

# Four Reasons Not to Feed Ducks and Geese



Many people like to feed wild ducks and geese, but what seems like kindness can be harmful. Here are some good reasons not to feed them:

## Human Food is Not Good for Waterfowl

Human food is like junk food for ducks and geese. It lacks the minerals needed to make strong, healthy waterfowl.

## Parasites in Waterfowl Cause Swimmers Itch

Tiny parasites which live inside waterfowl, are released into the water. The larval form burrows into water snails and grows into a larger form which may leave the snail and burrow into the skin of swimmers. When the parasites die under the skin, swimmers may get an itchy, allergic rash. Often the abundance of waterfowl means the water may contain the parasite that causes swimmers itch.



## Feeding Waterfowl can Interfere with the Natural Balance

Feeding waterfowl encourages waterfowl to “overwinter” in local lakes and ponds which interrupts their natural migration patterns.

## Increased Nutrients Cause Algae and Weed Growth

Waterfowl feces pollutes the water and surrounding beaches. The nutrients from the feces can cause murky green algae blooms and aquatic weed growth, which crowds out other plants and animals.

For more information, contact the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department, Environmental Health Division, Resource Protection Section at 360-754-4111. The TDD line for the hearing impaired is 360-754-2933.

