

Please don't feed the geese!



This photo of a West Des Moines neighborhood is the result of a well-meaning resident feeding geese. What you don't see is the residue on the sidewalks and yards, and the close misses from traffic.

Feeding waterfowl and other birds is a popular pastime, but many people do not know that this can be harmful to the birds, as well as the environment.

Here are several reasons why you should not feed geese and other birds:

- Bread, crackers, popcorn and other high carbohydrate foods are like junk food to birds. Birds filling up on them will not seek out other, nutritious food. This can cause the birds to become malnourished, contributing to a host of health problems for both adults and babies.
- The geese population in your area will grow, cause overcrowding. Birds will tend to lay more eggs, further contributing to overpopulation.
- The birds defecate more with a diet rich in carbohydrates, which can spread bacteria that can contribute to disease.
- Feeding geese can pollute the environment in a variety of ways, from uneaten food to droppings.
- Goose droppings damage property, pose health issues, and can become aesthetically unpleasant and quite annoying.
- Birds that rely on humans for food lose their natural fear and may place themselves in dangerous situations. They may become aggressive toward humans who do not provide them with the food they want.

While you may think that you are helping geese by providing them with food, you can be jeopardizing the health of the birds, other animals, and humans, as well as polluting the environment. Wild geese have plenty of healthy food in their habitat to sustain them. Let the geese find food on their own so that they and other animals in the environment can stay healthy.

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, if you care for waterfowl, here is what you can do to help them retain their “wildness” and maintain their wellbeing:

- Stop feeding them!
- Learn more about waterfowl: <https://www.fws.gov/midwest/feedingwaterfowl.htm>
- Then teach others what you know.

(Thank you to geeserelief.com for their permission to use verbiage from their website.)

