

# A Celebration of Swans

Wildlife Viewing Program

# 2014

A Celebration of *Swans*



APRIL 2014 EVENT INFORMATION  
867-667-8291 or [www.env.gov.yk.ca/swans](http://www.env.gov.yk.ca/swans)  
Swan Cam: [yukonenergy.ca](http://yukonenergy.ca)  
Photo: Claus Vogel

~ MARSH LAKE ~ TAGISH LAKE ~  
~ TESLIN LAKE ~ KLUANE LAKE ~ LAKE LABERGE ~

Water birds need open water in spring to feed, rest and stay safe.



Prepared by:  
Scott Cameron



November, 2015

**A CELEBRATION OF SWANS:  
WILDLIFE VIEWING ANNUAL REPORT  
2014**

**Yukon Department of Environment  
Fish and Wildlife Branch  
PR-15-03**

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Suggested citation:

CAMERON, SCOTT. 2015. A Celebration of Swans: Wildlife Viewing Program annual report 2014.  
Yukon Fish and Wildlife Branch Report PR-15-03, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada.

## Summary

A key feature of the Wildlife Viewing Program is the annual *A Celebration of Swans* birding festival and related activities at Swan Haven. *A Celebration of Swans* is held during the third week of April each year, to coincide with the return of migratory waterfowl to Yukon. The festival provides many opportunities for Yukoners to enjoy and learn about native swan species as spring progresses. *A Celebration of Swans* is part of the larger Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month (YBAM), which is recognized each April.

Swan Haven is located on the shores of M'Clintock Bay at the north end of Marsh Lake, approximately 35 km southeast of Whitehorse. This is a critical staging area for migrating birds as they travel from southern wintering areas to northern breeding grounds each spring.

The focal point for visitors to Swan Haven is the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre. This facility is located on Swan Haven Drive, Marsh Lake. Visitors can enjoy interpretive displays both inside and outside the building, waterfowl viewing, interactions with staff, interpretive activities, and a picnic area.

The centre's building is open daily in April; the grounds are open year-round. The Swan Haven Interpretive Centre is managed by the Wildlife Viewing Program. Girl Guides of Canada own the property and Government of Yukon owns all assets.

This year marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre. In recognition, a special evening event was held at the Yukon Beringia Interpretive Centre, and featured keynote speaker Jim Hawkings (biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service). The centre's exhibits were updated, both inside and outside the building, vastly improving our conservation messaging and the visitor experience of the site.

Both the festival and the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre were well attended this year. The program continues to be popular with Yukoners and visitors alike.

## Scope

This report describes Swan Haven / *A Celebration of Swans* program activities from January to December, 2014.



Figure 1. A fine sunny afternoon at Swan Haven, 2014.

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## A Celebration of Swans

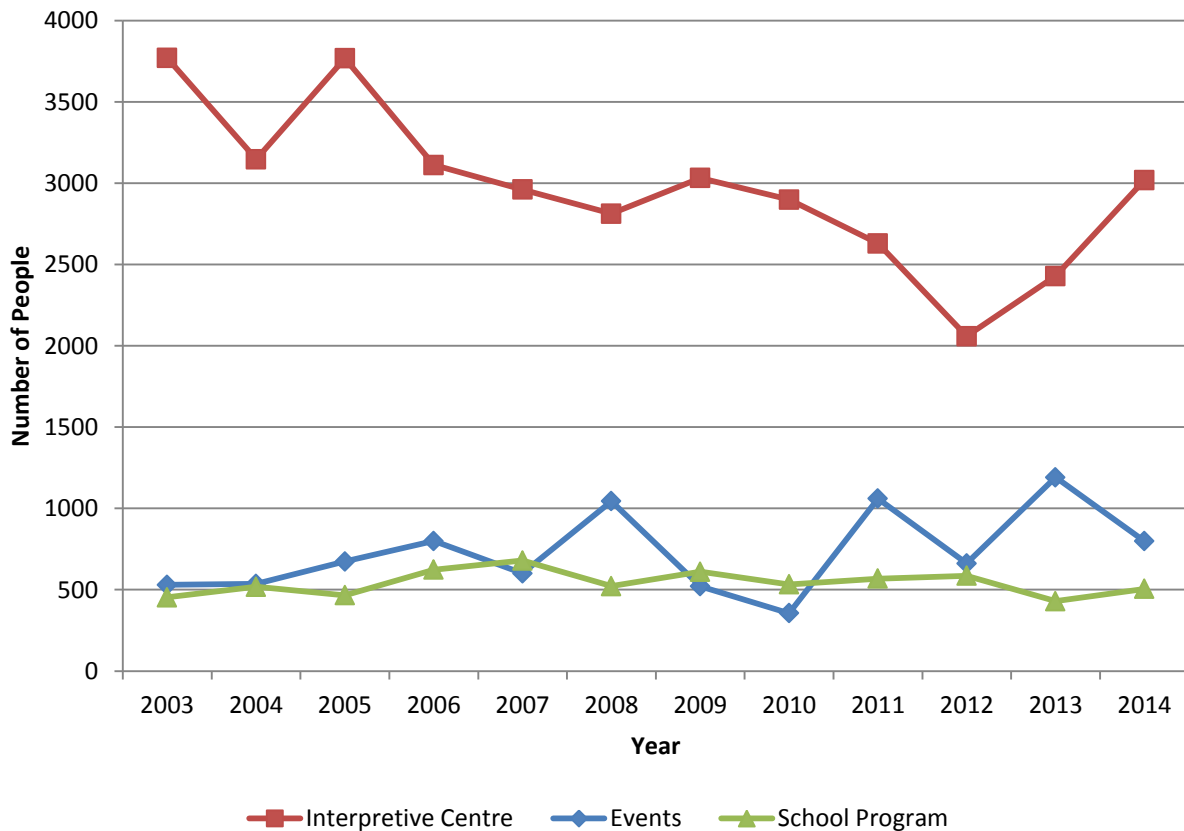
This year’s festival ran from April 12-20, with additional events occurring before and after these dates (Appendix A). Participation was strong for most individual events, and for the festival overall.

Centre attendance and school program participation were up from 2013. School program participation was 93% of average. Total event attendance was down 33% from 2013. However, 2013 attendance was quite high due to an extreme turnout on Family Weekend. Excluding Family Weekend in both years, the 2014 total event attendance was up 20% over 2013.

