

Grande Prairie
Trumpeter Swan

IMPORTANT BIRD AREA
CONSERVATION PLAN

Spring 2000

by Margot Hervieux
for the
Grande Prairie IBA
Stakeholders Committee



Ducks Unlimited Canada



Peace Parkland Naturalists



Alberta Conservation
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Saskatoon Island

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grande Prairie Important Bird Area

What is an Important Bird Area?

The Important Bird Areas of Canada Program was established by the Birdlife International's Canadian Partners, the Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada, as part of an international effort to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide.

The goals of the Canadian IBA program are to:

- Identify a network of sites that conserve the natural diversity of Canadian bird species and are critical to the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations;
- Determine the type of protection or stewardship required for each site, and ensure the conservation of sites through partnerships of local stakeholders who develop and implement appropriate on-the-ground conservation plans;
- And establish ongoing local involvement in site protection and monitoring.

The Grande Prairie IBA

Approximately 10% of the Rocky Mountain population of Trumpeter Swans and over 1% of the global population nest and stage in the Grande Prairie area of northwestern Alberta. The Grande Prairie IBA centers on Saskatoon Island Provincial Park, which includes Saskatoon and Little Lakes, in the County of Grande Prairie. Additional lakes in the surrounding agricultural zone will be added as landowner approval is secured. The total area under consideration contains about 30 lakes ranging in size from small, 500-m diameter ponds to the 10-km long Bear Lake. The uplands surrounding the lakes are a mosaic of agricultural land, deciduous and mixed woods and seasonal wetlands.

Why Trumpeter Swans Need Protection

In the early 1900s, it was thought that Trumpeter Swans had been extirpated from Canada, but in 1918 a small flock was discovered in the Grande

Prairie area. Numbers have since increased from 78 birds to over 350.

Trumpeter Swans are extremely sensitive to loud traffic, boating and human disturbance. Such disturbance can cause the loss of nests and cygnets and even the permanent abandonment of nesting lakes. Disturbance and habitat degradation, primarily due to agricultural and country residential development, are major threats to swans in the Grande Prairie area. The loss of wetlands also threatens the maintenance of biodiversity in the Peace Parkland region.

Current Conservation Strategies

The present IBA committee, with representatives from the Friends of Saskatoon Island Association, the Peace Parkland Naturalists and Ducks Unlimited Canada, was formed to assist with development of the IBA conservation plan however, there is a long history of swan conservation and advocacy in the Grande Prairie region.

Saskatoon Island Provincial Park was created in 1932 and then in 1948, the park and adjacent Saskatoon Lake were designated as a Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The sanctuary designation, however, only conveys protection to the lake and not to the surrounding shoreline habitat. There are no measures in place to protect shoreline habitat on private land, however, since Trumpeter Swans are listed as a vulnerable species in Alberta, land use conditions apply to new dispositions on crown land adjacent to nesting lakes. The Canadian Wildlife Service, in conjunction with the Friends of Elk Island National Park, also conducts an annual census of nesting and staging swan lakes in the Grande Prairie region.

Conservation Goals and Objectives

The following conservation goals have been established for the Grande Prairie IBA:

Education

- Share information throughout the County of Grande Prairie about the conservation of Trumpeter Swan habitat and the effects of

disturbance on nesting and staging swans;

- Establish a landowner stewardship program to enhance conservation of shoreline habitat;
- Provide ongoing information on Trumpeter Swans within Saskatoon Island Provincial Park;
- And participate in the annual Swan Festival at Saskatoon Island Provincial Park.

Habitat Protection/Enhancement

- Work to ensure maintenance of undisturbed shoreline habitat (including maintaining natural treed buffers, water levels, water quality etc);
- And work with government and Ducks Unlimited to secure and enhance nesting and staging habitat.

Enforcement

- Support existing management plans for Saskatoon Island Provincial Park and the federal migratory bird sanctuary and support any new conservation initiatives in the park;
- Support enforcement of existing regulations preventing the hunting or harassment of protected species;
- And work to further limit/restrict motorized use on Saskatoon Lake during critical migratory periods.

