



**T**urtles find a log to rest on to sun themselves on Emery Pond.  
Photo: Larry Chase



Spring is the time to catch sightings of geese with their brood of goslings. This group is taking time out from the water on Highland Lake to enjoy a sunny day.  
Photo: Larry Chase



**S**ucker Brook, which borders the back two sides of the Bob and Rita Norander's property in East Andover, is a favorite fishing spot for a blue heron which returns each year. Their game camera took this picture in late April.

## Feeding Waterfowl at Area Lakes Creates Multiple Problems

Please do not feed the ducks and geese!

Marj Roy, Town of Andover

Feeding waterfowl can create problems for the birds, their environment, and people. The idea that waterfowl cannot survive without human help is false. Many species of water birds have survived for thousands of years without human help, and they are thriving.

Please enjoy our local waterfowl from a distance and respect their wildness. By doing so, you will give them their best chance for survival, and you will keep beachgoers healthy.

The age-old practice of feeding ducks and geese bread, pastries, cookies, and other types of food can cause serious health problems for these birds. These foods are highly processed and provide no nutrition. In fact, human food may actually contribute to starvation among waterfowl. Foods get moldy and can make the birds sick. Ducks and geese are much better off to move their location in search of a healthy natural diet.

One goose can consume up to four pounds of grass a day, creating about

three pounds of poop daily. That is one goose and does not include the food provided by humans. Rarely do you see one goose, it's usually a gaggle of geese.

Large concentrations of geese can cause algal blooms and excessive plant growth in lakes. When geese, or ducks, defecate near shore or in the water, they create a risk to humans. Their fecal matter may contain the swimmer's itch organism along with fecal bacteria. Swimmer's itch is a temporary skin rash.

Overpopulation can become a problem when there is an endless food supply provided by the well-meaning humans. The birds do not move on and move in because of the easy and continuous food supplied by the well-meaning humans.

Once overpopulation happens the birds will fight for the food and are injured as a direct result of the intense aggression and competition that occurs when waterfowl overpopulation exists. Overpopulation is not sustainable. As numbers increase, natural foraging will decrease, and individuals will only become more dependent on the unhealthy food provided by humans.

For wild animals, survival is contingent on maintaining a healthy fear of humans. Feeding waterfowl can quickly cause them to lose their instinctive sense of fear. While people who feed the waterfowl have the best of intentions, the ducks and geese still have to live in a world filled with hazards like dogs, cats, cars, foxes, and people. The ducks and geese that keep their innate wildness have the best chance of survival.

Humans feeding waterfowl can lead to aggressive behavior towards humans, especially among geese. Finally, waterfowl that is used to human handouts are more likely to take up residence and less likely to be successfully driven from locations such as beaches and picnic areas. Unfortunately, feeding the waterfowl does more harm than good.

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(at the AE/MS outdoor stage between the school & bank parking lots)



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