



# HENRYS FORK WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

CHAMPIONS FOR WILDLIFE

## OUR MISSION

*Protect and conserve the native wildlife and its enjoyment by the public in the Upper Henry's Fork Watershed*

## Vanishing Wetlands Threaten the Future of Wildlife

BY SARAH CUBELLS

Recently I participated with other volunteers from Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance in a collaborative fence building and shoreline restoration project at Henry's Lake in Island Park. The project is part of a larger effort to restore wetlands and shoreline at the lake. This phase includes planting willow stems along the lakeshore and replacing an old cattle exclusion fence with a new wildlife-friendlier fence. Volunteers chatted and laughed, and the hours genuinely flew by with good company and beautiful views.

The Henry's Lake Wetland Protection project is an ongoing effort by Henry's Lake Foundation with the Bureau of

Land Management to preserve wetlands at this world-renowned lake of Island Park that the local community and thousands of visitors love. Historic Henry's Lake boasts 16.8 miles of shoreline, and is named after fur trader Andrew Henry. Hosting native cutthroat and brook trout, Henry's Lake is one of Idaho's greatest high mountain lakes - an angler's paradise.

The general public must never take these restoration efforts for granted. Instead, let's take pride in the fact that volunteers put in hundreds of hours of work to preserve our precious lands and waterways - enhancing the future of outdoor recreation, wildlife, hunting and fishing. The goal of lake and wetland restoration is to keep the environment safe and hospitable for both animal and marine life and the enjoyment of humans alike. Projects like these maintain and

*Wetlands provide rich habitat for plants, animals and birds, so disappearing wetlands threaten the future of wildlife.*

restore lake ecosystems and allow species of native fish, plants, and even birds to thrive.

Wetlands are places with a lot of water at or near the surface. Sadly, 85% of North American wetlands have been destroyed by human development and urban sprawl (Scientific American 2008). In our own area, the future widening of US 20, which borders a valuable wetland, Swan Lake in Island Park, could jeopardize the state's most productive habitat for trumpeter swans.

Wetlands provide rich habitat for plants, animals and birds, so disappearing wetlands threaten the future of wildlife. According to the Association of State Wetland Managers, "Although wetlands make up only one to two percent of the land mass in Idaho, they are critical for the survival of 80 to 90 percent of the state's species" (Idaho State Wetland Summary). Let's remember this as we enjoy Idaho's unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities.



*Volunteers replace cattle-exclusion fencing with a wildlife-friendlier fence. Photo Credit: Sarah Cubells*



*Volunteers plant willows along Henry's Lake shore. Photo Credit: Sarah Cubells*

## OUR VISION

The iconic wildlife of the Upper Henrys Fork Watershed will thrive in connected and sustainable habitats because citizens treasure diverse and healthy wildlife populations and understand what is required for their continued success.



# Bear Safety: Hiking & Camping

BY BECKY LEWIS

Island Park is a destination for recreationists and vacationing families. People come to ride horses, fish, hike, bike, or camp in this picturesque landscape.

Island Park is home to both black bears and grizzly bears so it is important to understand how to safely recreate in this area. Because hiking and camping are two of the most popular activities here, follow these tips to stay safe.

### HIKING

Island Park has many hiking trails. Here's how to help ensure your safety and reduce bear encounters.

- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return
- Hike in groups of three or more, stay together, and make noise by talking or singing
- Carry bear spray and know how to use it
- Watch for bear signs: scat, tracks, day beds, hair rubs/scratches on trees, holes from bears digging for roots, and carcasses.
- Be especially cautious around thick brush, blind corners, near berry patches and streams
- Avoid off-trail hiking, and hiking at dawn, dusk, and at night
- Don't leave backpacks unattended
- Keep dogs on a leash

### CAMPING

Camping is a great way to experience Island Park. Regardless of the type of camping, bears visit campsites looking for food rewards. Here's how to stay safe while camping in bear habitat.



Grizzly Bear  
Photo Credit: Charlie Lansche

*Island Park is home to both black bears and grizzly bears so it is important to understand how to safely recreate in this area.*

- Always keep a clean camp and keep your fire pit or grill clean.
- Store all bear attractants in a bear-resistant container or a hard-sided vehicle (in the backcountry, your sleeping area should be at least 100 yards away from your cooking area)
- Keep your sleeping area, tent and clothes free of food odors
- Use the designated grey water disposal grates; do not dispose of grey water near a human-use area
- Do not leave pet food or water bowls out, or leave pets unattended
- Keep bear spray and a flashlight readily available in your sleeping area

*Becky is an Idaho Master Naturalist who lives in Ashton, ID. She volunteers in the USFS Campground Bear Safety program, at the IDFG Bear Education Trailer, the Bear Safe Island Park project, and has obtained grant funding for Bear Spray Giveaway Events.*

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**VOLUNTEER  
WITH US!**

Visit

<https://henrysforkwildlifealliance.org/volunteer>

to learn about our volunteer opportunities and join our volunteer list!