Research

- Support the ongoing population monitoring conducted by CWS;
- Establish stronger links with Elk Island National Park and their swan re-introduction program;
- And an ongoing project on amphibians in Saskatoon Island Provincial Park will provide information on the health of the aquatic system.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Birds are an integral part of all of Canada's many, varied ecosystems. The plight of large birds, such as the Trumpeter Swan, often attracts our attention but, more often than not, it is the habitat that is at the greatest risk. Wetlands are severely threatened all across the prairies and the Grande Prairie area of northwestern Alberta is no exception. The expansion of agricultural and country residential development has led to habitat loss and increased disturbance for a variety of wetland species.

Trumpeter Swans were close to extirpation in Canada when a small population was found near Grande Prairie in 1918 (James, 2000). The region, which contains a mosaic of poplar woods, prairie, wetlands and agricultural land, now supports at least 1% of the world's nesting and staging Trumpeter Swans (G. Beyersbergen, CWS, pers.com.) While the number of swans has increased significantly, the population will never fully recover without a commitment to habitat conservation in both the summer and winter range.

The Grande Prairie IBA centers on Saskatoon Island Provincial Park and adjacent Saskatoon Lake. Additional lakes in the surrounding agricultural zone will be added as landowner approval is secured. Please see map, page 8. The present IBA committee, with representatives from the Friends of Saskatoon Island Association, the Peace Parkland Naturalists and Ducks Unlimited Canada was formed to assist with development of the conservation plan however, there is a long history of swan conservation and advocacy in the region by local landowners and others.

The two primary goals of the Grande Prairie IBA are:

- To help ensure the long-term stability of this breeding area through enhanced habitat stewardship.
- To improve public knowledge, attitudes and behaviour regarding trumpeter swan nesting and staging lakes through education programs centered in Saskatoon Island Provincial Park.

2. THE IBA PROGRAM

The IBA program is an international initiative coordinated by BirdLife International, a partnership of member-based organizations in over 100 countries seeking to identify and conserve sites important to all bird species worldwide. Through the protection of birds and habitats, they also promote the conservation of the world's biodiversity. There are currently IBA programs in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

The Canadian BirdLife co-partners are the Canadian Nature Federation (CNF) and Bird Studies Canada (BSC) (See Appendix A). The Canadian IBA program is part of the Americas IBA program which includes the United States, Mexico, and 17 countries in Central and South America.

The goals of the Canadian IBA program are to:

- Identify a network of sites that conserve the natural diversity of Canadian bird species and are critical to the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations;
- Determine the type of protection or stewardship required for each site, and ensure the conservation of sites through partnerships of local stakeholders who develop and implement appropriate on-the-ground conservation plans;
- And establish ongoing local involvement in site protection and monitoring.

IBAs are identified by the presence of birds falling under one or more of the following internationally agreed-upon categories:

- Sites regularly holding significant numbers of an endangered, threatened, or vulnerable species.
- Sites regularly holding an endemic species, or species with restricted ranges.
- Sites regularly holding an assemblage of species largely restricted to a biome.
- Sites where birds concentrate in significant numbers when breeding, in winter, or during

migration.

The lead partner for the Alberta Important Bird Area program is the Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN). The Alberta program was launched in the spring, 1999, with the hiring of a Community Conservation Planner, (a.k.a. IBA Coordinator). Instrumental to the success of the Alberta program is the Alberta IBA Advisory Committee, animated by members from the Federation of Alberta Naturalists, the Alberta Conservation Association, the Provincial Museum of Alberta, the Canadian Wildlife Service, and the province's Natural Resource Services.

The Alberta IBA Program puts a premium on the voluntary and participatory nature of IBA conservation planning. In this regard, the Program seeks the cooperation and participation of the site's landowners and/or land managers and bird or wildlife agency personnel with an interest in the site. The Program is particularly interested in identifying, supporting, and empowering local, grassroots birders and bird clubs. By supporting these local bird interests, both financially and technically, and by facilitating the participation of local conservationists in the formulation, writing, and implementation of conservation plans for their favourite sites, FAN is working to build local buy-in, ownership, and a commitment to long-term stewardship of the site.

