake NWR)

Green collars with white codes O## (Letter O is horizontal, numbers vertical) = Oregon

Green collars with white codes R## = Nebraska (through Lacreek NWR)

Green collars with white codes S## = South Dakota (through Lacreek NWR)

Green collars with white codes L##, Y## = Wyoming (the latter with Lacreek NWR)

Green collars with 4-digit white codes A#### - 2002 and earlier in Washington

Green collars with 4-digit white codes ##FA, ##RA, ##RC, ##TY = Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming (through Lacreek NWR) – 1997 and previous

RED COLLARS:

Red collars with white codes H##, J##, P##, #C#, #H#, #K#, #M#, #T#, #U#, all with matching tarsal bands = Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri

Red collars with white codes ##K = Michigan

Red collars with white codes M## (from M68-M99), F##, #F# = Washington

Red collars with white codes #P#, #A# = Montana

Red collars with white codes C## = Idaho

Red and white collars with white codes A##, #A# = Alberta

Red collars with white codes M##, A## = British Columbia

Red collars with white codes #R# = Alaska (Fairbanks)

Red collars with white codes T##, #T# = Montana (Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes)

Red collars with white codes V## = Idaho, Oregon, Utah (through Grays Lake NWR)

Red collars with white codes E##, L##, R##, Y##, or leg bands only with these codes = South Dakota, Nebraska (through Lacreek NWR)

YELLOW COLLARS:

Yellow collars with black codes E,X,T,H,P,Z followed by ##, or the letter A,C,J,K,U,Y,E,F,N,P, preceded by ## = Wisconsin

Yellow collars with black codes #A#, #C#, #E#, #K#, #M# = Ohio

Yellow collars: U## = Idaho (through Red Rock Lakes NWR)

Yellow collars with black codes C## = Utah, Nevada

Yellow collars with black codes M## = Washington

Yellow collars with black codes ##R, ##T, Y##, #Y# = Idaho

Yellow collars with black codes F## = Wyoming

Yellow collars with black codes R##, L## with matching leg bands = Maryland, New York, Virginia

Yellow collars with black codes #M#, ##M = Idaho, Oregon, Utah (through Grays Lake NWR)

Yellow collars with black codes A##, C##, J##, K##, may have radios attached = Idaho, Grays Lake coordinating with Utah

BLUE COLLARS:

Blue collars with 4-digit white codes ##UK = Alaska (Yukon-Koyukuk and Northwest Arctic)

Blue collars with 4-digit white codes ## EA, ##HC, ##JL, ##PN, ##UJ = Alaska

Request to contact Craig Ely if the following Blue Collars are spotted – mainly on Tundra Swans:

Craig Ely
Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive Anchorage, AK 99508
Phone: (907) 786-7182
EM: cely@usgs.gov

BLUE WITH WHITE DIGITS, EXCEPT CODES T3##, WHICH ARE WHITE WITH BLACK DIGITS.

Yukon Delta: K###

Alaska Peninsula (North) : N###

Alaska Peninsula (North): P###

Alaska Peninsula (South): T###

Koyukuk Drainage*: T213-228, U075-U120, U390-U399

North Slope: T172-212, 296-299 T3##

Kotzebue Sound: U###

* Collars with codes U075 – U120 have the letter separated from the numbers (oriented vertically)

OTHER COLLARS:

White collars with 3-digit black codes including two numbers and letters A,C,E,J,K,M,P,T,U,V, or Z = Utah for both Tundra and Trumpeter Swans.

White collars without codes = Yukon Territory, placed on birds for transmitter attachment.

White collars with black codes Z### to be used on three species of captive swans = Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia without USGS bands.

NOTE: A number of 4-digit-code collars were permitted in 1995 and previously, and they are not included in this summary. Brown (Washington) and Orange (British Columbia) were additional collar colors.

ANODIZED COLOR LEG BANDS

Color leg bands (Gold, Green, Red) have been used in Idaho (*through Grays Lake NWR*)

PLASTIC LEG BANDS
Yellow with black ### codes = <i>Ontario</i>
Yellow exactly matching collar = <i>Wisconsin, Ohio</i>
Yellow with black codes #F# = <i>Wyoming</i>
Yellow with black codes L##, R## matching collars = <i>Maryland, New York, Virginia.</i>
Green, no codes = <i>Wyoming</i>
Green with white codes M##, #M#, ##M = <i>Ohio</i>
Green with white codes #A#, T## = <i>Minnesota (and Oklahoma) through Three Rivers Park District (formerly Hennepin Co. Parks)</i>
Green with white codes #P#, #V#, F##, #F# = <i>Iowa</i>
Green with white codes ⓪## = <i>Oregon</i>
Green with white codes ##F, C## = <i>Alaska</i>
Green with white codes K## = <i>Yukon Territory</i>
Green tarsus bands matching collar = <i>Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming (through Lacreek NWR)</i>
Red with white codes F27-F29 = <i>Montana</i>
Red with white codes A##, #A# = <i>Alberta</i>

Red matching collar = <i>Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming (through Lacreek NWR)</i>
Red with white codes matching collars = <i>Montana, Iowa (for several states)</i>
Blue with white 4-digit codes = <i>Alaska</i>

Plastic Leg Bands with 4-digit codes were issued in 1997 and years previously. They are not summarized here.

WING TAGS
Green tags with black codes T## = <i>Minnesota's Three Rivers Park District, 1997-present</i>
Green tags with black codes ### (3 numbers) = <i>Michigan (marked in 1998 or before)</i>
Orange tags with black codes ### (3 numbers) = <i>Minnesota DNR</i>
Yellow tags with black codes ### (3 numbers) or a letter followed by two numbers = <i>Ontario</i>

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If you have found this information useful, and wish to help us track Trumpeter Swans on their winter range, south of the 40th parallel, please join our Trumpeter Watch efforts. These are described on our website, or you may contact the program coordinator, Peg Abbott at peg@trumpeterswansociety.org.

Your support of The Trumpeter Swan Society in its mission to assure the security and vitality of wild Trumpeter Swans, either as a member or a project contribution, will be greatly appreciated.

**The Trumpeter Swan Society
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