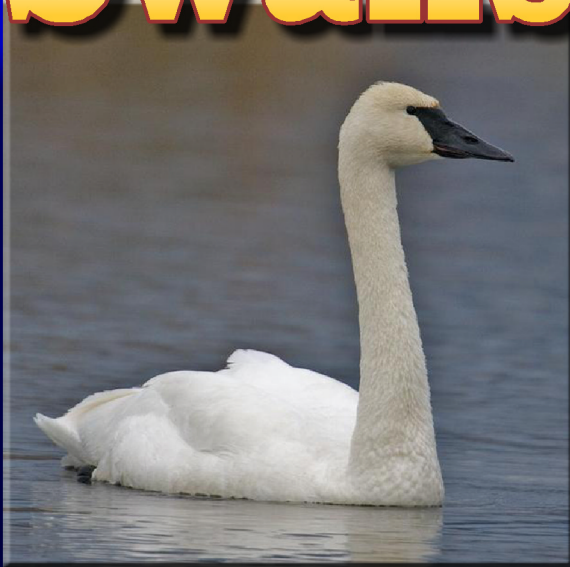


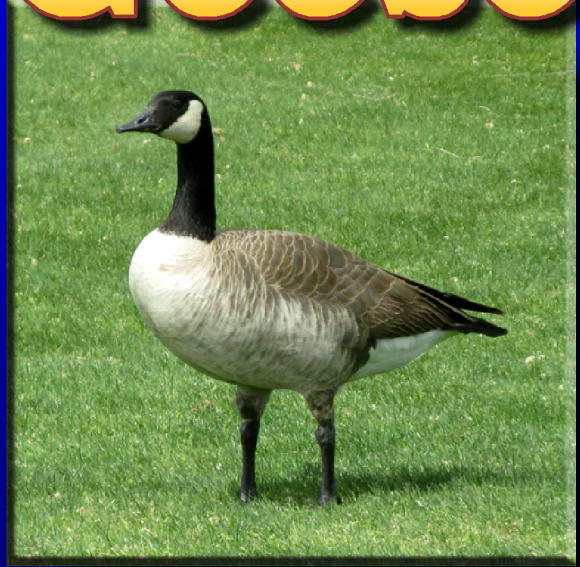
ANSERIFORMES

(Waterfowl)

Swans



Geese



Family **ANATIDAE** (Swans)

Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)



Measurements:

Length: 52" Wing Span: 66"

Average Weight: 14.5 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

very large size; white plumage (juveniles grayish); **black bill**, usually **yellow spot at base**, pink streak along mouthline; long neck; dark eyes; black legs and feet; females slightly smaller, otherwise genders identical



Notes:

common in breeding grounds in Arctic tundra areas in NA and Siberia; migrates in winter farther south near Pacific coast from B.C., Canada, to n CA, also most of n NV and UT, and Atlantic coast to NC; some populations winter in Europe; Bewick's subspecies has more yellow at base of bill; aka **Whistling Swan**; distinguished from **Trumpeter Swan** by curved line (rather than pointed) where base of bill meets forehead; feeds mainly on aquatic plants, also grains, grasses, etc.



Mojave presence: rare; migratory

Comments:

These rare winter visitors (bottom left) certainly seemed out of place in the desert. And not just any desert--but just outside of **Death Valley NP** of all places! It is likely they were just catching some rest time before heading onward on their journey through the region in January of 2019. These were the first wild swans I had ever seen in the Mojave.

This juvenile (below right) showed up all alone for only one day at the **Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve** in January of 2022 before moving on to another location. It was just pure luck I happened to be there that very day!



Family **ANATIDAE** (Swans)

Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Measurements:

Length: 50-65" Wing Span: 80-95"

Average Weight: 20-32 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

very large size; **all-white** body; **orange bill** with **black knob** at base (juveniles have grayish plumage and gray bill); long tail; long, curving neck; dark eyes; black legs and feet; females slightly smaller, otherwise genders identical

Notes:

uncommon, usually in territorial pairs or small family groups; found locally in temperate areas on calm open waters (ponds, lakes, golf course water hazards, etc.), often near human habitation; introduced from Eurasia, now naturalized in NA and elsewhere; name derived from its quiet demeanor relative to other swan species; feeds on a large variety of vegetation, including aquatic plants and agricultural crops

Mojave presence: rare

Comments:

A pair of these large swans (appropriately named Elvis and Priscilla) claimed residence in the lobby of an off-Strip Las Vegas hotel (Embassy Suites) in April, 2018 (left), but observations in the wild are a different story. These beautiful, majestic birds are a rare sight in the Mojave. The only ones I have seen are the two shown above, photographed while I was participating in a charity tournament in February of 2022, at the **Chimera Golf Course** in Henderson, Nevada.



Chimera GC; Henderson, NV



Chimera GC; Henderson, NV



Chimera GC; Henderson, NV



Chimera GC; Henderson, NV



Family ANATIDAE (Geese)

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)



Desert Pines GC; LV, NV



Bear's Best GC; LV, NV

Measurements:

Length: 25-45" Wing Span: 43-73"

Average Weight: (m) 9 lbs (f) 8 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

very large size; distinctive **white "chin strap"** on black head, black neck; both sexes share identical plumage; female generally smaller

Notes:

common; native to NA in open grounds, usually near water (as on golf courses); spreading to northern Europe and Siberia naturally, introduced elsewhere; numerous subspecies of various sizes; feeds mainly on plants, occasionally insects and fish

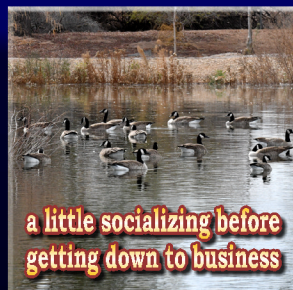
Mojave presence: winter range; some year-round



LV Municipal GC; LV, NV



Overton WMA; Overton, NV



Geese usually migrate to their nesting grounds in large flocks, but once they arrive, quickly pair off and settle in to the business of raising a family at the **Bird Viewing Preserve** in NV.

Chicks make their debut in the middle of April, which requires the recruitment of several adults to keep a sharp eye out for predators at **Floyd Lamb State Park** in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Family ANATIDAE (Geese)

Snow Goose (*Chen/Anser caerulescens*)

Measurements:

Length: 28" Wing Span: 53"

Average Weight: 5.3 lbs

Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

large size; light morph (pictured) has **all-white body** with **black wing tips**; dark morph, blue-gray body with white head; both have pinkish bill with dark "grin" patch, pinkish legs; both sexes essentially identical in plumage and size, thus gender is difficult to determine

Notes:

common locally; breeds in tundra locations in Canada, Greenland, Alaska, winters in sporadic areas in US and Mexico; light and dark morphs (snow and blue); feeds on aquatic vegetation

Mojave presence: migratory

Comments:

The Snow Goose is not nearly as common a sight as the **Canada Goose**, but when they're in town they don't hesitate to mingle with their larger brethren. This family, with junior in the middle, enjoyed a beautiful day on the water in March of 2022 at the **Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve**.

While the plumage on mature birds is, literally, snow white, juveniles sport a grayer cap, nape, and back, as presented by these two--also at the HBVP on the same day as above. The one on the right was alone, which is unusual.



black wing tips

Coyote Spgs GC; NV



arriving on final approach ...

Overton WMA; Overton, NV



pink bill with grin patch

Coyote Spgs GC; NV



... touch down!

Overton WMA; Overton, NV