To this date, Bird Studies Canada has identified 31 Important Bird Areas in Alberta. Others will follow. At this time, local stakeholder groups are writing IBA conservation plans at over a dozen sites. If you are curious about any of these sites, one-page site summaries for many sites are posted on the IBA Canada website: <www.ibacanada.ca>. Additional sites will be listed as they receive the requisite approvals. For more information, please telephone the Alberta IBA Community Conservation Planner at (780) 422-5582, or the FAN office at (780) 427-8124.

3. IBA SITE INFORMATION

Site: Grande Prairie, CAAB107G

Location: 55°20' N, 119°20' W

The Grande Prairie IBA is situated in northwestern Alberta, near the city of the same name. The initial focus of the IBA will be Saskatoon Island Provincial Park and adjacent Saskatoon Lake but other lakes will be incorporated into the site as landowner approval is secured. The greater area under consideration harbours about 50 lakes ranging in size from small, 500-m ponds to the 10km long Bear Lake (See map, page 8). The communities of Beaverlodge, Clairmont, La Glace and Wembley are also within the overall site. The uplands surrounding the lakes are a mozaic of agricultural land, deciduous and mixed woods and seasonal wetlands. Most of this site is within the Peace River Parkland subregion of Alberta, although the southwestern portion is within the Dry Mixedwood subregion. The area around Saskatoon Lake, as described in the Saskatoon Island Provincial Park Management Plan (Alberta Environment, 1998), is representative of upland Peace River Parkland.

4. IBA SPECIES ACCOUNTS

4.1 Distribution and Abundance

Trumpeter Swans are listed as vulnerable in Alberta and they were also listed as vulnerable by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) in 1979. Population increases since then, however, have allowed COSEWIC to remove Trumpeter Swans from their list of species at risk (James, 2000).

The lakes of the Grande Prairie area support significant numbers of breeding and staging Trumpeter Swans. There are at least 28 locations in the agricultural zone around Grande Prairie where families of swans have been recorded breeding over the last several decades, within an area roughly bounded by Valhalla, Wembley, Flyingshot, Clairmont and Wolfe lakes. It is unknown exactly how many lakes in the Grande Prairie area support families of swans on a yearly basis, but it is expected that over 10% of the Rocky Mountain population of the species breeds here (G. Beyersbergen, CWS, pers. comm.).

Additional scattered flocks continue to expand into the Peace River, Manning (Chinchaga), Edson and Cardston-Pincher Creek areas (James 2000).

Hundreds of staging Trumpeter and Tundra Swans also use the lakes within the site, but Bear, Clairmont, Saskatoon, Valhalla, Wilkin, Gummer and Lac La Glace lakes support the largest numbers. In the autumn, usually sometime between early October and early November, mixed flocks of between 800 and 1,000 swans have been recorded. Up to 309 Trumpeters were recorded on Valhalla Lake on Nov 8, 1998. Using the peak numbers recorded in each year between 1996 and 1998, an average of 237 Trumpeter Swans was seen (Ducks Unlimited, unpublished data). This represents over 1% of the estimated global population of Trumpeter Swans but, since only a few lakes are covered in any individual survey, these are likely to be conservative figures. The above swan numbers warrant identifying the Grande Prairie -- Trumpeter Swan IBA as globally significant.

Bear Lake, Lac La Glace, Valhalla Lake and the Buffalo Lake complex are also important lakes for staging ducks. Over 20,000 ducks have been recorded at each of these locations during fall staging (Ducks Unlimited, unpublished data) suggesting that the Grande Prairie area hosts many tens of thousands of ducks in most years. The most common species are Mallard and Pintail though all of the prairie duck species are observed. In addition, the many lakes and marshes within the site are important colonial waterbird and shorebird breeding and staging areas.

