

THE ISSUE

It is traditional for people living in towns and cities to stroll through the public park and feed the waterfowl and fish, present entertainment for the family, and in today's urbanizing society, provide an opportunity for people to interface with nature.

However, supplemental feeding of wild waterfowl and fish has several negative consequences that may not be readily apparent to the average citizen. These repercussions may impact not only the waterfowl and fish, but also the regional environment and public health.

Why supplemental feeding of waterfowl should be banned.

1) Overcrowding

In the wild, the term "carrying capacity" refers to the population size for the species that can be supported indefinitely by the environment. Supplemental feeding in public parks artificially raises the number of individuals (waterfowl in this case) beyond what the dam can normally support. Increased waterfowl abundance leads to increased competition for food. As a result, the weaker waterfowl often sustain pecking injuries from more dominant waterfowl that can result in infection and a general failure to thrive.

2) Habitat degradation

Large number of waterfowl in a small area can have a serious impact on the surrounding environment. Feces generated by congregating waterfowl results in increased deposition of carbon, phosphorus, and nitrogen in the water and surrounding grass.

3) Habituation

In the wild, a healthy fear of humans and other potential predators allow waterfowl to survive and reproduce. In public settings where waterfowl are fed artificial diets, the waterfowl often lose this fear, and are more likely have a higher incidence of vehicle collision.

PUBLIC NOTICE Upcoming Changes



Preserving the future of the Spring Dam Park



Roaring Spring Borough Council shall consider this Ordinance 2017—1, for passage on April 10, 2017 to regulate no feeding / releasing of waterfowl and fish at the Spring Dam Park Area.

All parties involved with the maintenance at the Spring Dam have made this decision because of the devastation that the waterfowl have done to the property. Implementing this Ordinance will help clean up waterfowl feces, and reduce the threat of disease transmission and aggressive behavior which has been a leading concern for residents, and public land managers.

DO NOT FEED WATERFOWL

Domestic waterfowl are primarily grazers, feeding on grass and crops. During the summer months when most damage occurs, they are attracted to the succulent new shoots of grass growing on the lawn. Waterfowl are also attracted to an area by food handouts from people, and will accumulate in great numbers, and have a higher incidence of disease transmission (waterfowl enteritis and botulism), and may suffer from deformities and poor health due to nutritional deficiencies. Waterfowl fecal contamination is the most common damage complaint. In addition to the unsightly aspects of fecal matter on public walkways the accumulation of feces may cause increased levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the water.

Alternatives

Many people like to feed wild waterfowl but what seems like kindness can be very harmful. The best solution for waterfowl problems situated around public parks is to stop all forms of supplemental feeding.

PLEASE DON'T FEED WATERFOWL

Feeding waterfowl can create many problems for the birds as well as for the environment. This practice is discouraged by the Public Land Managers. The notion that waterfowl cannot survive without human intervention is false. Waterfowl have survived for thousands of years without handouts and today many species of waterfowl are thriving. In fact many of our urban parks, including the Spring Dam are now over-populated with waterfowl. Please enjoy our local waterfowl but view them from a distance and respect their wildness. By doing so, you will provide them with their best chance for survival.



THREE REASONS NOT TO FEED THE WATERFOWL

Many people like to feed wild waterfowl but what seems like kindness can be very harmful. Here are several good reasons not to feed them:

1. HUMAN FOOD IS NOT GOOD FOR WATERFOWL

Human food is junk food for ducks and geese. It lacks minerals needed to make strong, healthy waterfowl. Overfeed, undernourished waterfowl suffer from more illness and disease.



2. FEEDING WATERFOWL CAN INTERFERE WITH NATURE

Feeding waterfowl can artificially increase their population. Feeding also encourages waterfowl to “over-winter” in ponds; interrupting their natural migration patterns. When they stay through the winter the result can be an unhealthy build-up of waterfowl.



3. INCREASED NUTRIENTS CAUSE ALGAE AND WEED GROWTH

Waterfowl waste pollutes both water and ground. Too many nutrients from these droppings fertilize murky green algae, which crowd out the fish.

