

Save our Swans

PETITION TO AMBER MORLEY, THE DEPUTY MAYOR OF TORONTO AND COUNCILLOR FOR ETOBICOKE-LAKESHORE

Why this petition matters:

For many who visit Toronto's waterfront, a source of joy is watching Mute Swans, the intelligent orange-beaked birds, loved for their beauty and lasting pair bonds. In the spring it is especially moving to watch the parents nest then raise their baby cygnets.

Human bonds with Mute Swans are unique. Mute Swans are highly visible, tend to live in urban areas, and come to know individual people. We can watch them as they spend months with their babies teaching them to eat, swim, fly, and ultimately head off for lives of their own. These factors make humans' relationship with Mute Swans different than with any other wild animal and very special.

But what observers may not know is that the City of Toronto contracts the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to control the population of Mute Swans by destroying all of their eggs. Typically, this is done by coating the eggs in oil, which cuts off the oxygen the cygnets inside need to develop. This is fatal for the cygnets, of course, and devastating for the parents. Mothers have been known to stay on the nest weeks longer than usual, nearly starving but unwilling to give up on the cygnets they think will emerge.

Some Mute Swan pairs have lost eggs to oiling *year after year after year*. While they build their nest, attend it faithfully, protect their eggs, and wait weeks for them to hatch, they have NEVER had the chance to be parents. Instead, they are chased off the nest when their eggs are oiled then later have to watch while the Toronto-contracted crew tears apart their nest and takes their eggs away.

So determined are they to be parents, that the mother will often rest and recover for a few weeks because mating, producing eggs, laying, and incubating are tiring work, then lay a second set of eggs – only to have them destroyed as well.

Mute Swans spend 80% of their lives reproducing and raising their young. Egg destruction eliminates a central feature of their wild lives.

This petition calls on Amber Morley to direct that, effective April 2026 and for a period of at least five years, three eggs are to be left to hatch in each Mute Swan nest in Etobicoke-Lakeshore so that Mute Swans have a chance to raise their young and residents can enjoy observing Mute Swan families in the wild.