4.2 Natural History of Trumpeter Swans

The natural history of Trumpeter Swans (*Cygnus buccinator*) is well summarized in Alberta Fish and Wildlife (1999) and James (2000).

Trumpeters are the largest of North America's waterfowl and the world's largest swan. Males weigh an average of 10.3 kg and females an average of 9.9 kg (James 2000). These long necked birds are completely white with black bills and legs. They closely resemble Tundra Swans (*C. columbianus*), which usually possess a yellow spot in front of the eye, but the two

species are most easily distinguished by their voice.

In the Grande Prairie area of northwestern Alberta, nesting Trumpeter Swans prefer permanent water bodies with quiet water, stable water levels and shallow areas in which the swans can dig for the roots and tubers of aquatic plants. They also need areas of emergent vegetation for cover and nest construction and healthy invertebrate populations. The birds are very territorial and usually only one pair will take up residence on a lake. Trumpeter Swans are also very long lived and show high fidelity to nesting sites. Nests are located near the shore and are often built on muskrat or beaver lodges or on mats of floating vegetation. Egg clutches vary in size from 3-9 and incubation lasts 32-37 days. In the Grande Prairie area, the average hatching success is 77.2% with an average brood size of 2.93 cygnets (James, 2000).

Migrating birds return from their wintering sites in the Tri-state area of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming in April. The birds gather on lakes such as Bear and Saskatoon before disbursing to nesting lakes. Non-breeding birds will remain on the larger, more isolated lakes throughout the summer and then join up with breeding pairs and their cygnets in October. As the lakes begin to freeze in late October or early November the birds begin the trip back south.

Trumpeter Swans once bred in "boreal, parkland, and prairie habitats throughout Canada and the United States from James Bay to the Rocky Mountains south to Missouri and Wyoming" (Alberta Fish and Wildlife, 1999). The Canadian population was thought to be extirpated by the early 1900s but in 1918 a small flock was discovered in the Grande Prairie area. In 1944, 78 Trumpeter Swans were observed and that number increased from 232 in 1954 to over 350 in the 1990s.

Trumpeter Swans are extremely sensitive to loud traffic, boating and human disturbance. Such disturbance can result in the abandonment of nests and the possible loss of cygnets and even the permanent abandonment of nesting lakes. Disturbance and habitat degradation are major threats to swans in the Grande Prairie area.

While nesting pairs may habituate to small increases in shoreline disturbance, lakes that have been abandoned will not likely be recolonized unless the sources of disturbance are removed. Swans no longer use many previously productive lakes (including Saskatoon, Wembley and Crystal lakes) and others could potentially be abandoned if the resident pair stops using the site.

5. OTHER ELEMENTS OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE

The many wetlands scattered throughout the parkland regions of the prairie provinces, including the Peace River Parkland, provide critical habitat for an entire assemblage of plant and animal species. Grebes and ducks use both the open water and the emergent vegetation for feeding and cover. A variety of songbirds, including warblers and sparrows, nest in the upland shrubs bordering the wetlands. These sites are also important for countless invertebrates and small mammals that in turn feed fish, larger mammals, shorebirds, passerines and raptors.

Wetlands also hold spring run-off, help maintain the water table, increase soil moisture and act as a natural filtration system. Surrounding vegetation provides food and cover for wildlife and livestock and helps control erosion and reduce evaporation. The larger water bodies also provide recreational opportunities for fishermen, hunters, canoeists, bird watchers and photographers.

An estimated 70% of the smaller wetlands in the Grande Prairie area have disappeared in the last 100 years as agriculture developed and low areas were drained to increase cultivated acreage. The conservation of wetlands within the Peace Parkland is critical to the maintenance of biodiversity in the region.

6. LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

6.1 Land Ownership

A high proportion of the land surrounding swan lakes in the Grande Prairie IBA is privately owned. Saskatoon Island Provincial Park is located between Saskatoon Lake and Little Lake

and these two lakes and the Park have been designated as a Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The County of Grande Prairie, Ducks Unlimited Canada and The Nature Conservancy also own a few scattered parcels within the area.

