

# DEC warns against feeding waterfowl after finding dead and dying geese



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ALBANY - Recently, a dozen Canada geese were found sick or dead on a pond in northern Clinton County by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Wildlife staff responding to a report from a concerned citizen.

The sick geese were disoriented and unable to fly, and all are expected to die. A necropsy of the dead geese determined that they were infected with Aspergillosis, a fungus that grows in the birds' lungs and air sacs causing respiratory distress and, eventually, suffocation.

Aspergillosis is transmitted to waterfowl by the ingestion of moldy grain, such as bread or livestock feed. It has been known to cause large-scale mortality events in waterfowl, and for every one dead bird recovered, many more may die in remote locations or go unnoticed. Aspergillosis is not contagious and does not present a health risk to humans.

DEC is attempting to locate the food source that contains the fungus. Once located it will be removed and disposed of (or covered) to prevent any further waterfowl deaths.

DEC is asking the public to not feed geese, ducks, and other waterfowl to help prevent this disease and other negative impacts on waterfowl populations. Feeding causes poor nutrition, overcrowding, unnatural behavior, delayed migration, and facilitates the spread of diseases, like Aspergillosis, that may result in death.

DEC recommends that anyone feeding waterfowl, stop before winter sets in, and remove any food, such as bread or corn, that is or may become moldy. In recognition that some insist on feeding, despite the negative impacts on waterfowl, DEC urges the following precautions to prevent the spread of Aspergillosis:

- Only provide enough food that will be consumed in less than a day.
- Remove all food and food remnants from the feeding area at the end of each day
- Check the food while putting it out and remove any moldy food items.
- Never feed moldy bread to any birds - throw it out.

Farmers should keep grain piles covered and dispose of moldy grain or silage by burial or tilling into the soil. Ducks and geese must be discouraged from using areas where moldy agricultural products have accumulated.

Please report diseased or dead waterfowl to your nearest Department of Environmental Conservation Wildlife Office. The phone number of the nearest DEC wildlife

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