**Table 1.** Participation summary for A Celebration of Swans, 2014.

Festival Component	Number of People		
	2014	2013	Average*
Interpretive Centre	3,019	2,428	2,969
Events	798	1,191	731
School Program	505	429	541
<i>Total participation:</i>	<i>4,322</i>	<i>4,048</i>	<i>4,241</i>

\*average for 2003-2014



**Figure 2.** Participation trends by festival component, 2003 to 2014.

**Table 2.** A Celebration of Swans Events, 2014.

<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
April 4 5 – 7:30 pm	Havre des cygnes : Regard sur le passé	Whitehorse	A presentation and craft at the Association franco- Yukonnaise’s Cafés-rencontres.	50
April 5 10:30 am – 12 pm	Winter Swans	Johnsons Crossing	A talk and short walk about the overwintering swans in the area.	5
April 12 12 – 2 pm	Tagish Stories and Campfire	Tagish	First Nation stories about spring around a campfire with tea and bannock.	16
April 12 2 – 5 pm	Watercolour Landscape Workshop	Swan Haven	Drop-in watercolour painting workshop.	32
April 12 8 - 10 pm	Coffee House Music Night	Swan Haven	Musical jam session with light refreshments.	19
April 13 10:30 am – 12 pm	Bird Photography Workshop	Swan Haven	Introduction to wildlife photography on the shoreline.	18
April 13 1:00 – 3:00 pm	Willow Weaving Workshop	Swan Haven	Drop-in workshop to weave willow swans and ducks for the fence.	15
April 14 6:30 – 8:30 pm	Counting Swans	Carcross	Outdoor swan viewing and indoor eBird website entry.	3
April 16 7 – 9 pm	20 Years of Swan haven	Whitehorse	Keynote speaker Jim Hawkings shared the swan migration story of southern Yukon.	32
April 19 11 am – 12 pm	From Image to Identity	Swan Haven	Bird identification workshop.	15
April 19 1 – 2 pm	Forest Birds of Swan Haven	Swan Haven	Bird banding display by Society of Yukon Bird Observatories.	10
April 19 2 – 3 pm	A Bird’s Eye View	Swan Haven	Presentation on bird banding by Society of Yukon Bird Observatories.	17
April 21 10:30 – 11:30 am	Spiritual Celebration of Swans	Swan Haven	Multi-faith service, songs and quiet reflection.	30
April 23 11 am – 3 pm	Senior’s Tea	Swan Haven	Drop-in event hosted by the Marsh Lake Community Association with tea, coffee and baked goods.	65
April 26 & 27 12 – 4 pm	Family Weekend	Swan Haven	Swan viewing, face painting, crafts, games, activities, food concession by Girl guides of Canada.	448
May 11 12 – 4 pm	Swans of Kluane	Burwash Landing	Walk and talk along the shores of Kluane Lake with waterfowl viewing. Tea, bannock and stew.	23
<i>Attendance sum:</i>				798

## Supporters / Partnering Organizations

Twenty-five different organizations either hosted or aided in the delivery of *A Celebration of Swans* events. Many individuals also contributed (Appendix B).

### Swan Haven Interpretive Centre

The centre was open daily in April, from 5-9 pm on weekdays and 12-7 pm on weekends and holidays. A contractor (Jukka Jantunen) was responsible for day-to-day operations of the centre, visitor reception, and

daily counts of waterfowl.

Environment Yukon staff also worked at the centre during peak visitation times. Mr. Jantunen is an accomplished birder and photographer and has been involved in many Yukon bird monitoring programs in recent years.

In March new interpretive exhibits were installed both inside and outside the building. Many of these updates are interactive and encourage active, hands-on learning. Feedback on the new exhibits was overwhelmingly positive. On April 2 we hosted a “media tour” of Swan Haven. This provided local media outlets with an

**Table 3.** Supporters and partnering organizations for *A Celebration of Swans* 2014.

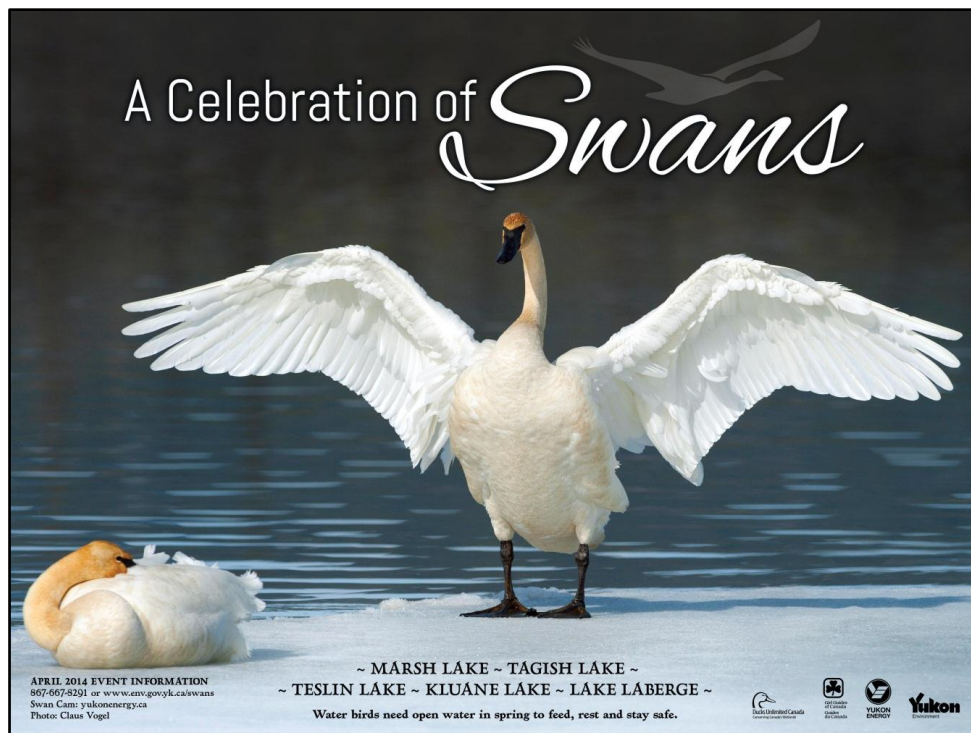
Organization	Contribution
<b>Association franco-Yukonaise</b>	‘Havre des cygnes : Regard sur le passé’ event
<b>Aurore boréale</b>	Promotion
<b>Canadian Wildlife Service</b>	Promotion and waterfowl monitoring
<b>CBC/Radio-Canada</b>	TV, radio and web promotion
<b>Carcross/Tagish First Nation</b>	Promotion and support for ‘Tagish Stories and Campfire’ event
<b>Claus Vogel</b>	Contributed photograph for poster
<b>CKRW The Rush</b>	Radio promotion
<b>Ducks Unlimited</b>	Bird identification guides
<b>Girl Guides of Canada</b>	Food concession
<b>Hougen Group of Companies</b>	Promotion (sign on 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue walkway)
<b>Klondike Travel</b>	Storefront Challenge display
<b>Kluane First Nation</b>	Promotion and support for ‘Swans of Kluane’ event
<b>Marsh Lake Community Association</b>	Hosting ‘Senior’s Tea’ event
<b>Nancy Deasty</b>	Library display and food concession
<b>Science Adventures (Yukon College)</b>	School program promotion
<b>Society of Yukon Bird Observatories</b>	Promotion, ‘Forest Birds of Swan Haven’ event, and ‘A Bird’s Eye View’ event
<b>What’s Up Yukon</b>	Newspaper and web promotion
<b>Whitehorse Public Library</b>	Hosted Storefront Challenge display
<b>Whitehorse Star</b>	Newspaper and web promotion
<b>Whitehorse United Church</b>	‘Spiritual Celebration of Swans’ event
<b>Yukon Brewing</b>	Storefront Challenge display
<b>Yukon Conservation Society</b>	Promotion
<b>Yukon Energy</b>	Sponsored festival poster and swan cam, promotion
<b>Yukon News</b>	Newspaper and web promotion
<b>YG Tourism and Culture</b>	Twitter and Facebook promotion