6.2 Land Use

Historical

The Peace River region has been occupied historically by aboriginal people and there are records of local native peoples using what is now Saskatoon Island Provincial Park for camping and berry picking as recently as 1929 (Alberta Environment, 1998). By 1916, when the first train arrived in Grande Prairie, there was a thriving agricultural community in the Saskatoon Lake area including the shoreline community of Lake Saskatoon (the community was moved to the present site of Wembley in the late 1920s to be near the railroad). Forestry became a force in the area in the 1950's and Alberta's largest gas field was discovered in the County of Grande Prairie in 1978.

Current

A large proportion of the land in the IBA is either under cultivation or is used for grazing. Cultivation likely extends to within at least 60 meters of most of the lakes in the IBA. The major communities within the IBA continue to expand, as does the amount of country residential development. Oil and gas exploration and extraction takes place throughout the IBA on private and crown land and this activity is increasing due to the construction of the Alliance Pipeline through the west part of the County. Other land uses in the area include recreation and tourism and wildlife conservation and research. Motorboat use on Saskatoon Lake has been restricted to reduce disturbance but it has not been banned completely. Boaters also use Bear and Clairmont Lakes but most of the other lakes are too shallow for such activity.

7. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT ACHIEVED AT THE IBA SITE

The Grande Prairie IBA is centered on Saskatoon Island Provincial Park which protects the south shore of Saskatoon Lake and all of adjacent Little Lake. In 1948, the Park and all of Saskatoon Lake were also designated as a Federal Migratory Bird Sanctuary (Alberta Environmental Protection, 1998) but the designation only conveys protection to the lakes and not to the surrounding shoreline habitat.

Trumpeter Swans are listed as a vulnerable species in Alberta and land use conditions apply to new dispositions on crown land adjacent to swan lakes (Appendix B). Up until 1998, known swan lakes were listed in the County of Grande Prairie municipal plan and setbacks were recommended. In the new municipal plan, subdivisions and other development has been left to the discretion of council. (At present, a group of local landowners is petitioning the County of Grande Prairie to impose restrictions on development along the shore of Saskatoon and Little Lakes.)

The Canadian Wildlife Service, in conjunction with the Friends of Elk Island National Park, conducts an annual census of nesting and staging swans. The next five year North American Trumpeter Swan survey is scheduled for the fall of 2000.

In the 1998 update to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), the primary goal for Trumpeter Swan management was to "maintain or exceed recent rates of annual increase" based on the fact that the Rocky Mountain population was at "approximately 35 percent of objective size". Ducks Unlimited Canada, which oversees implementation of the NAWMP, has the following objectives for swan lakes:

- Secure key Trumpeter Swan wetlands with control structures (i.e. Hermit Lake, Wolfe Lake);
- Secure wetlands with key purchases, usually the outlet ¼. (i.e. Bear Lake);
- Manage water levels for swan habitat where necessary by constructing water controls;

- Manage human intrusion including influencing land use planning to include buffers;
- And secure critical molting and staging lakes within the region (i.e. Bear, La Glace, Clairmont and Buffalo lakes).

8. IBA STAKEHOLDER GROUP ACTIVITY

The Grande Prairie IBA committee includes representatives from the Friends of Saskatoon Island Association, the Peace Parkland Naturalists and Ducks Unlimited, Canada. These groups work closely on a wide variety of conservation issues in the Grande Prairie area. The committee has also received technical assistance from the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Natural Resources Service of Alberta Environment.

This past spring (30 April 2000), during their 2nd Annual Swan Festival, the local IBA partners hosted the dedication of the Grande Prairie Trumpeter Swan IBA. The dedication ceremony was well-attended and included the participation of Grande Prairie mayor, Gord Graydon. Park staff and members of the Peace Parkland Naturalists and the Friends of Saskatoon Island received a commemorative IBA site dedication plaque.

Following is a list of swan related activities carried out by all of the various stakeholders involved in swan conservation.

