

Trumpeter Swans, Mute Swans and Geese.

These Trumpeter Swans are probably from the flock that overwinters on the Mississippi River at Monticello.

Trumpeter Swans are a great success story.

By 1930 these majestic birds were thought to be extinct. Then a few nesting were located in Yellowstone wintering in thermal pools.



Trumpeter Swans with 6 Cygnets on a nearby pond

Numerous attempts to build flocks followed but with only very limited results.

In the 1960s a nuclear power plant was built on the Mississippi River, a few miles upstream from Monticello.

The plant draws cooling water from the river.

When the water is returned to the stream, it is warm enough to keep the river from freezing over, even in our coldest winter.

By 1986 there were several breeding pairs summering in Minnesota.

A woman who lived near the river, on the downstream end of Monticello, began feeding waterfowl during the winter.



A Mute Swan on a nearby pond

She fed lots of ducks and geese at least one pair of trumpeter swans.

Birds don't migrate because of the cold.

They migrate to find food.

The waterfowl on the river had lots of food, up to 2,000 pounds of corn a day.

They did not migrate.

Apparently, that improved the bird's survival rate dramatically.

By the year 2000, the Monticello family was feeding many thousands of birds, among them lots of Trumpeter Swans.

By the year 2020, kind woman and husband had passed away, and winter-feeding program had ceased.

But by then, the Minnesota population of Trumpeter Swans had grown to 30,000.

We see them flying overhead at any time of the year.

Incredibly beautiful birds.

Each summer we see mated pairs with cygnets (swan hatchlings) in any local water of a few or more.

Virtually every suitable pond in central Minnesota has a nesting pair of gorgeous Swans.

The photo below shows two Trumpeter Swans and two Canadian Geese.

Can you find both geese?



About Mute Swans.

Mute Swans also populate Minnesota, but experts and naturalists do not value them highly.

To the casual observer they seem just as sticking.

Unfortunately, they have a reputation for driving other water birds away and destroying their habitat.

Tom.