opportunity to preview the new exhibits before the bulk of our visitation. The tour resulted in several positive newspaper articles on the centre's updates.

Visitors to the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre could enjoy the exhibits, view waterfowl from the centre's two decks, and interact with knowledgeable staff and the contractor. Total visitation at the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre is estimated at 3,019 people during April 2014. Without a formal registration process it is difficult to know exactly how many people visit the centre and grounds.



**Figure 3.** Enjoying the new displays at Swan Haven.



**Figure 4.** Final 2014 poster design.

## Poster Contest

As in the previous 14 years, a poster was produced to commemorate *A Celebration of Swans*. A contest was held to obtain a swan-related image for use in the poster design. A total of 34 images by 15 artists were submitted for consideration. The winning entry was submitted by Pelly Crossing photographer Claus Vogel. The poster was designed by Paul Gowdie of Tarius Design, and Yukon Energy again sponsored the design and printing.



**Figure 5.** Poster display at the Canada Games Centre, Whitehorse.

## Student Art Display and Contest

Yukon students in grades 2-6 were invited to submit original artwork for display at the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre throughout April. Visitors to Swan Haven were to vote for their favourite pieces in a “people’s choice” style contest.

Surprisingly—and unfortunately—we did not receive any entries to the contest. Several teachers told Environment Yukon staff they were planning to submit artwork, but never did. As usual, the contest was promoted by email and hardcopy advertisements sent directly to

teachers and school administrative assistants. Most hardcopy materials were hand-delivered.

In the past the student artwork display has been very popular with visitors to the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre. Renewed advertising and promotion will occur in the lead up to the 2015 festival.

## Canada Games Centre Poster Exhibit

From April 8 to 25 we displayed all the previous *A Celebration of Swans* posters along with explanatory text. The exhibit was located on the first floor of the centre, across from the fieldhouse. This high-traffic area resulted in exceptional exposure for Swan Haven and the festival.

## Festival Logo Creation

In recognition of Swan Haven’s 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we contracted a designer to create a logo for use in promotional materials. Several versions of the logo were created around a central graphic element. The logo will serve as a long-term identifier for Swan Haven and *A Celebration of Swans*. It is most often used with the Environment Yukon wordmark.



**Figure 6.** New *A Celebration of Swans* logo.

### Storefront Challenge

Through our website and poster distribution, we encouraged local businesses to recognize *A Celebration of Swans* by decorating their storefronts or offices. The challenge was not a primary focus this year, as interest has been low in recent years.

A volunteer created a display at the Whitehorse Public Library and Yukon Brewing and Klondike Travel created window displays. Many festival posters were visible around Whitehorse during April.



Figure 7. Klondike Travel display.

### Swan Cam

A live-feed, web-based “[swan cam](#)” was again hosted and maintained by Yukon Energy. The camera was positioned on a property at the end of Swan Haven Drive and captured video of waterfowl along the open water of M’Clintock Bay.

In February and March, the Wildlife Viewing Technician worked with Yukon Energy staff, in an attempt to improve the quality of the swan cam footage by finding a more suitable location on the southwest shore of Marsh Lake. A site visit was conducted and a new, tentative location was selected. Unfortunately, technical limitations of the camera and batteries prevented us from using the location in 2014.

In 2015, we plan to examine alternate camera locations to improve the quality of camera footage.



Figure 8. Yukon Brewing display.

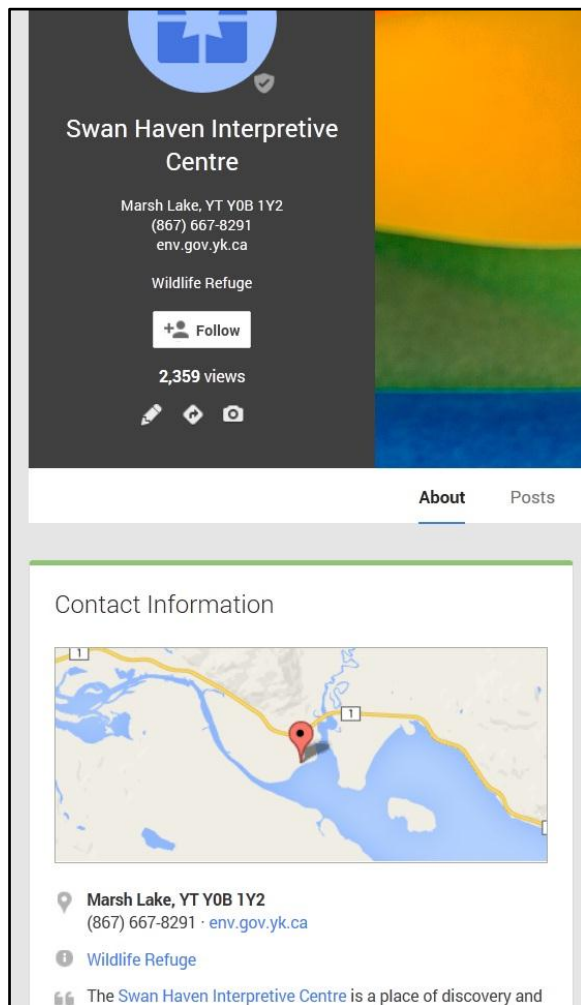
## Google Maps

In April 2014, after a request by Wildlife Viewing staff, the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre was added to the [Google Maps base map](#).

The vast majority of web searches use Google: 68% of US market and over 90% of European market. This inclusion in Google Maps will raise the overall web presence and “findability” of Swan Haven.

## Open House for Local Residents

On March 31, 5:00 – 9:00 pm, we hosted an open house for Marsh Lake residents at the Swan Haven



**Figure 9.** Google Maps listing for Swan Haven Interpretive Centre.

Interpretive Centre. This was an opportunity for local residents to enjoy Swan Haven before the April crowds and to meet Environment Yukon staff. This year special focus was placed on the updated interpretive displays—completed just days earlier.