The Friends of Saskatoon Island Association hosts an annual swan festival and supports interpretive and environmental education programs on swans in Saskatoon Island Provincial Park.

The Peace Parkland Naturalists Club, a corporate member of the **Federation of Alberta Naturalists**, helps promote the importance of habitat conservation in managing swan populations. Participates in annual swan festival.

The Canadian Wildlife Service, with support from the **Friends of Elk Island National Park**, monitors swan populations including an annual census of breeding and staging swan numbers.

Ducks Unlimited Canada oversees implementation of the **NAWMP**, assists in population monitoring and may acquire key land parcels (such as outlet quarters) adjacent to swan lakes when opportunities arise. Participates in the annual swan festival.

Saskatoon Island Provincial Park maintains swan breeding and staging habitat and monitors water quality within its boundaries as well as conducting interpretive and environmental education programs about swans and wetlands.

Natural Resources Service, Alberta Environment enforces regulations under the Wildlife Act and applies for land use restrictions adjacent to swan lakes in the green zone.

The City of Grande Prairie actively promotes its self as the 'Swan City'. There is a section devoted to Trumpeter Swans on the city's web site (www.city.grande-prairie.ab.ca) and swans are mentioned in a variety of promotional materials.

The County of Grande Prairie has regulatory jurisdiction over all development and subdivisions adjacent to swan lakes in the county. Supports annual swan festival.

The Town of Wembley promotes the swan festival.

9. OPPORTUNITIES

Trumpeter Swans are strongly associated with the Grande Prairie area, serving as symbols for both the 'Swan City' and the surrounding County. The identification of the Grand Prairie Trumpeter Swan IBA further emphasizes the importance of swans to the Grande Prairie area and provides the opportunity to involve landowners in habitat conservation. It may also be possible to 'twin' the Grande Prairie nesting area with other swan nesting sites in Alberta and beyond in an effort to increase the profile of Trumpeter Swan habitat conservation.

Over 250 people attended the first annual swan festival in 1999 including visitors from as far away as Calgary, British Columbia and even New York State. There are few places in North

America where bird watchers and photographers can easily observe Trumpeter Swans and the Grande Prairie area offers excellent viewing opportunities. Saskatoon Island Provincial Park provides a good starting point for swan excursions and offers programs for a variety of school and youth groups as well as the general public.

A landowner stewardship program will help work toward the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to maintain or increase the numbers of nesting Trumpeter Swans. The swan stewardship program could also be used in other nesting areas if it proves to be successful in the Grande Prairie IBA. The conservation of wetlands will also benefit the agriculture sector by maintaining the water table and conserving soil moisture.

10. THREATS

Disturbance

The breeding population of trumpeter swans in the Grande Prairie area is currently stable, but increasing residential subdivision/urbanization will result in increased disturbance to breeding and staging swans and other waterfowl. While existing pairs of nesting swans appear to tolerate some gradual increases in disturbance, new pairs seem reluctant to become established in areas of high human disturbance (CWS, pers. comm.). Intrusive recreational activities such as boating and shoreline off-highway vehicle use contribute to this disturbance as does the car, foot and pet traffic associated with increased country residential development.

Habitat Degradation

Agriculture and other development around the shore of swan nesting and staging lakes often results in the reduction or destruction of shoreline habitat. Increasing country residential development adjacent to swan lakes is of particular concern since there are no regulations in place to protect shoreline areas. The water quality of wetlands in agricultural and residential areas is also threatened by the runoff of fertilizers and pesticides.

11. CONSERVATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

EDUCATION

1. Share information throughout the County of Grande Prairie about the conservation of Trumpeter Swan habitat and the effects of disturbance on nesting and staging swans.

Key Partners

Friends of Saskatoon Island (FOSI), Peace Parkland Naturalists (PPN), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC)

Action Required

Place IBA and Landowner stewardship program displays/info in prominent places throughout the County (i.e. Muskoseepi Park, Visitor Centre 2000, museums, libraries)

Time Line

Ongoing

2. Establish a landowner stewardship program to enhance conservation of shoreline habitat.

(FOSI), (PPN), (DUC)

Establish terms of reference to designate land/owners as swan stewards. Develop information package for stewards including site designation signage. Develop program promotion plan.

