

# Ducks



“Duck” is a general term applied to certain members of the family Anatidae, which also includes geese and swans. Wild urban ducks provide a wonderful bird watching opportunity and can be very exciting to see. However, some urban ducks, though they look similar to wild species, are domestic breeds. These are non-native and can threaten native duck species. Never release domestic ducks. If you are having issues with nuisance wild ducks, you have several options.

## Don't Feed Wildlife

- Bread has low nutritional value for ducks, which mostly eat insects and invertebrates, and feeding leads to ducks being unafraid of human and even following humans for handouts. This can pose human health and safety risks and is also dangerous for the ducks.
- Congregating waterfowl in public green space can result in decreased use of public areas, aggressive ducks, shore erosion and water quality concerns from the feces runoff that occurs. Additionally, congregating waterfowl can spread diseases which can impact both humans and other birds.

## Protect Your Pet

- Dogs should be kept on leashes when in any public area and cats kept indoors. It is illegal to allow your pet to harass or in any way chase ducks.

## Discourage Ducks

- Scare tactics such as predator decoys, sticks and fences decorated with Mylar® flagging, and noise machines make ducks uncomfortable and may encourage them to relocate. Change the environment by moving objects frequently to keep ducks on edge.
- Fencing such as chicken wire or plastic snow fence at least 30 inches high erected between water's edge and feeding areas may reduce duck access to feeding and nesting areas.
- Ducks often select what seem like unusual locations for nests, but they pick nesting sites to try to minimize danger from predators. It is best to leave the nest alone and allow nature to run its course. It is not legal to remove wild duck eggs or nests.
- Keep swimming pools covered when not in use or leave floating objects in the water such as rafts and beach balls. The movement of these items may deter ducks from entering the pool.



## Quick Facts

- There are over 33 species of ducks that frequent Wisconsin. Some just stop briefly to recharge during migration, while others breed here in the Badger State.
- Each spring over half a million ducks breed in Wisconsin, as determined by our annual spring breeding survey. Our most common breeding species are mallards, wood ducks, and blue-winged teal.
- Duck hunting is legal during the regulated hunting season with a hunting license and the necessary stamps. Many municipalities in Wisconsin have specific regulations regarding the discharge of firearms, check local ordinances.
- If you have nuisance duck issues, contact USDA-Wildlife Services at 1-800-433-0663 (in southern Wisconsin) or 1-800-228-1368 (in northern Wisconsin).



For more information, visit our webpage:

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WM-584 2014

Urban Wildlife Factsheet: Ducks