

Trumpeter Swans, More Winter Birds Visible at Audubon Center in West Alton

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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WEST ALTON - Eagles might be the main attraction for many people, but trumpeter swans are also here to stay for the winter months.

Ashley Lockwood, an educator with the Audubon Center at Riverlands, explained that trumpeter swans and other birds of prey have migrated to the area for the winter season. The birds will be a big drawing point for tourists over the next few months.

“Wintertime is definitely known as the month of both eagles and swans. We have, for the past couple months, consistently around 200 of those swans out here,” Lockwood said. “Winter is actually our busiest season, definitely, and we have a good amount that you can see out here, not just the eagles or the swans, but we’ve had a lot of birds of prey this year.”

Lockwood explained that the river determines when birds like the swans migrate to the Riverbend region. The swans need colder temperatures to survive, so they are more likely to be in our area when the river has iced over.

Whether you’re a novice birdwatcher or an expert, it’s possible to see birds at the Audubon Center and Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Located at 301 Riverlands Way in West Alton, Missouri, the center welcomes hundreds of visitors every winter, and Lockwood said it’s not difficult to spot birds like eagles, swans, short-eared owls, northern harriers, pintail ducks and more.

“I like to tell people no matter what your level of skill is, we have a road that just bisects the entire sanctuary, Riverlands Way, and you can just look left and right,” Lockwood said. “It’s a really good way to kind of get a lay of the landscape and still have really good visibility... You see at dusk there, 30, 50 cars parked along the road with these huge cameras just taking pictures out on the prairie land. So it’s been a really good turnout for them.”

The Audubon Center also invites guests to check out their Birds of Winter weekends, from now until Feb. 11, 2024. These days include raptor and eagle meet-and-greets, vendors, bonfires and guided walks through the sanctuary. You can learn more about [upcoming events](#) at the [official Audubon Center website at Riverlands.Audubon.org](https://www.audubon.org/riverlands).