

## How can you make a difference?

It only takes one person to make a change. Each person that takes time to understand how feeding Waterfowl can have adverse effects can make a difference.

It is hard to believe that one littered bag of potato chips or a handful of bread could amount to such a big problem.

Habitual feeders think that they are helping the animals but in actuality are hurting them.

- **Do Not Feed Waterfowl!** Wild animals can locate food sources on their own. It is best to let them be wild and find their own natural sources.
- **Instead use your free time to educate others on the adverse affects of feeding Waterfowl.**

## For More Information About Waterfowl

Contact:

NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
Bureau of Wildlife  
Albany, NY 12233  
518.402.8883  
[fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:fwwildlf@gw.dec.state.ny.us)  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7001.html>

## For Water Quality Information

This pamphlet and others describe how to prevent storm water pollution and improve water quality.

For more information about ways to prevent stormwater pollution and improve water quality, please visit our website:

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



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

# Waterfowl Guide

**Don't foul it up!**



**Stop feeding the waterfowl.**

**Keep them wild!**

### Check it out!

Long Island is an important breeding and wintering habitat to waterfowl. Waterfowl can find all the proper nutrients they need throughout the year on Long Island. Waterfowl have adapted to migrate distances without the assistance of humans. This natural occurrence can be adversely affected when birds overstay their seasonal welcome.

### Feeding is bad for all!

Often, people who feed waterfowl think they are being helpful. Unfortunately this is a terrible misconception. Feeding waterfowl most certainly has adverse effects on ecology, the environment, and social order.

"People food" is not a balanced diet for waterfowl. The low quality foods - bread, chips, popcorn and other "people foods" lack the proper nutrition for the birds. This can lead to birth defects and other ailments which can decrease the life expectancy of the waterfowl.

In general, people should never feed waterfowl or wild animals.

### Diseases and Water Pollution

Areas where public feedings occur are havens for large groups of birds. This can lead to the overgrazing of plants, soil erosion and generally unsanitary conditions. Accumulations of droppings from birds in confined spaces such as harbors and creeks can cause algal blooms and elevated fecal coliform levels in the water. This can ultimately lead to beach and shellfish area closures.

Feeding can also result in malnourished waterfowl that are competing for food in crowded, dirty conditions. Diseases, such as avian flu, botulism, and avian cholera thrive well under those conditions. Another concern for waterfowl is aspergillosis, which is fatal to birds and is contracted by eating moldy, rotten grain products.



Fifth Street Park Greenport, NY

### The South never seemed so far away!

Waterfowl, as do all animals, can become conditioned to being fed by humans. This can present a problem for birds that must fly South to survive the harsh Winters. Birds can be reluctant to leave if they are receiving everything they need. If the feeding is stopped in time, the birds can stand a chance.

### "Mommy, that bird is acting weird"

Waterfowl can become quite comfortable with being fed regularly by humans. Beware the negative effects: loss of competitiveness, increased aggression, and behavior less wary of humans. In certain situations, the birds can seem vicious. Any time wildlife attack, people can be hurt, especially young children.

### Hybrids? Good? Maybe in cars!

Feedings by humans often attract wild and domestic waterfowl to the same location. This increases the chances that hybridization can occur among species. This can actually weaken a gene pool and damage the integrity of wild waterfowl populations.