

# Winchester's Waterfowl: Addressing the Problems, Protecting Our Environment

by Winchester's Natural Resources Advisory Board  
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Nearly everyone enjoys seeing ducks, geese and other waterfowl here in Winchester. But today our city has **too many mallard ducks** and **too many Canada geese!** Winchester's Natural Resources Advisory Board has studied the situation and offers these ideas.

## What Are the Problems?

People have made many of Winchester's ponds and streams perfect – too perfect -- for ducks and geese: mowed grassy areas for feeding, open water for swimming, no predators, and even extra food tossed by well-meaning people who visit our parks. As a result, we have more waterfowl than our habitats can support.

Too many ducks and geese means that:

- They threaten people by demanding food
- Their droppings can make our parks ugly, carry diseases and pollute the water
- They no longer seek natural food, preferring the bread and crackers people give them. These human foods are not appropriate for wild birds!
- They no longer follow their natural migration instincts

## What Can We Do?

Solving this problem and protecting the environment is everyone's responsibility. The Natural Resources Advisory Board recommends the following set of solutions:

### 1. Stop Feeding the Birds!

Winchester has passed an ordinance making feeding ducks, geese and other waterfowl illegal.

### 2. Educate the Public

Signs, flyers, public meetings and media attention can help spread the word. Once they know the reasons, most people will stop feeding the birds.



**STOP ANIMAL CRUELTY**  
**A Fed Goose is a Dead Goose !**

### 3. Discourage Overpopulation

- Border collies: Many communities have successfully used border collies to discourage large numbers of waterfowl, especially when birds select nesting and overwintering sites.
- Repellents: Two harmless chemical repellents can be sprayed on grasses where geese and ducks feed.
- Eggs: Coating some of the birds' eggs with mineral oil will keep their numbers down by preventing some eggs from hatching.
- Landscaping: Clumps of native shrubs and wildflowers discourage birds because predators can hide in these areas. Landscaping also improves water quality by trapping pollutants washed into streams by rain.

As a last resort, euthanizing the birds may be necessary to reduce their populations to numbers that can be controlled.

**Please do your part to protect the birds and protect Winchester's environment !**

