



Queen Elizabeth II attends swan counting ceremony

英國女王出席清點天鵝儀式

Queen Elizabeth II watched for the first time as her staff began the annual job of counting her swans.

The Seigneur Of The Swans — as she is known during the historic Swan Upping ceremony — sailed up the River Thames on a steamer to observe cygnets being weighed and measured.

The 83-year-old monarch, on the British **throne** since 1952, owns all unmarked mute swans in open water in Britain, but had never watched the traditional custom before.

“Swan Upping” dates from the 12th century when the crown claimed all the unowned mute swans in England to ensure a supply of meat for **banquets** and feasts.

Although the royal family no longer eat the birds, the ceremony has **stood the test of time** but is now done for conservation purposes.

Queen Elizabeth only exercises her right of ownership along certain stretches of the Thames and its tributaries.

Wearing an apricot outfit, the monarch sailed in the steamer Alaska to watch the proceedings.

“The queen just seemed generally interested in everything we were doing and asking questions about our work,” said the sovereign’s swan marker, David Barber, who is in charge of the annual census.

“Two hundred years ago there would have been a lot more swans than there are today and conservation is much more important now,” he said.

“Pollution and loss of habitats have affected the birds so the job we do is **vital** to check on how they are doing.”

The swans face a variety of perils such as being shot, attacked by dogs or getting caught up in fishing tackle.

The supply of swans to the royal household was once considered so important that in the 16th century anyone caught stealing swan eggs could face a year in jail and a hefty fine.

(AFP)

英國女王伊麗莎白二世首次視察年度清點天鵝工作。

在這項具歷史意義的清點天鵝儀式中，被稱作「天鵝領主」的女王搭乘汽船，在泰晤士河上觀賞小天鵝秤重和測量的情況。

八十三歲的女王於一九五二年登基，全國開放水域所有無標記的疣鼻天鵝都歸她所有，但她以前從未參加過這項傳統習俗。

「清點天鵝」這項傳統可追溯至十二世紀，當時的英國君主為了確保宴會和筵席的食用肉供給無虞，便宣佈全英國所有的無主疣鼻天鵝都歸皇室所有。

儘管英國皇室後來不再食用天鵝肉，但這項儀式仍延續了下來，現在清點天鵝則是為了保育。

伊麗莎白女王僅在泰晤士河的某幾個河段和支流清點天鵝。

女王穿著一襲杏黃色的服裝，搭乘阿拉斯加號汽船視察清點工作。

負責年度天鵝普查的皇家天鵝標記員大衛·巴伯說：「女王似乎對我們工作的每個環節都很感興趣，也對我們的作業提出一些問題。」

他說：「兩百年前的天鵝可能比現在多出許多，因此現在的保育工作更顯重要。」

「環境污染和棲息地減少已經影響天鵝的生態，因此我們的工作極為重要，就是要了解牠們的狀況。」

這些天鵝面臨多種危險，例如被人類射殺、被狗攻擊或被釣具困住等。

十六世紀時，皇室家族一度十分看重天鵝的供應，當時偷竊天鵝蛋的人可能得吃上一年牢飯或被處以高額罰款。

(法新社／翻譯：袁星塵)

David Barber, the Queen’s swan marker, inspects a swan on the River Thames (top left) and “Swan Uppers” sail on the River Thames during the annual Swan Upping Census in Maidenhead, Berkshire on July 20, 2009.

PHOTOS: AFP

七月二十日，在英國波克夏郡梅登海德舉行的年度天鵝普查活動中，「天鵝標記員」乘船沿河工作；女王的天鵝標記員大衛·巴伯（上圖左）檢查泰晤士河上的一隻天鵝。

照片：法新社

TODAY'S WORDS

今日單字

1. **throne** /ˈerɒn/ n.

君王 (jun1 wang2) · 王位 (wang2 wei4)

例: The heir to the throne has announced his plans to get married.
(王位繼承人已對外宣佈結婚計畫。)

2. **banquet** /ˈbæŋkwɪt/ n.

宴會 (yan4 hui4)

例: Jerry surprised everyone with the size of his wedding banquet.
(傑瑞婚宴的規模讓大家大吃一驚。)

3. **vital** /ˈvaɪtəl/ adj.

極重要的 (ji2 zhong4 yao4 de5)

例: It's vital that you record all the information accurately.
(將所有資訊都正確記錄下來是非常重要的。)

IDIOM POINT

重要片語

stand the test of time
經得起時間的考驗

If something **stands the test of time**, it endures for a long time. The article says that the swan upping ceremony has lasted for hundreds of years, even though its purpose has changed.

Examples: “Freda and Doug’s marriage has **stood the test of time** — they’ve been married for almost 50 years,” or “When choosing a computer, make sure you pick something that will **stand the test of time**.”

若某事「**stand the test of time**」，意思就是這件事持續了很長一段時間。文章中提到，即使目的已不相同，天鵝清點活動也延續了數百年之久。

例如：「芙芮達和道格的婚姻已通過時間的考驗，他們結婚都快五十年了」，或「挑選電腦時，一定要選經得起時間考驗的機種」。