

Yellowstone National Park



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TRUMPETER SWAN OBSERVATIONS

by

F. R. Oberhansley, Junior Naturalist

Two incidents of more than passing interest and significance in connection with Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) observations at Geode Lake are worthy of recording.

On May 28 both birds were sleeping on the beach directly below our natural blind of Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*). Neither bird seemed to be particularly alert. After watching the sleeping birds for several minutes they suddenly became alert, raising their great necks into a rigid upright position and looking toward our hillside vantage point. Our first thought, that they had in some way sensed our presence, was soon dispelled as a large coal black bear (*Euarctos americanus cinnamomum*) entered the scene covered by our field glasses. Here was a wilderness scene that was worth any naturalist's day. Neither the bear nor the swans suspicioned our presence. The bear scarcely looked at the birds as he nosed his way across the beach; and after satisfying themselves that it was only a bear, both swans settled back to sleep while the bear was not more than twenty feet away.

Under almost identical conditions on the morning of June 5, nearly the same performance was repeated. This time, however, I had remained quietly in the blind for over an hour watching the swans when my attention suddenly became fixed upon a coyote mousing along the lake margin. He passed the swans in almost the identical manner as the bear had done. More intent upon catching mice than birds, the attitude of the birds was also practically the same as in the previous case.