# Trumpeter Swans

BY DEB DRAIN

**T**rumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) are one of the most identifiable waterfowl found in the Island Park area. They are named after their call, which sounds like a trumpet. Trumpeter Swans are entirely white, with black bills, feet, and legs. They are the largest waterfowl in North America and one of the largest flying birds in the world. Trumpeter Swans can be up to 5' in length, with wingspans of up to 8 feet, and can weigh up to 30 lbs. Due to their size, they need open water on which to run to gain the speed and lift needed to become airborne.

Trumpeter Swans live and breed in wetlands, shallow ponds, lakes, and slow rivers. They require open water year-round to access their primary food source, aquatic plants, of which a mature adult can consume up to 20 pounds/day. Trumpeter Swans are also

***Trumpeter Swans can be up to 5' in length, with wingspans of up to 8 feet, and can weigh up to 30 lbs!***



Swan  
Photo Credit: Deb Drain

very sensitive to human disturbance. Although they have become somewhat "tolerant" of people in the Yellowstone National Park and Island Park areas, it's always best to give them their space.

Trumpeter Swan population recovery is one of our most successful conservation efforts. By 1932 it was estimated that the total remaining Trumpeter population was the 70 birds that resided at Red Rocks Lake, MT. The North American population is now estimated at 46,225 birds, with approximately 500 birds in the tri-state area of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Unfortunately, they still face threats from climate change, habitat loss, and lead.

Trumpeters can be seen in the IP area at Swan Lake, Herriman State Park, and the Henry's Fork of the Snake and Buffalo Rivers, Yellowstone National Park, and Red Rocks National Wildlife Refuge (Centennial Valley, MT). If you're lucky enough to see these magnificent birds enjoy your time with them and say a little thank you to those who made it possible.



Swan  
Photo Credit: Deb Drain

# CHAMPIONS FOR WILDLIFE

We are the only citizens organization devoted solely to protecting healthy wildlife populations in the Upper Henry's Fork Watershed.



Scan with QR Code Reader app on your smart phone to go straight to our website:



SCAN ME

## Campground Bear Safety Program

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) launched its Campground Bear Safety Program in Ashton/Island Park for its fifth year starting the Fourth of July weekend. The program is made possible through the dedication of several volunteers.

"The primary purpose of the Campground Bear Safety program is to enhance public safety and grizzly bear conservation through education," said Sabrina Derousseau, Forest Wildlife Biologist. "By educating campers on the rationale behind the food storage order, campers are better able to understand why food requires proper storage, so they don't attract bears, which in turn reduces human/bear conflicts."

"This program would not have the impact it does without individuals like Becky Lewis who go above and beyond to make a difference and organizations like the Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance which provides funds for volunteer uniforms and other logistical needs," said Derousseau.



## Volunteer Projects

**Fence Removal Project:** On Wednesday July 7, volunteers from Henry's Fork Wildlife Alliance and National Parks Conservation Association helped restore a historic pronghorn migration corridor in beautiful Island Park! Volunteers helped remove a derelict barbed wire fence on private property, at the landowner's request, to improve wildlife movement west of Yellowstone National Park between the Madison Valley, MT and Henry's Lake, ID.

**Henry's Lake Restoration:** HFWA volunteers and other partners participated in a collaborative fence building and shoreline restoration project with Henry's Lake Foundation and Bureau of Land Management in May 2021.

**Bear Safe Island Park:** This summer, HFWA is partnering with Idaho Fish & Game and Grizzly & Wolf Discovery Center to provide bear resistant trash containers in Island Park for use in specific problem areas. The containers will be used in concert with community education materials to keep humans and bears safe in our area. Stay tuned for more details!

**And more:** Stay tuned for more information about several other upcoming projects and volunteer opportunities, including swan monitoring in Island Park with Northern Rockies Trumpeter Swan Stewards. Visit <https://henrysforkwildlifealliance.org/volunteer> to learn more about our volunteer opportunities and join our volunteer list! More details to come.

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