

SWANS & CYGNETS



There are two types of swans on Lough Erne: Mute Swans, which are present all year round and Whooper Swans which are present in winter.



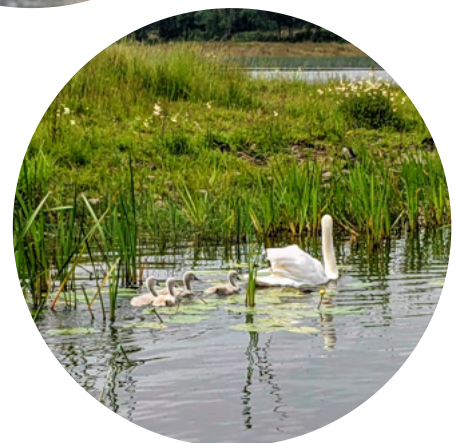
MUTE SWANS

Mute swans are large white birds which weigh approx. 10 - 12kg and have a distinctive orange bill. They pair for life and in the wild can live to be up to 20 years old.



MUTE CYGNETS

Cygnets are born in June and appear short-necked and thickly downed in grey. They are capable of running and swimming a few hours after hatching however they are carefully looked after for several months by their parents. Immature birds are mottled grey or brown for two years before maturing into beautiful white birds in their third year.



Swans are very territorial and defensive of their cygnets. A loud hiss can be heard as a warning to scare off intruders. It is important not to get too close to them!



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Whooper Swans and Mute Swans are differentiated by their bills. Whooper Swans have a distinctive yellow triangle, whereas Mute Swans have orange bills.

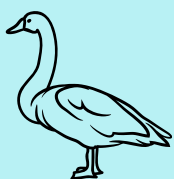


WHOOPER SWANS

From October to March, Whooper Swans are a common site in the fields surrounding the Lough Erne shoreline. They are bigger birds than Mute Swans and have a honking voice which can sound like an old-fashioned car horn!

APPROACHING SWANS

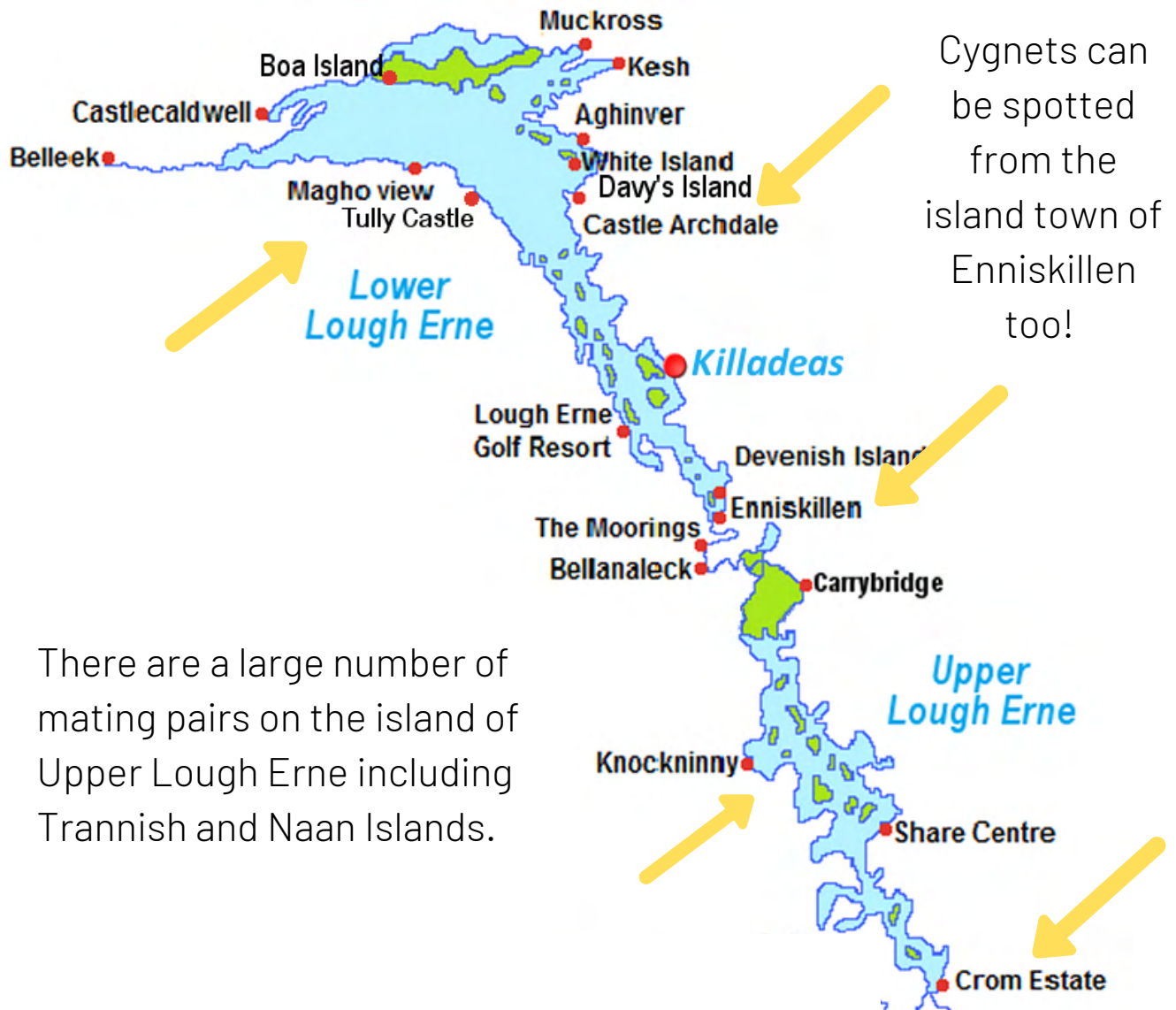
Swans normally find enough food in the wild without supplementary feeding. Grain, such as wheat, and vegetable matter, especially lettuce and potatoes, can be fed to swans. Food should be thrown into the water to avoid encouraging the birds onto the bank. Many people like feeding bread to swans, but when it's fed in large quantities, it can cause dietary problems, and is no substitute for the proper diet that the birds themselves will seek out.



Whooper swans will migrate to the same area each year, and a group of swans are called a "ballet".

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Where to see Swans and Cygnets?

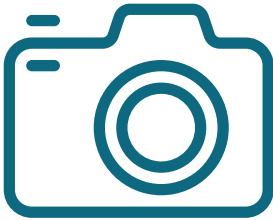


There are a large number of mating pairs on the island of Upper Lough Erne including Trannish and Naan Islands.

Swans are specially protected at all times under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 and are listed in the EU Birds Directive as a species which must be the subject of special conservation measures.

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Swan activities



Why not get outside and share your pictures and locations of where you see swans and which type you spot!



Why not make a swan out of a paper plate? All you need is a paper plate, scissors, markers and some optional decorative feathers. Cut your swan shape out of the paper plate, as seen in the picture and draw on an eye and a bill. Feathers or paper can be added to the body.

MORE RESOURCES

- Further information about Ducks, Swans and Geese in the UK by [RSPB](#).
- Free, printable swan colouring in page by [The Graphics Fairy](#).
- What to do if you find an injured, orphaned or sick swan by [RSPB](#).
- The Ugly Duckling, Bedtime Story by [Cartoons for Kids](#).