Summer and Fall of 2000. Landowner contacts in 2001-2002.

3. Provide ongoing information on Trumpeter Swans within Saskatoon Island Provincial Park.

Saskatoon Island Provincial Park (SIPP)

As part of the natural heritage appreciation goals in the Park, ongoing interpretive programs, school programs and information signage will be provided for the public.

Ongoing

4. Participate in the annual Swan Festival at Saskatoon Island Provincial Park.

SIPP, FOSI, PPN, DUC

Festival to coincide with dedication ceremony for the IBA. Foster further involvement from the Town of Wembley and the County of Grande Prairie.

April 30, 2000 for dedication. Swan festival is an annual event

HABITAT PROTECTION /ENHANCEMENT

1. Work to ensure maintenance of undisturbed shoreline habitat (including maintaining natural treed buffers, water levels, water quality etc).

SIPP, DUC, PPN

Respond to development proposals within the County. Provide shoreline landowners with information on habitat maintenance through stewardship program. Work with "Living By Waters" program.

Ongoing

2. Work with government and DUC to secure and enhance nesting and staging habitat.

DUC, CWS, Natural Resources Service (NRS)

Initiate reclamation where landowners have encroached on buffer zone to lakeshore.

Ongoing, involves habitat stewards

<u>ENFORCEMENT</u>	Key Partners	Action Required	Time Line
1. Support existing management plans for SIPP and the federal migratory bird sanctuary and support any new conservation initiatives in the park.	All	As Required	Ongoing
2. Support enforcement of existing regulations preventing the hunting or harassment of protected species.	CWS, NRS	Educate landowner stewards on the Report A Poacher program and provide enforcement contact information in packages.	Ongoing
3. Work to further limit / restrict motorized use of Saskatoon Lake during critical migratory periods. Restrict shoreline activity on Little Lake during nesting season.	FOSI, PPN, DUC	Currently, motor boats are not allowed in the bays of Saskatoon Lake. Continuing efforts should be made to further restrict boating in this designated Migratory Bird Sanctuary. (e.g. Seasonal closures during staging and nesting). Ban all boating on Little Lake.	Ongoing
<u>RESEARCH /MONITORING</u>			
1. Support the ongoing population monitoring conducted by CWS	CWS, DUC, NRS	Provide funds and volunteers when available.	Ongoing
2. Establish stronger links with Elk Island National Park and their swan re-introduction program.	FOSI	Request for guest presenters from Elk Island National Park to visit the Grande Prairie area. Financial contributions to the program from FOSI.	2000-2001
3. A proposed research project on amphibians in Saskatoon Island Provincial Park will provide information on the health of the aquatic system.	SIPP	Water parameters (temp., ph) are taken throughout the research period and the overall health of the system is closely monitored over the long term.	Summer of 2000

12. EVALUATING SUCCESS

The Grande Prairie Trumpeter Swan IBA conservation plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis and Trumpeter Swan populations will continue to be monitored. It is hoped that in the next five years at least one habitat steward can be designated for each of the swan lakes in the Grande Prairie Trumpeter Swan IBA.

13. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Important Bird Areas Program is part of the Natural Legacy 2000 program, a nationwide initiative to conserve wildlife and habitats on private and public lands. The Grande Prairie Trumpeter Swan IBA committee gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada's Millennium Partnership Program, the Alberta Conservation Association, and PanCanadian Petroleum Limited.

The committee also appreciates the technical assistance provided by the Canadian Wildlife Service and the Alberta Environment, Natural Resources Services during development of the conservation plan.

The IBA Trumpeter Swan stakeholder group would also like to thank the Federation of Alberta Naturalists for their support and guidance throughout the conservation planning process.