## School Program at Swan Haven

We again offered free outdoor education activities at Swan Haven for regional schools (grades 2-6). Three staff members were hired for the month of April to deliver this program. Morning and afternoon time slots were available on weekdays (excluding Wednesdays) from April 7-28.

Programs were curriculum matched to each grade level and allowed students to enjoy and learn about swans and other migrating birds.

A promotional package, highlighting the new interpretive exhibits, was distributed to schools in February to encourage registration. The final school program participation was 505 people, an increase of 18% from 2013. Grades 2, 3 and 4 continue to be the most common participants; in 2014 there were no grades 5 or 6 participating.

We invited teachers to complete a short survey about their class’s visit to Swan Haven. The response rate was 31% (4 of 13). All respondents indicated their students enjoyed the program, and all would recommend the program to a colleague. Most (75%) of respondents intend to participate next year, while 25% (n=1) indicated they participate every second year due to a split-grade class. Teachers also provided suggestions for improvements that will be considered for the 2015 program.



**Figure 10.** A school group enjoys the views at Swan Haven.

### **Advertising and Promotion**

Swan Haven and *A Celebration of Swans* were heavily promoted through print, radio, web, and social media (Table 4).

Radio coverage, particularly by CBC Radio's morning show *A New Day*, was very supportive of our program. The show's staff often checked the latest "Spring Update from Swan Haven" and discussed it on-air.

Word-of-mouth continues to be an effective advertising technique as well.



**Figure 11.** Sign above Third Avenue, Whitehorse. The space and installation was donated by Hougen Group of Companies.

**Table 4.** Summary of advertising and promotion techniques.

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Outlet</b>	<b>Note</b>
Print ad	l'Aurore boréale What's Up Yukon Whitehorse Star Yukon News	Generally small ads directing people to our online events calendar. A full-page ad was placed in What's Up Yukon as we received a 50% discount.
Radio ad	CHON CKRW	30-second ads.
Cable ad	Northwestel Channel 8	Static text and image, similar to print ads.
Web ad	Whitehorse Star	Ads appearing on the Whitehorse Star website.
Online ad	Facebook	Ads appearing in Facebook feeds in the Whitehorse area.
Radio interviews	CBC CKRW	Live, on-air interviews on the morning show (A New Day) and the lunch-hour show (Midday Café). Described upcoming events and recent swan numbers.
ENV Twitter account	-	Promotion of events and Swan Haven Interpretive Centre.
Wildlife Viewing Facebook page	-	Promotion of events and Swan Haven Interpretive Centre. Recent sightings and bird counts.
ENV website: "Spring Update from Swan Haven"	-	A daily, online report summarizing the swan migration at Swan Haven, events and interesting sightings.
All About Birds festival listing	Cornell Lab of Ornithology	An online festival and events listing service from the premier birding authority in North America.
Swan "Cut-outs"	-	Large, wooden swan cut-outs placed around Whitehorse and Marsh Lake to indicate the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre is open. Locations: Bottom of Two Mile Hill Second Avenue and Quartz Road (SuperStore) Robert Service Way roundabout Lewes Boulevard (FH Collins) Alaska Highway and Swan Haven Drive Swan Haven Interpretive Centre
Third Avenue sign	-	A large (8 x 2') sign advertising Swan Haven placed on the pedestrian overpass near Main Street.
Event posters	-	Posters advertising individual festival events posted around Whitehorse.

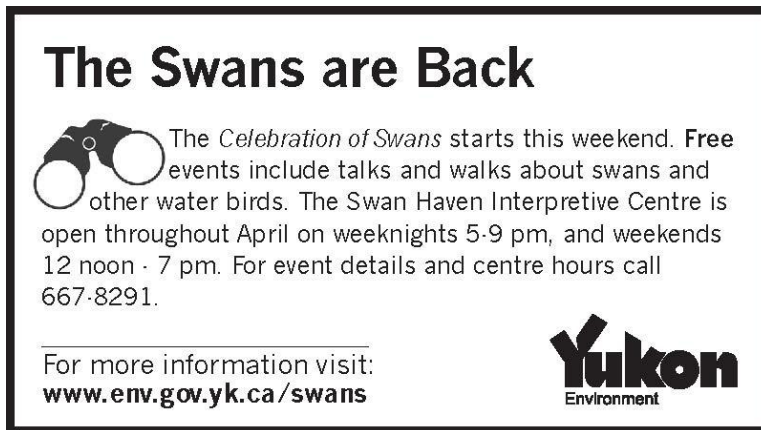


Figure 12. Sample newspaper advertisement.

## Infrastructure and Property

### *Interpretive Exhibit Update*

Continuing the work started in 2013; we fabricated and installed new interpretive exhibits inside and outside the building. The Wildlife Viewing Biologist coordinated and managed multiple contracts with carpenters, designers, translators, and fabricators from January to March. The interior exhibits were installed by the fabrication contractor, while Wildlife Viewing staff installed the exterior interpretive panels.



Figure 13. Young visitors enjoying the swan migration game, April 2014.

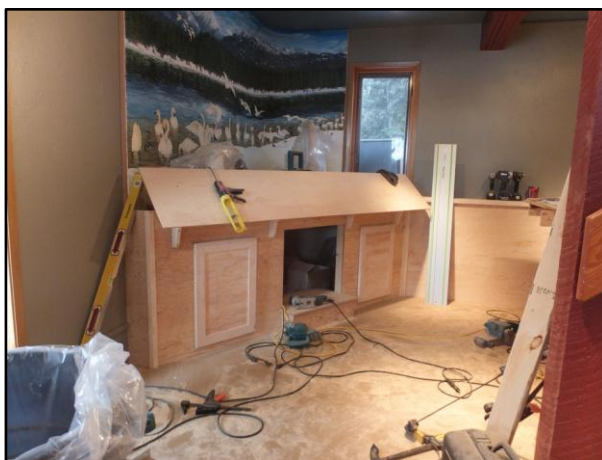


Figure 14. The early stages of exhibit installation.

The new centre design provides for a seamless visitor experience with complementary messaging throughout the exhibits. Games and interaction were built into the exhibits, with a variety of tactile, auditory and visual components. Both long-time and first-time visitors to Swan Haven enjoyed the updates and provided overwhelmingly positive feedback.



**Figure 15.** Vegetation has started to grow on the Swan Haven shoreline.

### **Shoreline Revegetation**

Grasses and shrubs have begun to grow along the upper portion of the shoreline, above the gabion mats installed last year. This new growth will help anchor the soil and protect against erosion. More active seeding and/or planting will be considered for 2015.

