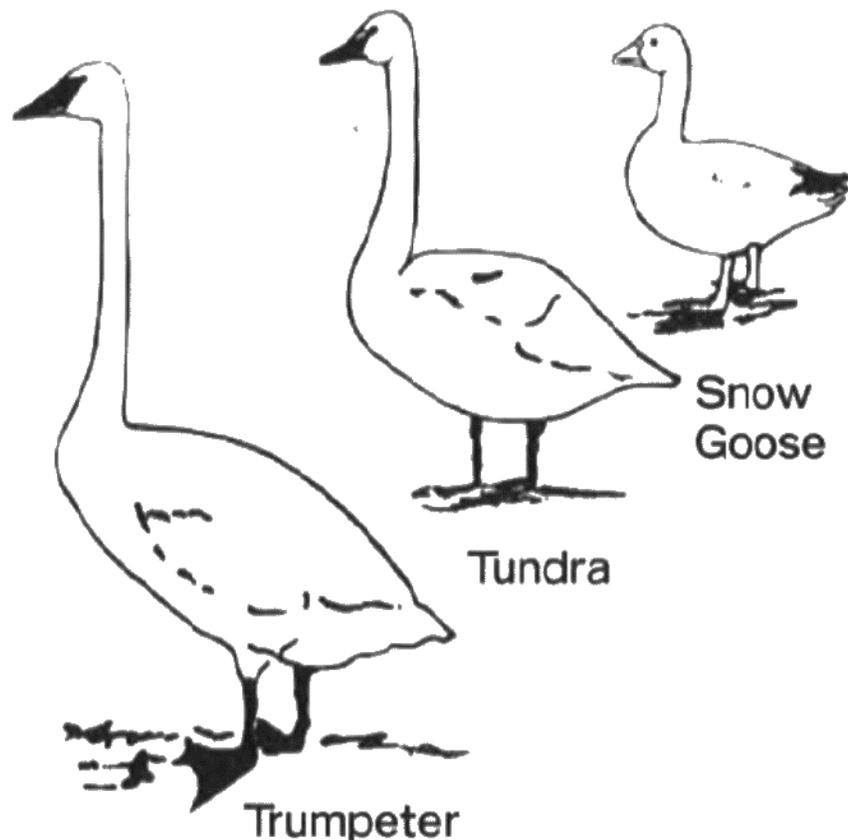


SWAN IDENTIFICATION

The material provided in this handout is a summary of information provided by the Trumpeter Swan Society. Please become familiar with this information before hunting swans. Remember, while both Trumpeter and Tundra swans can be legally harvested, Tundra swans are much more plentiful, and the harvest of all swans is limited by a quota on Trumpeter swans. It is your responsibility to confirm the swan season is still open before you go hunting. Season updates are available at glifwc.org, or by calling your local tribal registration station. *Miigwech!*



Trumpeters, afloat, on shore, resting, or in a mild state of alertness, generally have the neck kinked back at the base so that it appears to rise from the forepart of the back forming a reverse angular C-shape (swimming swan) rather than from the very front of the body as in tundra swans. When in a state of alertness, trumpeters hold their bodies at an angle as compared to tundra's which are held horizontal (standing swan). In general, body postures of trumpeters are angular and tundra postures are curved or round.

Mutes generally hold the neck curved gracefully and bill pointed somewhat downward. Wings may be arched over back giving a bulky appearance. Also, note size comparison- especially the length of the neck – between swans and geese.

VOICE

Some of the best ways to differentiate between similar species are by calls. Calls are an absolute method of species identification.

Trumpeter: resonant, sonorous, loud, low-pitched, bugle like call.

Tundra: high pitched often quavering, oo-oo-oo accentuated in the middle; or who, who-ho; woo-oo-woo; or who-who.

Mute: generally silent but not “mute”; hissing sounds are common and occasional snorting noises.

Snow Geese: high pitched awu-unk, awu-unk and kuk, kuk, kuk.

(Many websites will provide recorded samples of the calls of each species, including the site for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>.)

FLIGHT PROFILES AND TAKEOFF BEHAVIOR



Swans are large all-white (adult) or gray (juvenile) birds with a wing span of 6 to 8 feet. Snow geese of all ages have black wing tips and a wing span of about 3 feet.

Trumpeter swans, following the takeoff run and just as they become airborne, will pull their necks into a shallow “S” curve. This is seen only for a very brief time during their first wing beats to stay airborne.

Tundra swans hold their necks straight the entire time of the takeoff run and initial flight. This characteristic applies to both land and water takeoffs.

