

Seven Very Good Reasons Not to Feed the Ducks

If you care for waterfowl and especially the ducks at Manito Park Duck Pond, here is what you can do to help them retain their "wildness" and maintain their well-being.

- Ducks need a naturally diverse diet.
- Feeding bread creates overweight yet malnourished ducks.
- The availability of bread creates an artificial food supply that attracts more ducks than small ponds' ecosystems can sustain.
- Poor water quality is a direct result of this overpopulation of ducks.
- Inferior water makes the pond inhospitable to other native wildlife such as turtles, frogs, and other species that are lost in the balance.
- The more ducks, the more potential for disease transfer between birds and even to humans.
- Feeding ducks too late in the season disrupts their migratory pattern. They might even be too fat to fly!

Please...

Do not feed
the ducks.



HUMAN FEEDING CAN CAUSE:

- Poor nutrition
- Spread of disease
- Inability to escape predators
- Water pollution
- Overcrowding
- Delayed migration

If you care about the ducks, please stop feeding them. Allow them to return to their natural habits.

For more information please contact:
Spokane Parks and Recreation,
(509) 625-6200, or www.spokaneparks.org

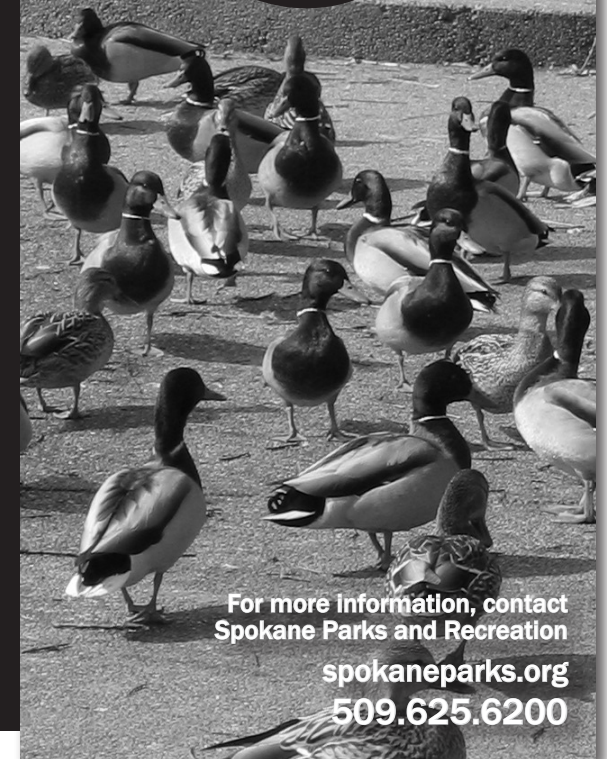


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Love the Ducks, But Please ...

Don't Feed Them



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Ducks & Humans

Over the centuries waterfowl have developed patterns of seeking out and feeding on highly nutritious marsh and grassland plants. These preservation patterns are passed on to each succeeding generation. Survival of waterfowl ultimately depends upon their ability to make use of food and habitat sufficient to maintain healthy populations.

Each year, ducks, like most waterfowl, migrate tremendous distances south in search of food and habitat to carry them through the winter months. In the spring they again migrate, this time returning to their northern breeding grounds.

Not all waterfowl, however complete the entire migration cycle. Many are sidetracked when they stop to feed and rest in the ponds, lakes and marshes found in many suburban environments. There they are observed by city dwellers who enjoy the beauty of these magnificent wild birds. And there they are fed by people who unknowingly are enticing the birds into delaying their migration or foregoing migration all together.

Some city environments can provide sufficient space and food for small populations of waterfowl. However, as thousands of waterfowl concentrate in areas because handouts are easily attainable, the once wild birds can soon become tame, lose their fear of people and pick up habits that conflict with the human population and the birds' natural patterns of migration.

Lack of fear of cars can cause safety problems as birds stroll across streets. Also, of increasing public concern is the damage large crowds of waterfowl can do to parks, golf courses and residential lawns where large number of birds graze and defecate. Excess nutrients in ponds, caused by waterfowl droppings, may also result in water quality problems such as noxious algal blooms in the summertime.

Food handouts often result in large numbers of birds competing for very limited food supplies in small, concentrated areas. Such crowding and competition for food, combined with the stress of less nutritious food and harsh weather, increases their susceptibility to disease.

The end result of this seemingly kind and generous act of feeding waterfowl can be a continuing cycle of the birds becoming injurious to people and being subjected to diseases that can spread as easily as humans spread the common cold.

*Information provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Migratory Bird Management, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203
<http://www.fws.gov>*



Please help us keep our park ponds and the ducks healthy.

The Spokane Parks and Recreation Department staff is working diligently to improve the water quality of park ponds, to manage the number of ducks in the area, and especially to sustain a fun and safe environment for all who use the parks.