The post-and-rail fence along the top of the bank was completed in March 2014. The fence is visually pleasing, reduces foot traffic on the revegetating slope, and increases visitor safety. It also provided a structure on which to hang swan-inspired willow weavings, created in a workshop during *A Celebration of Swans*.



**Figure 16.** Willow-woven swans, April 2014.

### **Other Exterior Work**

*August 5, 2014*

- Painted all picnic tables.
- Installed outhouse signs.
- Dug up “site welcome sign” and installed it along the boardwalk near the outhouse.
- Built a new step for the viewing deck built and painted it.
- Repaired stairs to water.
- Cleaned outhouse.
- Cleaned up site.
- Repaired vehicle barrier.
- Put face back on guillotine.
- Took measurements inside for temporary displays, etc.

*August 20, 2014*

- Dug holes and installed 4x6” pressure-treated posts for hanging the main Swan Haven sign.
- Removed garbage and recycling.
- Cleaned and pumped out outhouse.

*September 4, 2014*

- Installed large, wooden Swan Haven sign in parking area with assistance from Parks branch staff.
- An electrician serviced the flood lights inside the building. All are now operational.
- Fixed damaged boards on boardwalk.



**Figure 17.** The newly painted and installed sign in parking area along Swan Haven Drive.

*September 12, 2014*

- Propane heater serviced (preventative maintenance).

*September 19, 2014*

Swan Haven winter shut down:

- Stacked picnic tables.
- Installed “wheelchair parking” sign and “dog-on-leash” sign
- Installed dog waste bag dispenser.
- Stored guillotine inside building.
- Covered guillotine base with tarp and marked with upright 2x4”s for plow operator. Also marked step to viewing deck.
- Installed posts for “Welcome to Swan Haven Interpretive Centre” in front of building. Sign fabricator will install the sign on these posts.

- Brought 30 kph signs and stands (2) and stored in building.
- Removed garbage.
- Cleaned outhouse.
- Brushed out trails and boardwalk.
- Verified propane level (80%).
- Brought two peeled logs to building for use as rails on fence.



**Figure 18.** Swan Haven Interpretive Centre, October 2014.

October 16, 2014

- Installed final two fence rails.
- Removed garbage and recycling.
- Photo-inventory of site.
- Inspection by Highways and Public Works staff.

## Next Steps

### ***Infrastructure and Property, Swan Haven Interpretive Centre***

We will undertake the following actions in 2015:

- Monitor built structures for safety issues and effectiveness, particularly erosion protection features.
- continue to comply with terms and conditions of our water license (annual report, January).
- Monitor the seeded areas of the property and assess the need for further re-vegetation

action (April-August).

The seeded, upper portion of the shoreline has hosted some plant growth since last year. This is desirable for aesthetics and to help anchor the soil. During the summer of 2014, the City of Whitehorse installed some erosion control features along the Black Street stairs to the airport property. The potential application of this design at Swan Haven will be investigated.

### ***A Celebration of Swans***

We will continue to build upon the success and popularity of *A Celebration of Swans*. Festival events in 2014 were generally well-attended, with the exception of events in Carcross and Johnson's Crossing. These communities are important as part of the overall swan migration story. They also give opportunities for local community members to get involved in the festival, without traveling far. We will offer simple, cost-



Figure 19. Enjoying swan viewing on a sunny Family Weekend, 2014.

effective events in these communities in 2015.

The festival has traditionally been billed as a nine-day affair, scheduled for the third week of April. However, this is misleading as events occur throughout April and into early May, and Swan Haven is open each day in April. To avoid confusion, next year's festival will be promoted as "April 2015".

We will continue our efforts to improve participation in the Swan Haven School Program. It is encouraging that participation increased 18% from 2013; however, there is still schedule availability for more classes to visit. We will be planning new learning activities for students in 2015, which may attract more teachers to the program.

We will be refocusing the promotion of the student art contest for the 2015 season. The absence of student art at the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre was quite noticeable this year.

Tracking visitation to Swan Haven has been challenging. With no "front gate" or sales receipts, our figures are estimates, and should be considered a minimum visitation number.

In 2015, we will experiment with using a pneumatic traffic counter to complement staff-collected figures. In addition, we will distribute a commemorative button to each visitor. The number of buttons used will act as a proxy for total visitation and a small souvenir for visitors. The buttons will also serve as a promotional tool when people wear them after their Swan Haven visit.

We will continue to look at new ways of engaging our audiences. Some visitors would like to see all the previous festival posters displayed at

Swan Haven. While space and interpretive design make this challenging, we are considering showing posters in a large-format "scrapbook style" presentation. Another consideration will be maximizing the effectiveness of the tablet, perhaps for quickly comparing swan calls, showing video of waterfowl, etc.

We are looking at potential strategies for keeping the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre open in May 2015. Although the abundance of swans decreases, species diversity increases as shorebirds arrive in the area. Early May is a wonderful time to visit M'Clintock Bay and learning and appreciation opportunities are plentiful.

The daily *Spring Updates from Swan Haven* will continue. We will make small improvements to the design of the updates and work with the Web Communications Coordinator to maximize the reach of the updates.

It may be beneficial to engage in a formal evaluation process for this program. A professional review of audience needs, expectations and desires would help inform future program development. Audience (visitor) segmentation tools are widely used in the tourism industry. Application of these tools to our visitors may yield insights for adjustments. A gap analysis of current activities would contribute to wise, future decision making.

*A Celebration of Swans* has great community support. We will continue to strengthen this program by focussing on high quality experiences for participants.



**Figure 20.** Having fun at Family Weekend, 2014.

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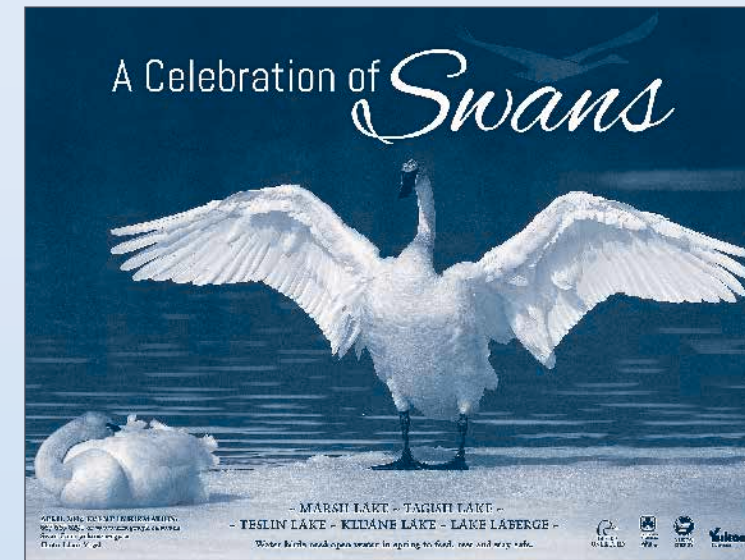
## **APPENDIX A – YUKON BIODIVERSITY AWARENESS MONTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2014**

[see next page]

# Spring Events Calendar 2014



## Yukoners can celebrate spring in so many ways!



### Faro's Annual Crane and Sheep Festival - May 1 to 4

In spring tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes darken the skies above Faro as they migrate to their breeding grounds in northern Yukon and Alaska. Come and enjoy a weekend of wildlife appreciation at Faro's annual Crane and Sheep Festival. The awe-inspiring number of cranes continues to attract and inspire visitors. Catch a glimpse of the Fannin sheep that are unique to the area in the hillsides surrounding the town. Festival events include the ever popular early morning bird walks, crane and Fannin sheep viewing tours, art displays and BBQ.

