

## How You Can Help

Each person that cares enough to be educated about the effects of artificial feeding *can* make a difference. The problem requires cooperation from everyone, but the solution starts with each individual.

It may be hard to imagine that a handful of bread or a stray French fry could contribute to such a growing problem. Compound that, though. In most cases where artificial feeding occurs, one well-intentioned feeder leaves and another soon arrives.

- Do Not Feed Waterfowl! Waterfowl are wild birds that can locate natural food sources throughout the year. Supplemental feeding by people is unnecessary and potentially harmful.
- Educate others about the negative impacts of feeding waterfowl and discourage the practice when possible.

## It's the Law

The Code of the Village of Patchogue prohibits feeding of any waterfowl on publicly owned lands or waterways within the Village of Patchogue at any time of year. Persons are also prohibited from creating any condition that leads to the congregation of waterfowl on Village-owned property which results in an accumulation of waterfowl droppings; damage to flora, fauna, or property; a threat or nuisance to the public health, safety, or welfare; or a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of waterfowl.

## For More Information About Waterfowl

Contact:

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
Bureau of Wildlife  
625 Broadway  
Albany, NY 12233  
518-402-8883  
fwwildf@gw.dec.state.ny.us  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7001.html>

## For Water Quality Information

This pamphlet is one of a series of pamphlets describing storm water pollution prevention and water quality improvement measures.

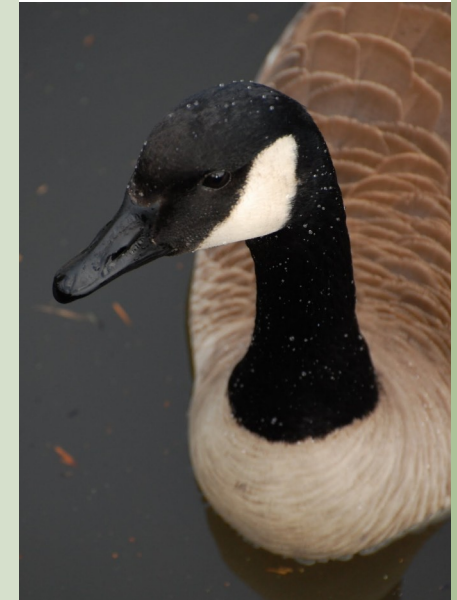
For more information about ways to prevent stormwater pollution and improve water quality, please visit our website:  
<http://www.patchoguevillage.org/stormwater.html>



This pamphlet was developed as part of the Village of Patchogue's Stormwater Management and Watershed Management Programs.

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## DO NOT FEED WILD WATERFOWL



*You Can Help Waterfowl  
By NOT FEEDING Them!*

**KEEP WILDLIFE WILD**

## Overview

Long Island provides important breeding and wintering habitat for numerous waterfowl species. Long Island's natural resources provide waterfowl with the proper nutrients they need throughout the year. Waterfowl have evolved to migrate great distances without the assistance of people. Artificial feeding can delay this natural phenomenon and encourage some birds to overstay their welcome.

## Feeding Causes Problems for All

Feeding creates numerous problems, not only for people, but also for the birds. Well-intentioned people erroneously believe that feeding is beneficial to waterfowl, but it often has negative ecological, environmental, and social consequences.

Feeding waterfowl low quality foods, such as bread, chips, or popcorn, does not provide the birds with the necessary nutrients they need for survival. Feeding often results in dietary deficiencies in wild birds and can lead to: development of deformed wings (propeller wings), lower reproductive rates, lowered life expectancy, an increased susceptibility to predation, lowered energy, and the loss of flight ability.



*People who feed waterfowl contribute to the birds acquiring numerous physical ailments that result from malnutrition.*

## Diseases and Water Pollution

Most areas where the public feeding of waterfowl occurs cannot sustain the large concentration of birds that often gather there. This ultimately leads to the accumulation of droppings and feathers, overgrazing of vegetation, soil erosion, and unsanitary conditions. Droppings from large numbers of waterfowl in relatively confined areas can be responsible for triggering algal blooms and **elevated fecal coliform levels** in the water. These conditions can lead to beach and shellfish area closures.

Feeding may result in malnourished birds competing for food in crowded, unsanitary areas. Diseases, such as **avian cholera**, **avian influenza (bird flu)**, **botulism**, and **duck viral enteritis**, thrive when these conditions are present. **Aspergillosis** is a fatal disease that kills waterfowl when they eat moldy, rotting grain products. All of these diseases have the potential to kill large numbers of waterfowl.



*Droppings from waterfowl carry diseases and can trigger algal blooms and increase fecal coliform levels which may result in beach and shellfishing area closures.*

## Delayed Migration

Feeding alters normal migration patterns of waterfowl by shortening or even eliminating them. Waterfowl, reluctant to leave in the winter, may not survive sudden cold. If the artificial feeding is stopped in time, ducks and geese can quickly adapt to finding natural foods and will follow their companions south.

## Unnatural Behavior

Waterfowl can rapidly become conditioned to, and dependent on, handouts. Fed ducks and geese behave differently. They become more aggressive and eventually lose their wariness of humans. Some will not survive because they cannot compete.

## Increased Hybridization

Artificial feeding concentrates wild and domestic waterfowl, significantly increasing the probability of hybridization (cross-breeding) between them. This leads to the overall weakening of the gene pool and the overall integrity of the wild waterfowl population.



*Swan-Goose Hybrid: This hybrid was the result of cross-breeding between a domestic Greylag Goose and a wild Mute Swan.*