

**In this issue:**

**28,000 swans**  
**See bighorn sheep**

---

## **Swans Stopping in Utah**

*More than 28,000 counted on Nov. 3*

If you drew a permit to hunt tundra swans in Utah, you may want to grab your gun and head to the marsh.

Tom Aldrich counted 28,271 swans in marshes along the eastern shore of the Great Salt Lake during a survey flown on Nov. 3.

On Oct. 28, he counted 27,361 swans.

“Swans should continue to migrate into Utah this fall, but the storms we’re having could also push some birds out,” says Aldrich, migratory game bird coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

“If you have a swan permit, right now is a great time to head to the marsh.”

### **Where the swans are**

Most of the swans Aldrich spotted on the morning and afternoon of Nov. 3 were on Unit 1 at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. He saw more than 23,000 swans on the unit.

The refuge is about 15 miles west of Brigham City.

“You can’t hunt on Unit 1, but the swans that are on the unit may fly over units 2, 1A, 3A and 3B, which are open to hunting,” Aldrich says.

The DWR usually flies its weekly swan surveys on Tuesday mornings. You can stay updated on where the swans are by logging onto the DWR’s Web site at [wildlife.utah.gov/waterfowl/swan/swansurvey.php](http://wildlife.utah.gov/waterfowl/swan/swansurvey.php).

Utah’s swan hunting season ends Dec. 14. Only those who drew a swan hunting permit earlier this fall can hunt swans.

### **Hunting tips**

If you’re one of the 2,000 hunters who drew a permit, Aldrich encourages you to spend time watching the swans and learning their flight patterns. Tundra swans are very consistent in the times of day they fly and the routes they take. “If you learn these patterns, you’ll up your chance for success,” Aldrich says.

Factors that can change a swan’s flight pattern include hunting pressure, changes in the weather and the availability of food.

(more)

Ice-up is another thing to watch for. As the water starts to freeze, swans fly more as they search for areas that still have open water. "Being in the marsh during this time can also increase your chance of taking a swan," Aldrich says.

Aldrich reminds hunters that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has closed all of the areas north of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge and north of Forest Street (the road leading from Brigham City to the refuge) to tundra swan hunting.

"The USFWS has restricted tundra swan hunting in this area to try and lessen the number of trumpeter swans that hunters take," Aldrich says. "Compared to tundra swans, trumpeter swans are much less abundant."

### **Swan hunting reminders**

Swan hunters are reminded about requirements that are designed to help the DWR and the USFWS obtain an accurate count of the number of trumpeter swans that are accidentally taken by hunters.

Within 72 hours of taking a swan, you must take your bird to a DWR office, or the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, so it can be examined and measured. You must also return your harvest questionnaire within 10 days after the season closes, even if you don't hunt swans or take a swan.

If you don't do these things, you'll have to pay a \$50 late fee to apply for a swan permit in 2009.

### **Changes in 2009**

Applications for swan hunting permits for 2009 will be accepted next September. Three changes await those who apply next year:

- You and up to three of your family or friends can apply for permits together as a group.
- If you apply for a 2009 swan hunting permit, but you don't draw one, you'll receive a preference point. If you apply for a swan permit again in 2010, this point will help ensure that your application is among the first drawn for a permit.
- To give young hunters a better chance at drawing a permit, 15 percent of the swan hunting permits for 2009 will be set aside for hunters who are 15 years of age or younger when the 2009 swan hunt opens.

###

Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

## See Bighorn Sheep near Moab

*Bighorn Sheep Festival set for Nov. 14 and 15*

Moab -- November is the best time of the year to see desert bighorn sheep. It's their rutting (breeding) season, and the time of year when rams engage in head-butting and other rituals to attract the attention of the ladies (female sheep called ewes).

"The antics of the rams makes for some exciting public viewing," says Brent Stettler, regional conservation outreach manager for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

That's why Stettler and other DWR staff have chosen Nov. 14 and 15 as the dates for this year's Bighorn Sheep Festival.

The festival will be held in and near Moab in sunny southeastern Utah.

The event is free. The DWR encourages everyone to attend.

### What to bring

When you come to the event, plan on bringing a pair of binoculars or a spotting scope along with snacks, drinks and a camera.

DWR biologists will watch the sheep before the event. They'll be ready to guide you to locations where the bighorns have been recently observed.

If you don't have your own binoculars or a spotting scope, or a vehicle that will get you where the sheep are, don't worry: the biologists have extra spotting scopes and binoculars you can use. They also have several large four-wheel-drive vehicles that they'll use to get you where the sheep are.

### Nov. 14 – learn about the sheep

The festival begins on Friday evening, Nov. 14, at the Moab Information Center. The center is at the corner of Center and Main streets in Moab.

At 7 p.m., Bill Bates, regional supervisor for the DWR, will present a PowerPoint program about bighorn sheep ecology and their life history. Bates studied desert bighorn sheep in the Moab area for his Master's Degree thesis.

Bates will also have some bighorn sheep skulls and horns you can see and handle, and he'll be available to answer any questions you have.

### Nov. 15 – see the sheep!

The fun really gets rolling on the morning of Nov. 15.

At 8 a.m., DWR biologists and festival goers will meet again at the Moab information Center. Biologists will divide everyone into groups. Then the groups will travel to various areas near Moab in search of desert bighorn sheep.

(more)

**page 4**

If you bring your own vehicle, you can leave the group at any time. If you ride in a vehicle with one of the DWR biologists, plan on the field trip ending by noon or early afternoon.

For more information, contact Brent Stettler at (435) 613-3707 or [brentstettler@utah.gov](mailto:brentstettler@utah.gov)

###

Contact: Brent Stettler, DWR Southeastern Region Conservation Outreach Manager  
(435) 613-3707 or (435) 613-3700