### A Celebration of Swans

Yukon's premiere bird festival brings residents and visitors alike out to great swan viewing areas to welcome spring to the north, arriving on the wings of the Trumpeter Swans. The shallow open waters of M'Clintock Bay, Tagish Lake, Teslin Lake, Kluane Lake, and Lake Laberge are critical stopovers on the swans' long migration to northern nesting grounds. These lakes provide access to food, good visibility, and little disturbance. In return for a safe place to stay, we are given the chance to experience a spring spectacle of birds not to be missed.



Above: Enjoying swan viewing from a safe distance at Swan Haven in 2013.



Wildlife Viewing

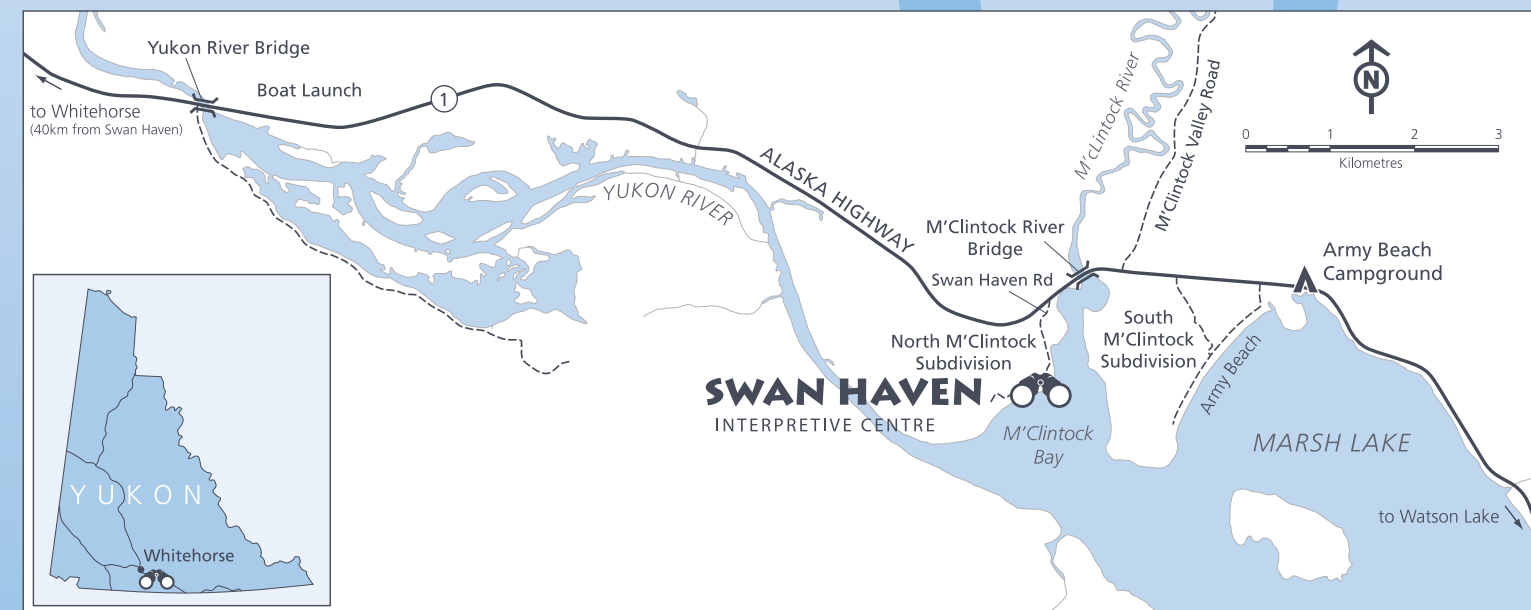
## Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month

### April is Yukon Biodiversity Awareness Month (YBAM)

Many Yukoners recognise the importance of maintaining biodiversity both here and around the world. They are working hard to ensure habitats remain healthy for the widest variety of species.

#### With the participation of:

- Association franco-yukonnaise
- Canada Games Centre
- Carcross/Tagish First Nation
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Environment Canada
- Girl Guides of Canada
- Kluane National Park and Reserve
- Marsh Lake Community Association
- Society of Yukon Bird Observatories
- Town of Faro
- Whitehorse Star
- Whitehorse United Church
- Yukon College
- Yukon Energy
- Yukon Literacy Coalition
- Yukon News
- Yukon Wildlife Preserve



Cover photo: Two Trumpeter Swans dip their heads underwater to feed on plants, while a third swan rests on the ice. Thousands of swans stop to rest and feed at open water each April during their migration north. (Photo by Minnie Clark)



[www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca](http://www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca)

[www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca](http://www.wildlifeviewing.gov.yk.ca)

# Biodiversity Month Events 2014

 = A Celebration of Swans event

Admission is free for all events unless otherwise noted.

## **Tuesday, April 1 - Swan Haven Interpretive Centre Opens**

See On-going Events for details.

## **Vendredi 4 avril - Havre des cygnes : Regard sur le passé**

Centre de la francophonie, 302, rue Strickland, de 17 h à 19 h 30. Plaisir garanti pour toute la famille! Le Havre des cygnes célèbre ses 20 ans cette année! Joignez-vous à nous pour jeter un regard sur les migrations printanières des oiseaux au cours des deux dernières décennies, tandis que les enfants s'amuseront à faire des bricolages sur le thème des cygnes. Le coût du repas est de 10 \$ (payable à l'entrée).

## **Saturday, April 5 - Winter Swans**

Johnsons Crossing, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon. Join Adam Skrutkowski at the boat launch under the bridge to get the latest update on overwintering swans at Johnsons Crossing. The story took an interesting turn this winter - come hear all about it. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy on the shores of the Teslin River.

## **Saturday, April 12 - Picnic and Stories Around the Campfire**

Tagish River Bridge, Day Use Area, 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm. Come to this great swan viewing area with your own picnic lunch and sit around the campfire enjoying a cup of tea and homemade bannock. Carcross/Tagish First Nation elder Ida Calmegane will share some traditional stories of spring in Yukon. Be sure to bring a mug for tea, lawn chair, and a blanket so that you can sit back and relax!

