



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Mute Swans Are Still in Danger

TONY AVELLA March 12, 2014



*Senator Avella, Friends of Animal, and League of Humane Voters hold a press conference on fate of the majestic birds*

ALBANY, NY—TODAY, New York State Senator Tony Avella, Friends of Animals (FoA), and the New York League of Humane Voters (LOHV-NY) held a press conference inside the LCA Press Room in the Legislative Office Building to address the Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) revision of its controversial plan to eliminate the state's 2,200 mute swans, and to urge the agency to protect, not persecute, the swans.

Since learning of DEC's plan, Senator Avella has advocated on behalf of animal rights groups to protect the beautiful species. On February 10<sup>th</sup>, Senator Avella introduced legislation in the State Senate (S.6589) to establish a two-year moratorium on the DEC's plan to eradicate all wild mute swans in the state by 2025 and declare them a "prohibited species."

After thousands of testimony submissions from individuals opposing the plan and pressure from legislators expressing their outrage, DEC decided to make revisions which will go through an additional public comment period.

"Although I commend DEC on carefully reviewing each submitted testimony and deciding to revise their plan, it still does not go far enough in providing evidence to justify the elimination of these beautiful swans," Senator Avella stated. "That is why I remain fully committed to my legislation, which would halt the plan and require DEC to illustrate the necessity of eradicating this species by demonstrating the actual damage to the environment or other species caused by mute swans."

Senator Avella along with FoA, and LOHV-NY demanded that DEC replace the swan eradication proposal with legal protections that prevent harm and allow New York residents to live in harmony with these treasured birds.

"We are committed to gaining full protection for NY's mute swans and making sure that not a single swan is killed or harassed nor a single swan egg destroyed. Mute swans are a beloved part of New York's landscape, and our message to the DEC is 'Hands off NY's swans,'" said Edita Birnkrant, NY director of Friends of Animals.

"If the NY DEC holds the same scientifically-flawed theories about mute swans, any new proposal will smell like their initial, hateful one," said Priscilla Feral, president of Friends of Animals. "FoA isn't falling for a control scheme that manages swans to extinction—denying

these beautiful birds flight, families and the right to live in nature. We insist on replacing the DEC's swan extinction proposal with legal protections that prevent harm and allow New York residents to live in harmony with these lovely, treasured birds.”

Senator Avella concluded, “The facts just do not appear to support DEC's plan to eradicate these beautiful creatures. After speaking with countless animal rights advocates and experts, it appears that the mute swans do not pose any real danger to the general public or any catastrophic damage to the environment, as DEC claims. We should be researching ways of how to protect these birds, not eradicate them.”