

# Don't feed those birds!

## HERE'S WHY

### Why shouldn't you feed the birds?

Short answer: [Because it's bad for them.](#)

Bread and similar products like crackers, chips, donuts and popcorn offer little nutritional value for ducks, geese, and other birds. Bread is like junk food for the birds, and too much of it can lead to excessive weight and malnutrition, as well as a host of other problems.

### What happens when you feed the birds?

Feeding ducks, geese, and other birds at all leads to lots of problems for the birds and for us.

**Malnutrition:** When we feed birds human foods, their babies don't get adequate nutrition for proper growth and will not learn to forage for natural foods.

**Overcrowding:** When easy food is abundant, birds lay more eggs. This makes it hard for them to find healthy food sources and it increases the likelihood of territorial aggression.

**Pollution:** A large amount of bird waste creates problems on the ground and in our water. We have discovered high levels of bird fecal matter in our streams, which makes contact with the water a health risk for humans.

**Loss of natural behavior:** When birds become accustomed to getting food from us, they lose their natural fear of humans and can become aggressive. Have you ever gotten a little too close to a Canadian goose?

### Learn more

Visit [bothellwa.gov/birdfeeding](http://bothellwa.gov/birdfeeding) for more about birds. Check out [bothellwa.gov/pugetsound](http://bothellwa.gov/pugetsound) for ways you can Help keep Puget Sound healthy.



WE WADDLE ENOUGH ON  
OUR OWN, THANKS.

**Disease:** When you feed the birds, you increase the spread of disease in three ways: 1) by causing birds to come in closer contact with us than they normally would, 2) by creating higher levels of bacteria-infested fecal matter that cause a number of diseases, and 3) subjecting entire waterfowl flocks to a fatal lung infection that can happen when they eat moldy bread.

**Unwanted pests:** Food attracts unwelcome pests like mice, rats, and insects. These pests harbor even more diseases that are health risks for humans.

**Habitat degradation:** Providing food attracts large groups of birds beyond what the natural ecosystem can support. These large groups can wreak havoc on natural areas causing erosion, increased fecal matter on the ground and in our water, and a nasty mess for others sharing the space.



City of Bothell™