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.

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!