## **Saturday, April 12 - Watercolour Landscape Workshop**

Swan Haven, 2:00 – 5:00 pm (drop-in). Would you like to try painting landscapes? Local artist Daphne Mennell will be on hand to give tips to aspiring artists. Materials provided. No experience required.

## **Saturday, April 12 - Coffee House Music Night**

Swan Haven, 8:00 – 10:00 pm. Bring your acoustic instruments to Swan Haven for a musical evening, unplugged! Please RSVP to Wildlife Viewing if you would like to lead some songs, and be prepared to sing-a-long. Light refreshments will be served.

## **Sunday, April 13 - Bird Photography Workshop**

Swan Haven, 10:30 am – 12:00 noon. Bring your camera and questions and join photographer Jukka Jantunen for a workshop on bird photography. Jukka will take you down on the ice to try

your hand at snapping photos of the birds, while discussing some tips and tricks of this challenging trade. Dress warmly.

## **Sunday, April 13 - Willow Weaving Workshop**

Swan Haven, 1:00 – 3:00 pm (drop in workshop), 3:00 – 5:00 pm (demonstration and installation). Help us put the finishing touches on our post-and-rail fence. Shiela Alexandrovich will help you weave a simple swan design with willow branches, and later incorporate it into our new fence on the shores of Swan Haven. No experience required and materials are provided. Depending on demand, there may be a sign-up sheet and short wait upon your arrival at the event.

## **Monday, April 14 - Counting Swans**

Carcross, 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Meet at the pedestrian bridge behind the post office for some evening swan viewing. After, we'll warm up inside with a coffee and record our sightings for the eBird.org website – an online, global bird checklist.

## **Wednesday, April 16 - 20 Years of Swan Haven**

Beringia Centre, Whitehorse, 7:00 – 9:00 pm. In 1994, the Swan Haven Interpretive Centre first opened its doors. Twenty years later, we still welcome thousands of visitors each spring. Join us in looking back over these years, through stories, photographs and art. Keynote speaker Jim Hawkings will share the swan migration story of southern Yukon and the origins of Swan Haven.

## **Saturday, April 19 - From Image to Identity**

Swan Haven, 11:00 am – 12:00 noon. Join Jukka Jantunen as he helps us identify our feathered friends that make their home in Yukon. Head down on the ice and work together identifying some of the more challenging birds at Swan Haven. Dress warmly.

## **Saturday, April 19 - Forest Birds of Swan Haven: Bird Banding Display**

Swan Haven, 1:00 – 2:00 pm. The Society of Yukon Bird Observatories will have a mist net set up at Swan Haven to demonstrate bird banding and talk about what we hope to learn from our feathered friends. This is your chance to get a closer look at some beautiful forest birds. Don't forget your camera.

## **Saturday, April 19 - A Bird's Eye View**

Swan Haven, 2:00 – 3:00 pm. Come learn all about Yukon's three bird banding stations from the experts themselves. Members of the Society of Yukon Bird Observatories will share a slide show presentation about migration monitoring and bird banding. Find out what is planned for the 2014 banding season and the return of our feathered friends.

## **Monday, April 21 - Spiritual Celebration of Swans**

Swan Haven, 10:30 – 11:30 am. All are welcome to this special time to give thanks for the return of spring. Join in song and

prayer during this multi-faith service, while enjoying time for quiet reflection with the swans.

## **Wednesday, April 23 - Swan Haven Seniors Tea**

Swan Haven, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm (drop-in). The Marsh Lake Community Association invites you to enjoy tea, coffee, and home-made goodies and peaceful swan viewing. For more information call 660-4999 or e-mail marshlake@gmail.com

## **Wednesday, April 23 - Albert Creek Bird Observatory Banding Station Opens**

Watson Lake, early mornings from April 23 to June 7. See On-going Events for details.

## **April 26 & 27 - Family Weekend**

Swan Haven, 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm. The whole family is welcome to an afternoon of swan-watching and fun activities. Get your face painted, vote for your favourite artwork, play games, read a book, do a swan-craft, and immerse yourself in the cacophony of swan sounds.

## **May 1 to 4 - Faro's Crane and Sheep Festival**

Faro, Yukon. Free events for all ages including bird and sheep viewing tours and talks, plant walks, art auction, music and BBQ. Contact Town of Faro at 867-994-2728 or www.faroyukon.ca

## **Saturday, May 10 - Shorebirds of Swan Haven**

Swan Haven, 10:00 – 11:30 am. Move over swans, it's shorebird time! Sandpipers and snipes, yellowlegs and godwits, Jukka Jantunen will sort it all out during a short walk and talk. The shores of Swan Haven boast much more than swans and ducks. Rubber boots are recommended.

## **Sunday, May 11 - Swans of Kluane**

Kluane Museum, Burwash Landing, 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm. Bring your lunch out to Kluane and enjoy a guided hike by Mary Jane Johnson and an elder from Kluane First Nation. Learn about the

swans of the area and enjoy some warm tea and bannock at the end of the day. Warm layers and rubber boots are a must! Some transportation may be available from Whitehorse and Haines Junction. Please call Wildlife Viewing for details.

## **Sunday, May 11 - Mother's Day at the Yukon Wildlife Preserve**

Yukon Wildlife Preserve, 9:30 am – 6:00 pm. Check out our new animal mothers and their cute babies. Join a guided bus tour at 10 am, 12 noon, 2 pm or 4 pm, or embark on a self-guided walking/bike tour. Regular admission rates apply, but mothers get in free! For more information, call 456-7300 or email info@yukonwildlife.ca

## **Tuesday, May 13 - Celebration of Caribou**

Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse, 7:30 – 9:30 pm. Enjoy an evening of films and storytelling about the biology of caribou, and the cultural relationships between northern peoples and caribou. Hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Society Canada and the North American Caribou Workshop.

## **Friday, May 16 - Frog Walk**

Meet at the Carcross Cut-off, 9:00 – 11:30 pm. Join us for a guided walk along Rat Lake and take in the spring sounds of frogs and birds in the wetland. We'll have a campfire going to warm you up, and a chance to sit back and enjoy the sounds of spring. Don't forget your rubber boots, camera, and an extra layer of clothes.

## **Saturday, May 24 - Paddling Down the Lewes**

M'Clintock River Bridge, Marsh Lake, 9:30 am – 5:00 pm. The swans have moved on but there are still plenty of birds on the mudflats of M'Clintock Bay. Bring your own canoe and safety gear, and join Environment Yukon biologists as we paddle down the river to the Lewes River Bridge. You MUST REGISTER for this event by contacting the Wildlife Viewing Program. This is a challenging paddle in high winds.

