

## How You Can Help

- 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.
- Contact your local government and encourage the implementation of a no feeding policy in your community.
- Numerous organizations are working together to restore Connecticut's and the nation's wetlands, making them beneficial for waterfowl. It is important for all of us to concentrate our efforts on these types of projects because habitat, not feeding, is what guarantees the future of waterfowl. Support the efforts of federal, state, and private organizations to conserve waterfowl and habitat. Volunteer and participate in research that pertains to waterfowl.
- Purchase a Connecticut or federal Duck Stamp from your local city or town hall to help with the purchase and restoration of natural habitat for waterfowl.
- **2018 - 2019:** Participate in Canada Goose Surveys in the Groton area. Eastern Connecticut Conservation District received a CWA §319 Nonpoint Source Program grant from CT DEEP to implement strategies to reduce fecal coliform bacteria and restore shellfishing in Groton's Baker Cove.

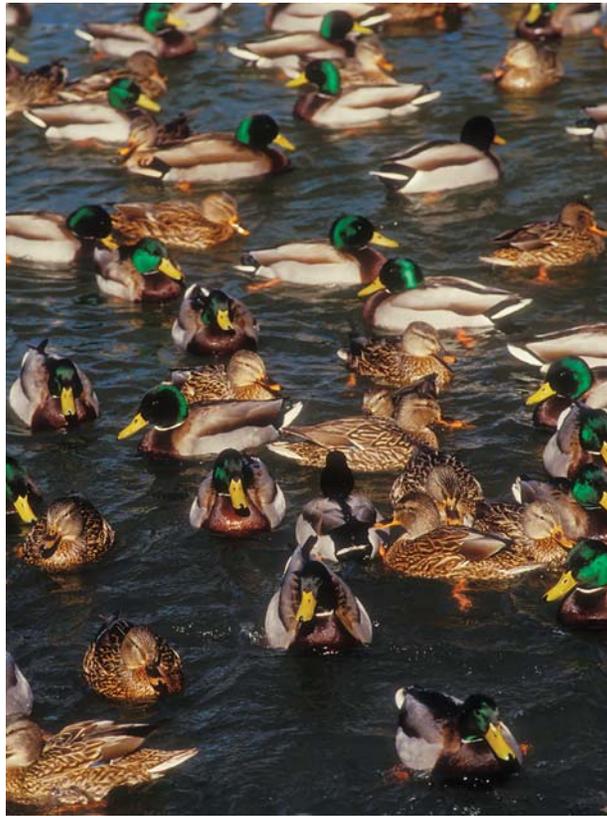
If interested, please contact:

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Eastern Connecticut Conservation District  
238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT, 06360  
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### **For more information about waterfowl contact:**

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection  
([www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep))  
Wildlife Division  
79 Elm Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
860-424-3011  
Waterfowl Program (860-642-7239)

United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
([www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov))



*Dense congregations of wild ducks, particularly in urban settings, greatly enhance the chances of disease transmission.*



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The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program was initiated by sportsmen and conservationists to provide states with funding for wildlife management and research programs, habitat acquisition, wildlife management area development and hunter education programs.

*Photos by Paul J. Fusco*

# DO NOT FEED WATERFOWL



## You Can Help Waterfowl by NOT FEEDING Them!



State of Connecticut  
Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Division

[www.ct.gov/deep](http://www.ct.gov/deep)



Connecticut provides important breeding and wintering habitat for approximately 30 waterfowl species. Our state abounds with numerous coastal and inland areas that are very important to ducks and geese. Connecticut's natural resources provide waterfowl with the proper nutrients they need throughout the year. Waterfowl have evolved to migrate extraordinary 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. Waterfowl rely on specific nutrients in natural foods to carry on important biological processes. Numerous problems can arise when birds are fed low quality food. They may become malnourished or deficient of vital nutrients, resulting in:

- *the development of deformed wings (propeller wings)*
- *a decrease in reproductive rates*
- *an increased susceptibility to predation*
- *the loss of flight ability*
- *lowered energy*
- *lowered life expectancy*

## Feeding Areas Are Unsanitary and Harbor Diseases

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. Waterfowl also act as hosts for numerous bacterial agents, including the organism that is responsible for swimmer's itch. Feeding waterfowl can exacerbate this problem by concentrating potential hosts in swimming areas. Large numbers of waterfowl in relatively confined areas also can be responsible for triggering algal blooms, resulting in elevated fecal coliform bacteria and nutrients in the water. These factors cause some of our favorite and most popular recreational areas to become unusable for animals and humans.

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.

## Feeding Increases Conflicts

Feeding draws birds to areas where conflicts with humans can arise. The constant interaction between humans and waterfowl causes the birds to lose their apprehension of people and their surroundings. Wild animals rely on their instinctive sense of fear for survival. The loss of a bird's fear towards humans often results in the bird exhibiting dangerous and unpredictable behavior towards people. Public safety also becomes an issue when birds congregate near heavily traveled areas, increasing the likelihood of a vehicle strike.

Corporations, municipalities, and

private landowners often spend large amounts of money to alleviate problems with waterfowl that are often caused by people feeding these birds. By not feeding waterfowl, you are allowing the birds to use our state's natural areas to our benefit and theirs.



## Feeding Weakens the Gene Pool

Artificial feeding concentrates domestic and wild waterfowl, significantly increasing the probability of hybridization between them. This leads to the weakening of the gene pool and the overall integrity of the wild waterfowl population. **Allow our waterfowl to stay wild by not feeding them!**

### NEW for 2018 - 2019

*Support healthy flock levels of Canada Geese in the City and Town of Groton by conducting volunteer Canada Goose surveys!*

*Please contact Maura Robie, ECCD:  
maura.robie@comcast.net / (860) 319-8807*

