

Feeding Wild Ducks

by Lori Goodman / Live Ducks

In many areas wild duck populations are becoming overly socialized and endangered because of human interference, especially feeding. Many public waterways, lakes and ponds prohibit interaction with wildlife, including ducks, for a good reason.

Wild ducks need to eat the green foods that grow naturally in their environment in order to maintain good health and a normal lifespan. Their ability to fly and retain natural instincts for survival depends entirely on the foods they eat. By feeding wild (or dumped domestics) you are contributing to their early death, shortening their lives ten-fold.

Disease, malnutrition, overbreeding, infighting, easy pickings for predators, are just a few of the problems that occur when people feed the ducks.

Changes in behavior

I've observed in the 7 years I have visited this area, the wild ducks, mostly Mallards, have **changed their behavior significantly**. They once stayed in the water and had fear of people who came too close. They now live on land within 10 feet of most buildings. Their numbers have increased substantially.

If you care about ducks, do not feed them

Enjoy their natural beauty from a distance and protect their survival. **Keeping your snacks to yourself**. You may think you are the only one feeding them so you're not doing any harm, but be assured that as soon as you leave another offender takes your place.

Safe alternatives

Are there any safe foods we can feed the ducks? No, no, and I'll say it again, NO.

Attracting wildlife for the purpose of feeding it causes a complicated chain reaction of events that ends up with the ducks losing.

The only humans that should feed wild ducks are Wildlife Officials or Parks and Recreation staff. Only these people can make the determination that the ducks survival depends on their intervention. They feed only approved food that meets strict standards and contains the nutrition the ducks need. Feeding is done in a controlled environment, unlike typical scenarios you'd find on public waters where duck feeding is out of control.

Please do not contribute to this problem, be part of the solution.

What you can do to help

- * Stop feeding the ducks
- * Politely tell others they are harming ducks by feeding them
- * Talk to city officials about posting warning signs at your local ponds and lakes
- * Encourage schools to teach young children to respect wildlife by not feeding it
- * Refer people to Live Ducks or this article for more information

-Lori Goodman