



OFFICIAL GUIDE
FEEDING DUCKS
AND SWANS



FEEDING DUCKS AND SWANS

Getting the right balance

Feeding ducks and swans is enjoyable and can be helpful for them in winter, but overfeeding can cause problems for the health of the birds and the cleanliness of the water.

How can you help us?

To help Historic Scotland care for the birds in Holyrood Park and Linlithgow Peel please follow the advice in this leaflet and encourage others to do the same.

What is the best food to give to birds?

Natural foods for ducks and swans are water plants, insects, worms and the seeds of rushes and grasses. When these foods are scarce, such as in the winter months, supplementing them with small amounts of grain or fresh wholemeal bread can provide extra nutrition.

White bread, however, doesn't provide this nutrition and can lead to vitamin deficiencies and illness for the birds. Other 'human' food, such as chips, crisps, rice or curry can also be harmful.

Checklist

- ✓ Bird seed (grain).
- ✓ Wholemeal or brown bread.
- ✗ White bread.
- ✗ Other human food.



How much food should you give to birds?

In the summer, birds need less feeding. Please don't overfeed the birds. Birds will usually eat just as much as they need – unlike humans! Unwanted food will rot in the water.

Feed them:

- ✓ A few handfuls of grain, or
1 or 2 slices of fresh wholemeal bread.

Protecting the loch habitat

Feeding the birds small amounts of the correct food will also help protect the lochs because uneaten food can affect the quality of the water.

Left-over food can attract rats and can also cause an excess growth of algae (a slimy green coating on the surface).

Algae reduces the water quality which makes it more difficult for plants and insects to live and grow in it.

This means there is less of the natural food that the birds need.





THANK YOU

Thank you for following this advice and helping us to take care of the birds and their habitat. We hope you enjoy your visit.

If you would like to know more about Holyrood Park or Linlithgow Peel or find out about guided walks and events please contact the Ranger Service.



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