The stakeholder group would also like to thank Ducks Unlimited for the use of their "Key Trumpeter Swan Wetlands" map, which appears on page 8.

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APPENDIX A: IBA PARTNERS

BirdLife International

A pioneer in its field, BirdLife International (BL) is the first non-government organization dedicated to promoting world-wide interest in and concern for the conservation of all birds and the special contribution they make to global biodiversity. BirdLife operates as a partnership of non-governmental conservation organizations, grouped together within geographic regions (e.g. Europe, Africa, Americas) for the purpose of planning and implementing regional programs. These organizations provide a link to on-the-ground conservation projects that involve local people with local expertise and knowledge. There are currently 20 countries involved in the Americas program throughout North, Central and South America.

For further information about BirdLife International, check the following web site:

<http://www.birdlife.net/>.

The Canadian Important Bird Areas Program has been undertaken by a partnership of two lead agencies. The Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada are the Canadian BirdLife International partners.

The Canadian Nature Federation (CNF)

The Canadian Nature Federation is a national conservation organization with a mission to be Canada's voice for the protection of nature, its diversity, and the processes that sustain it. The CNF represents the naturalist community and works closely with our provincial, territorial and local affiliated naturalists organizations to directly reach 100,000 Canadians. The strength of our grassroots naturalists' network allows us to work effectively and knowledgeably on national conservation issues that affect a diversity of ecosystems and human populations in Canada. The CNF also works in partnership with other environmental organizations, government and industry, wherever possible.

Our approach is open and cooperative while remaining firm in our goal of developing ecologically-sound solutions to conservation problems. CNF's web site is <http://www.cnf.ca>.

Bird Studies Canada (BSC)

The mission of Bird Studies Canada is to advance the understanding, appreciation and conservation of wild birds and their habitats, in Canada and elsewhere, through studies that engage the skills, enthusiasm and support of its members, volunteers, staff and the interested public. Bird Studies Canada believes that thousands of volunteers working together, with the guidance of a small group of professionals, can accomplish much more than could the two groups working independently. Current programs collectively involve over 10,000 volunteer participants from across Canada.

Bird Studies Canada is recognized nation-wide as a leading and respected not-for-profit conservation organization dedicated to the study and understanding of wild birds and their habitats. Bird Studies Canada's web site is <http://www.bsc-eoc.org>.

Federation of Alberta Naturalists

The Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN) is a provincial conservation organization, founded in 1970. FAN is an affiliate of the Canadian Nature Federation and is composed of corporate clubs and individual members. The objectives of FAN are:

- to encourage Albertans to increase knowledge and understanding of natural history and ecological processes;
- to provide a unified voice for naturalists on conservation issues; to promote field meetings, conferences, nature camps, research symposia and other activities;
- and, to promote the exchange of information among clubs and societies.

FAN publishes Alberta Naturalist four times a year.

Phone: (780) 427-8124.

Fax: 422-2663.

Website: www.fanweb.ca/.

APPENDIX B: TRUMPETER SWAN LAND USE CONDITIONS, ALBERTA ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES SERVICE

The Natural Resources Service of Alberta Environment recommends the following conditions be applied to activities near trumpeter swan habitat through the land use permit system:

- April 1 to Sept. 30, no activity within 800 m of the high water mark of identified lakes or water bodies.
- April 1 to Sept. 30, no direct flights over identified lakes or water bodies.
- No long term development (roads, wells, pipelines, etc) with 500 m of the high water mark on identified lakes or water bodies.
- Buffers from the high water mark of identified lakes or water bodies as follows:

Conventional seismic lines	800 m
LIS seismic lines	500 m
Hand cut seismic lines	100 m
0.5 m survey line	Nil

- No shot holes where water or ice exists or on dry lakes (air/mud guns only).
- No new grazing leases issued around identified lakes or water bodies.
- No range improvement within 500 m of the high water mark on identified lakes or water bodies.
- No timber harvesting within 200 m of high water mark on identified lakes or water bodies, special management zone for timber harvesting between 200 m and 500 m from high water mark (detailed plan required).