

Feeding ducks and geese is hazardous to their health

People like to feed wild ducks and geese. Some folks give them left over bread, fruit, potato chips etc, believing that "a little bit won't do any harm", but don't realize that they are actually endangering the water fowl along with the habitat.

When people start feeding water fowl they not only hurt them nutritionally, they also cause them to become tame. Although that is good for a domestic animal, a wild animal needs to have the natural fear of humans and other natural enemies in order to protect them. Untamed wildlife will naturally run from people. After they lose that fear they begin approaching all people including those who are looking to harm them.

The damage doesn't end there. Feeding the water fowl can disrupt the entire ecosystem. Most ducks and geese are migratory. In other words, as seasons change they move to another area. Some move south for the winter then return in the spring. This break gives the wetlands time to naturally filter out the impurities caused by water fowl waste. When these birds have enough food, they begin to ignore the call of nature to move on and take up permanent residence in one area causing a build up of waste.

When other ducks and geese pass through an area where people continually feed them, the new comers will also begin to take up permanent residence in that one area which will lead to over crowding. The birds will then be in such concentrated groups that they will begin to soil the surrounding area with droppings making the area around the lake or pond a breeding ground for parasites and diseases.

Over time the bacteria levels can rise to where they start killing off fish and other aquatic life, which then sets off a chain reaction. The animals that rely on fish for food find that there is no longer an abundant supply and then begin to wander off into urban areas where they can become a nuisance, or they just die from starvation. The dead fish that collect on the shore start to decay and raise bacteria levels to where it becomes unhealthy for humans and wildlife.

Leaving birdseed out for non-migratory birds in the winter isn't going to hurt, but feeding migratory birds, especially water fowl will only lead to a damaged ecosystem. Show you care. Don't feed the ducks and geese.