

Black swans refuse to eat after eggs stolen

A police investigation is underway into the theft of black swan eggs at a scenic spot over Spring Festival, which has left the Swan pair grief-stricken and unable to eat.



The male black swan keeps guard as the female swan hatches the eggs. [Photo: 1545ts.com]

The eggs were taken from the breeding pair at the swan scenic spot of Mount Tai, east China's Shandong province.

Staff members have reviewed security camera footage and said that two tourists may have been responsible for the theft.

Li Yaming, general manager of the swan breeding company in Taian city, told reporters that the swan eggs went missing on February 1. Keepers found that the black swan couple had left their nest, were making a lot of noise, and were being aggressive towards people coming too near to them.

"The two black swans were behaving very abnormally, and then the breeder found out that the five black swan eggs were all gone," said Li Yaming.

Swans tend to stay in the nest during the incubation period. In general, male swans keep guard while female swans incubate the eggs. The thieves would have needed to wait for the swan couple to take a break before taking the eggs, said Li.

According to the staff at the scenic spot, unhatched eggs are useless to ordinary people. The eggs can't be eaten nor can they be hatched. Also, the eggs could explode in hot weather. But even if they were returned by the thieves, the five missing eggs can no longer be hatched.

Swans are nationally protected animals, and as they are strictly monogamous,

they are seen as a symbol of loyalty in love.

Incubating eggs for swans is a painful process. Female swans only produce 4-7 eggs every spring, and the time needed for the eggs to incubate is 36 days. Even with great care by swan couples, the survival rate of eggs is only 50 percent.