

## South American swans decimated

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The World Wildlife Federation says a recently opened pulp mill in Chile has devastated one of South America's most biologically outstanding wetlands.

"What was probably the largest population of black necked swans in South America has been wiped out in less than a year," said Clifton Curtis, director of World Wildlife Fund's Global Toxic Program. "It is an environmental catastrophe,"

The Carlos Anwandter Nature Sanctuary, covering more than 12,000 acres in southern Chile, was home to more than 100 species of rare, vulnerable, or in at least two cases, endangered species of birds.

"This was an area once teeming with water birds," said David Tecklin, a WWF ecoregion coordinator. "Now, within the space of just months, it has become an empty expanse of brown, polluted water."

The WWF affirmed earlier findings by Austral University of Chile that pulp waste from the plant owned by CELCO, Chile's largest timber conglomerate, is most likely responsible for the catastrophe.

"It was heart-rending. We talked to people in Valdivia who said they saw emaciated swans fall from the sky, landing on rooftops and cars," Curtis said. "They were so weak they were unable to carry their own weight."

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