## On-going Events

### **Swan Haven Interpretive Centre**

Tuesday, April 1 to Wednesday, April 30, 2014  
Weekdays: 5:00 – 9:00 pm  
Weekends and holidays: 12:00 noon – 7:00 pm

An interpreter will be available to answer your questions during these hours. For more information, please call 667-8291 or 1-800-661-0408 ext. 8291, or visit [www.swanhaven.gov.yk.ca](http://www.swanhaven.gov.yk.ca)

We are celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Swan Haven this year! The centre has been completely re-designed, inside and out, with new exhibits and displays. Bring the whole family to experience Swan Haven like never before.

### **Bird Banding Stations**

The Society of Yukon Bird Observatories promotes understanding, appreciation and conservation of Yukon birds. The Albert Creek Bird Observatory station carries out migration monitoring by netting birds in mist nets to count, measure and band. The Albert Creek observatory is located 10 km west of Watson Lake.

### **Swan Cam - [www.yukonenergy.ca](http://www.yukonenergy.ca)**

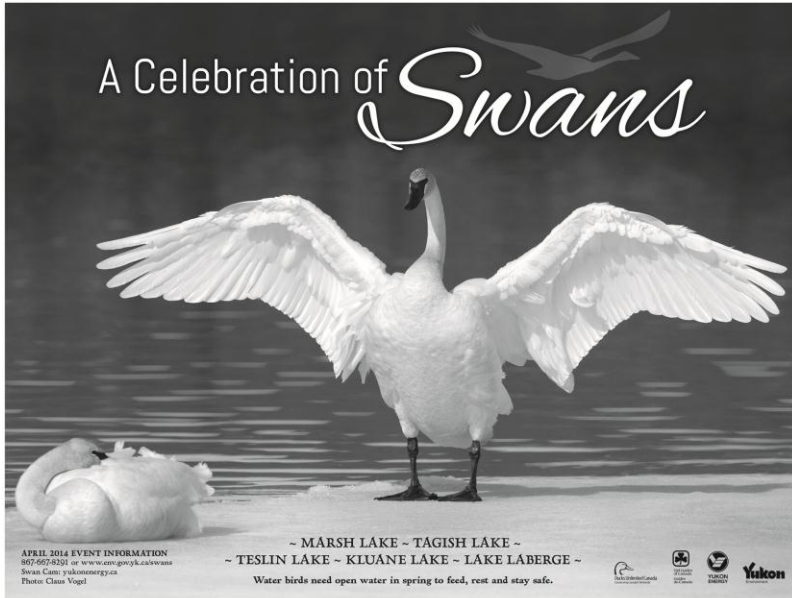
See what the swans are up to, any time of day. Watch in real time as the swans, ducks and geese feed and interact. Brought to you by Yukon Energy.

[wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca](mailto:wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca)

667-8291 or 1-800-661-0408, ext. 8291

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**APPENDIX B – A CELEBRATION OF SWANS THANK YOU AD**  
[see next page]



To everyone who made Swan Haven and  
*A Celebration of Swans 2014* a success,

## Thank You!

### Poster:

Claus Vogel | Yukon Energy

### Yukon Energy Swan Cam:

Peter Heebink | Yukon Energy

### Swan Haven Update:

Alan Wilson | Bernice  
 Schonewille | Bruce  
 Montgomery | Carolyn Allen  
 Cecil Spinks | Chera Hunchuk  
 Dennis Ferguson | Dennis  
 Senger | Gerry Perrier | Ida  
 Calmegane | Inkspirationz  
 Jackie Gosselin | Jeremy  
 Fulmer | Marko Marjanovic  
 Mary Binsted | Morris Lamrock  
 Oliver Barker | Outerop Yukon  
 Paul Crawford | Pearl Keenan  
 Peter Heebink | Philip Merchant  
 Robert Kempson | Sia Staniforth  
 Tanya Handley | YG French  
 Language Services

### Food Concessions:

Girl Guides of Canada | Nancy  
 Deasty

### Promoters:

Aurore boréale | CBC/Radio-  
 Canada (TV, radio, web) | CKRW  
 The Rush | Hougen Group of  
 Companies | What's Up Yukon  
 Whitehorse Star | Yukon  
 Conservation Society | YG  
 Tourism and Culture | Yukon  
 News

### Events & Activities:

Adam Skrutkowski | Ben  
 Schonewille | Bev Brazier,  
 Rev. | Daphne Mennell  
 Environment Canada | Ida  
 & Henry Calmegane | Jim  
 Hawkings | Jukka Jantunen  
 Kluane First Nation  
 l'Association franco-  
 yukonaise | Marsh Lake  
 Community Society, Wendy  
 Morrison & all the volunteers  
 Mary Jane Johnson | Nick  
 Guenette | Remy Rodden  
 Shiela Alexandrovich | Society  
 of Yukon Bird Observatories  
 Ted Murphy-Kelly | Yukon  
 Energy

### Community Displays:

City of Whitehorse (Canada  
 Games Centre) | Klondike  
 Travel | Nancy Deasty  
 Whitehorse Public Library  
 Yukon Brewing

### Thank you to the children, youth and adults

who submitted  
 inspiring creations for the  
 poster.

### School Programs:

Karine Grenier | Lance  
 Leenders | Maria Leung  
 Science Adventures (Heather  
 Dundas) and 505 teachers and  
 students!

### Waterfowl Monitoring:

Adam Skrutkowski  
 Environment Canada | Jim  
 Hawkings | Jukka Jantunen

### Coordinators:

Environment Yukon,  
 Wildlife Viewing Program



Girl Guides  
 of Canada  
 Guides  
 du Canada



**Yukon**  
 Environment

## **APPENDIX C – SAMPLE “SPRING UPDATE FROM SWAN HAVEN”**

[see next page]

Swan ticker: **1,422** (1,416 Trumpeter + 6 Tundra)

**Summary:** POW-POW! Standing room only as the swans continue to arrive in droves. Other birds were also more abundant: Mallard (138), Common Goldeneye (290) and Herring Gull (280).

**First sighting for:** Canvasback (1) Lesser Scaup (2) American Wigeon (4)  
(this spring)

**Around the region:** Also a big day at Tagish: 900 swans, 2 Hooded Mergansers (very cool-looking duck), and the first Gadwalls (3) of the spring. The rarity of the day is a **Black-legged Kittiwake**: a small gull that nests on ocean-side cliff ledges and spends the winter on the open sea. There are only a handful of observation records from southern Yukon!

[Upcoming Events](#)

Detailed Bird Observations (from eBird.org)

[Swan Haven](#)

[Tagish](#)

[Carcross](#)

[Johnson's Crossing](#)

[What is / where is Swan Haven?](#)

