

# NEWS FROM...



## **Tammy Williams, Assistant Curator of Birds at the Palm Beach Zoo Appointed to North American Studbook Keeper for Trumpeter Swans**

**May 12, 2008** - West Palm Beach, FL – Tammy Williams, a 26 year-old assistant bird curator at the Palm Beach Zoo, has been appointed North American Studbook Keeper for Trumpeter Swans by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Williams, originally from New Hampshire, has been working at the Palm Beach Zoo since 2003, where she oversees the daily care of the Zoo's 130 species of birds.



The trumpeter swan (*Cygnus cygnus buccinator*) is a beautiful and elegant looking waterbird with a loud, trumpet-like call, hence the bird's name. They have broad, flat bills with tooth-like serrations along the edges that strain water when the birds consume aquatic vegetation. Their long necks allow them to uproot plants in four feet of water. Trumpeter swans weigh between 21-30 pounds, with males known to sometimes exceed 35 lbs., distinguishing them as the largest waterfowl species native to North America.

The Palm Beach Zoo currently has 22 swans representing 7 species, including a pair of the aforementioned Trumpeter Swans.

Trumpeter swans were once hunted to extinction in the early 1800's due to the demand for their flight feathers for use in hats and quill pens. Despite once having an "endangered" listing, there has been a significant increase in their numbers in the wild. Between 2005 and 2006, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service census revealed that there were over 34,000 trumpeter swans on the North American continent.

North American studbooks help to keep track of the entire population of a species, and are typically governed by Species Survival Plans or Population Management Plans through the AZA. In addition to the trumpeter swan, staff members at the Zoo also maintain studbooks for Central American Spider Monkeys, South American Spider Monkeys,

West Indian Whistling Duck, Spotted Whistling Duck, and the Fennec Fox.

The Palm Beach Zoo is a non profit zoological organization located at Dreher Park in West Palm Beach, housing over 1,500 animals within 35 acres of lush tropical habitat. Its mission is to provide an open-air classroom of living creatures to foster awareness, appreciation and respect for the natural world.

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