

## Feeding geese can lead to conflicts with humans

When regularly fed, wild birds become quite "tame," lose their fear of people, and pick up habits that conflict with humans.

Large numbers of birds in parks, golf courses, residential lawns and agricultural fields graze, trample vegetation, and produce large amounts of defecation.

Excess nutrients, caused by waterfowl droppings in ponds and lakes may result in water quality problems such as increased harmful bacteria and algal blooms that deplete oxygen from the water and kill fish.



*Shoreline vegetation killed by geese*

## If you care about waterfowl, there are things you can do to help them retain their wildness and maintain their well-being

Here are some things to do and not do to help the geese and minimize conflicts.

- **STOP FEEDING THE GEESE!** They don't understand the problem - you do.
- **PURCHASE FEDERAL DUCK STAMPS** at most U.S. Post Offices, State Department or Natural Resources Offices, or National Wildlife Refuges. All proceeds from the sale of these stamps are used to purchase wetlands that provide natural habitat for our nation's waterfowl.
- **LEARN MORE** about waterfowl by visiting a library, nature center, state wildlife management area, or National Refuge, then teach others what you know.
- **ALLOW WATERFOWL TO STAY WILD** Observe and appreciate them from a distance.
- **Please DO NOT** feed Waterfowl!

## Questions?

Call 301-962-1342 or 301-962-1341

M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County  
Park Planning & Stewardship Division  
Natural Resources Stewardship Section

[www.ParksNaturalResources.org](http://www.ParksNaturalResources.org)

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## Living with Canadian Geese in Montgomery County, Maryland

M-NCPPC Department of Parks,  
Montgomery County

Park Planning & Stewardship  
Division

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Section



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## Do Not Feed Geese

*Por favor no dar comer  
a los gansos!*

### Feeding Waterfowl can be Harmful!

Regular feeding can cause:

- Dependency on humans for food
- Poor nutrition
- Overcrowding
- Spread of disease
- Bird/human conflicts
- Water pollution
- Unnatural behavior

### Feeding the geese is unhealthy

It might seem that providing food for ducks and geese would make them healthier, this is not the case. Waterfowl at artificial feeding sites are often found to suffer from poor nutrition. Many of the items commonly used to feed waterfowl (bread, corn, popcorn, etc.) are low in protein and are very poor substitutes for natural foods.



### Feeding geese promotes overcrowding

In natural settings, waterfowl seek and feed on a **variety** of nutritious foods such as aquatic plants, natural grains, and invertebrates that are widely scattered. Ducks and geese are able to find these foods and eat them in relative seclusion.

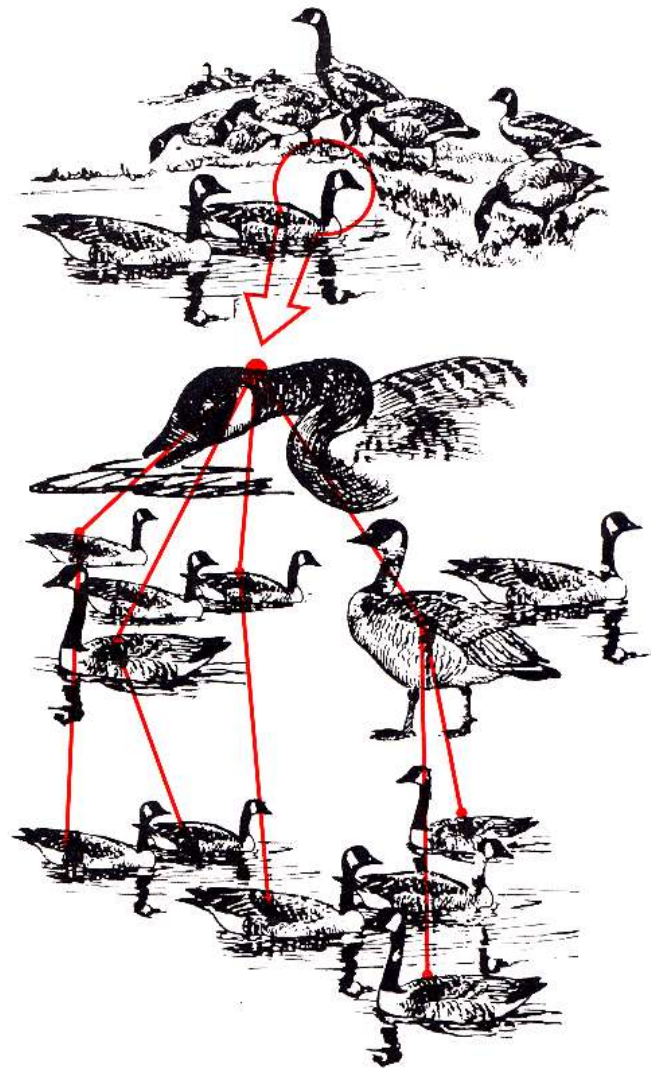
Many suburban environments provide sufficient space and food for small populations of waterfowl. Small ponds, community parks with lakes, reservoirs and golf courses provide ideal habitat.

However, the added attraction of human handouts can result in the concentration of hundreds or thousands of waterfowl.

At artificial feeding sites competition for each scrap or kernel is high and some (usually the youngest) are unable to compete for handouts.

### Feeding can spread disease

Where birds are fed regularly they end up feeding and defecating in the same area. Diseases generally not transmissible in a wild setting, find overcrowded and unsanitary conditions very favorable.



*Above: Transmission of disease through a concentration of geese*

*The human future depends on our ability to combine the knowledge of science with the wisdom of wildness.*

- Charles Lindbergh