

Domestic Waterfowl



Domestic Ducks Photo: John Davis

Identification:

Size: Variable. Average wt. = Variable.

Coloration: Species specific, but many of the problem waterfowl are solid white.

Habitat:

Domestic waterfowl are found on urban lakes and ponds.

Benefits:

Domestic waterfowl offer no ecological benefits.

Problems / Concerns:

Domestic waterfowl are a problem for many reasons. First, they are known to interbreed with wild waterfowl populations, polluting the gene pool of wild populations. Domestic waterfowl are also known to transmit diseases to wild populations resulting in damage to those populations. In addition to problems involving wild waterfowl, domestic waterfowl also create local problems in and around the ponds they inhabit. They are known to overpopulate urban ponds. When this occurs, their excrement severely alters the chemistry of the water resulting in excessive algal growth. Excessive algal growth results in soupy, green water. Domestic waterfowl will also create or intensify erosion of the pond bank. Their constant feeding on vegetation along the banks combined with their excessive foot traffic denudes the bank, allowing erosion to occur.

Cost per duck.

City Management Policy:

Management options for this group may vary.

1. Enact a city ordinance prohibiting the release of domestic waterfowl on city waterways. Capture and destroy existing domestic populations as well as future introductions. Manage all ponds for wild waterfowl.
2. Capture, sterilize, and tag 5 domestics. Release tagged waterfowl on a designated "Duck Pond". Capture and destroy all other domestic waterfowl. Enact an ordinance prohibiting the release of domestic waterfowl. Capture and destroy any new introductions. Manage all other ponds for wild waterfowl.
3. Capture and destroy all domestic waterfowl on all but one pond. Designate that pond as the "Duck Pond". Enact a city ordinance prohibiting release of domestic waterfowl in the future. Capture and destroy all domestic waterfowl using ponds other than the established "Duck Pond". Manage all other ponds for wild waterfowl.

Note: Capturing and relocating animals is not a viable solution.

Citizen's Responsibility:

Domestic waterfowl are a serious problem. Citizens must resist the urge to release them into local ponds. Citizens are urged to enjoy wild waterfowl as they come and go and treat them as they should be treated, with respect. Citizens are urged not to feed waterfowl, but to allow them to feed on the natural foods that keep them healthy.

Similar Species:

There are many species of wild waterfowl. Perhaps the most handsome of all is the Wood Duck.



Wood Duck Photo: John Davis