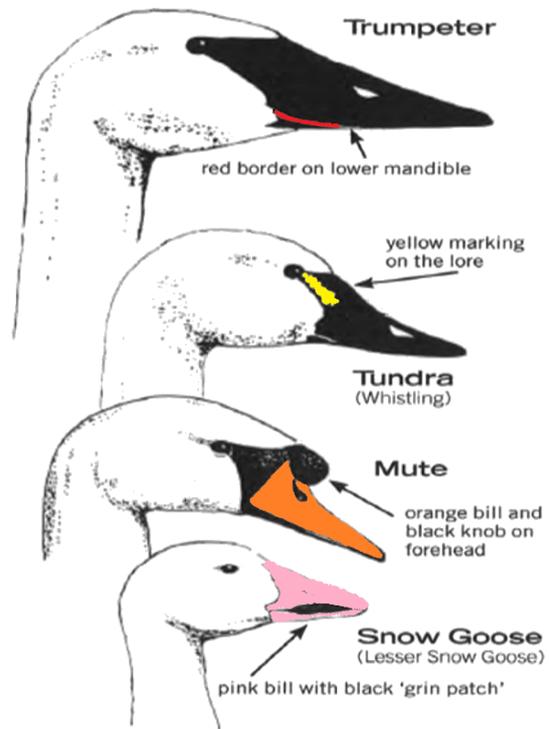
Trumpeter swans may be the last birds in a mixed flock to take off. They may stay up to one or more minutes longer than tundra swans. This happens when trumpeter and tundra swans occur together but are not entirely intermingled.

BIRDS UP CLOSE OR IN THE HAND

While it can be difficult to differentiate between different swan species in under field conditions, it is generally straightforward to identify adult birds in hand.

Note that juvenile swans will be gray instead of white. The yellow mark in front of the eye will be missing from about 10% of the tundra swans, but the two species can still be told apart by measuring the distance from the tip of the bill to the front of the nostril; if the distance is more than $1\frac{3}{4}$ " , the bird is a Trumpeter swan. If the distance is less than $1\frac{3}{4}$ " it is a Tundra swan.

Mutes swans will have an orange bill, and the much smaller snow geese will have a pinkish bill.



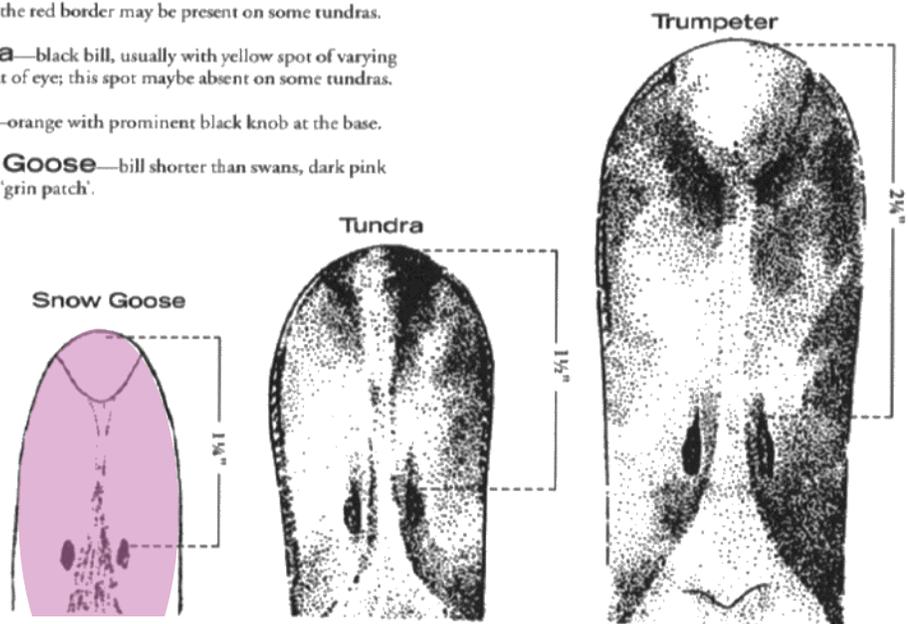
●●● Bill Color

Trumpeter—black bill with red border on lower mandible; the red border may be present on some tundras.

Tundra—black bill, usually with yellow spot of varying size in front of eye; this spot may be absent on some tundras.

Mute—orange with prominent black knob at the base.

Snow Goose—bill shorter than swans, dark pink with black 'grin patch'.



JUVENILE IDENTIFICATION

Both **Trumpeter** and **Tundra** juveniles have a gray body coloration. **Tundra** juveniles are brighter silvery gray with black legs and feet. **Trumpeters** are darker sooty gray, especially in the head and neck area; leg and foot color is primarily yellow-orange mottling with some black. From late December on, **Tundra** juveniles begin turning white, and by mid-March are nearly all white. **Trumpeters** remain dark gray. **Tundra** bill color is usually mottle pink with black tip; **Trumpeters** are black at the base and tip with a pink middle. Bill color late in the season gradually fades from pink with black borders to all black in both species.

The juvenile plumage of **Mute** swan is white with brownish splotches; bill is gray with black base. Legs and feet are black.

Snow goose juveniles are gray with black wing tips. Bills are grayish in color.