



Photo by Matt Love

Crab was nestled in a bowl over ice at the Triangle Tavern, ready for anyone who wanted it.

## A GLIMPSE INSIDE

An occasional feature by MATT LOVE

### The Triangle Tavern

"I can't eat crab," said the man standing at the bar of the Triangle Tavern in Astoria. "I ain't got no teeth."

Yes, that posed a serious problem for the man considering the tavern lacked the proper crab breaking tools to crack open the shells. Good teeth were compulsory to get at the meat.

At that very moment, the University of Oregon was laying a first-half licking on Oregon State in the Civil War, and the crab, caught and cooked up by a regular, nestled in a gleaming silver bowl near the pool table, next to the leftovers from the Thanksgiving Day potluck. The crab rested on ice and was ready to be devoured by any throwback hominid who didn't require tools.

This is precisely why every evolved person who enters a dive tavern on the Oregon Coast should carry a Leatherman. You never know when fresh crab might show up. I'm not joking.

I had just cracked open a succulent crab leg with my hands and teeth and juice exploded all over my face. It was such a preposterous occurrence in an Oregon tavern that I couldn't stop laughing. I didn't have a napkin handy so I just cleaned up with a little beer.

The crab was beyond delicious, and I knew I wanted a second helping, possibly a third. Crab can do that to a man. I wanted it all to myself and was, in fact, the only one eating it.

As I watched the toothless, crabless man at the bar, an altruistic thought occurred to me: Maybe I should go out to the truck and scare up some tools to assist the crab breaking operation.

Oregon scored again. I heard the tinkle of a winning video poker hand behind me. Sunlight streaked through the blinds. I tasted my craft malt liquor. I ate another bite of crab. No, I decided, I wasn't getting up from my comfortable stool. Altruism was dead. The man would just have to suffer.

I noticed some movement behind the bar. Tamree, the bartender, went into a utility closet and emerged a few seconds later.

"I've got pliers and a hammer if anyone needs them," she said.

She set the tools on the table and drifted away to serve a customer. The toothless man started walking toward the crab.

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*Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books about Oregon. His books are available through coastal bookstores or his web site, [nestuccaspitpress.com](http://nestuccaspitpress.com)*

# Wild SIDE

## Cygnus buccinator

### Trumpeter swan

By LYNETTE RAE McADAMS

One of only three species of wild swans in North America and the largest waterfowl in existence today, the trumpeter swan, named for its bugle-like call, is found across all of Canada, throughout the northern reaches of the U.S., and as far west as the Bering Sea. At full maturity, this bird can reach an overall length of 6 feet, with a 10-foot wingspan and a weight of 35 pounds. Despite its enormous size, it is more than capable of flight, and its motion in the air and on the water is practically synonymous with grace.

With snow white plumage offset by the beauty of a solid black bill, this bird is entirely striking. Visually, males and females are identical, though if seen together, they can be distinguished by size — in some cases, males, called cobs, are twice as large as females, called pens.

Baby swans, more officially known as cygnets, hatch with light gray feathers and pink legs, but gain their white plumage after about a year. They remain with their parents (who mate for life) throughout the first winter, returning with them to their natal breeding grounds in spring, at which point the adults drive them away in order to start a fresh brood. Cast out by their love-struck parents, sibling swans often shelter together until it's time to seek mates of their own, usually two or three years later.

Throughout the last half of the 19th century, trumpeter swans were hunted nearly to extinction, though not for meat: Highly prized in Victorian fashion, their magnificent feathers were used in women's hats, and their plucked skins were marketed as powder puffs. By 1933 it was presumed that only 70 swans remained in existence, but a discovery in the 1950s revealed an unknown bevy of more than 1,000 swans taking refuge near Alaska's Copper River. Though still considered threatened, thanks to ardent conservation measures, the continent's population now numbers nearly 50,000.

Seventy percent of all trumpeters breed and



Submitted photo

Known as one of the crown jewels of a healthy wetland, trumpeter swans can be found on or near the waters of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and at Black Lake in Ilwaco, Washington.

nest in Alaska, then winter in the Pacific Northwest, including here along our coastline. Known as one of the crown jewels of a healthy wetland, they can be found on or near

the waters of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge, at Black Lake in Ilwaco, Washington, and anywhere else pristinely clean water combines with peaceful surroundings.



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