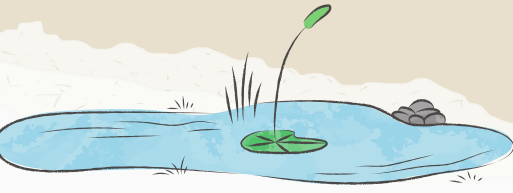




Skip the Bread! Stop Feeding Waterfowl

Many people are familiar with the ducks and geese at Hillcrest pond and travel to James A. Cisco Park to gaze at the pond and visit the waterfowl that live there. Feeding ducks and geese, while considered a pastime by many, is prohibited under Township Code Section 59-4C. This is because feeding waterfowl in the parks can actually have serious consequences for the animals and the environment.



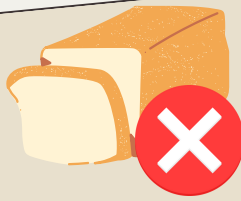
Bread is Bad for Birds!

Bread is like junk food for waterfowl. Not only does bread have no nutritional value for the birds, but it also makes them lose interest in foods that are extremely important to their diet, including insects, aquatic plants, mollusks, crustaceans, and acorns (Kintz, 2022).

Eating bread can lead to developmental conditions, unnaturally fast growth, and stress.



Risk of Disease Increases



Feeding waterfowl can increase the volume of birds at the parks. This can cause overcrowding. Ecosystems can support a certain number of individuals before ecosystem degradation, called "carrying capacity." Increasing carrying capacity also increases the risk of diseases.

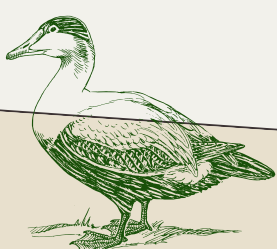
Habitat / Water Degredation

Not only is feeding the birds problematic to their health, but it can also wreak havoc on the ecosystem. Leftover food promotes algae blooms, which can deplete the oxygen levels in the water. This can be deadly to other aquatic animals. Feces from heavy waterfowl populations can also contribute to algae blooms.



Increase Unwanted Pests

Leftover food scraps at the parks can attract other animal visitors, including raccoons, skunks, mice, rats, and even foxes. Each of these additional animals carries their own risks in terms of disease and habitat degradation.



Reference:

Kintz, L. (2022, June 9). Skip the bread. just watch instead! MDIFW Blog. Retrieved December 28, 2022, from <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/blogs/mdifw-blog/skip-bread-just-watch-instead>