



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **PLEASE DON'T ABANDON EASTER PETS IN CITY PARK PONDS OR GROUNDS**

***Spokane Parks and Recreation Asks Public for Its Help***

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Chicks, ducklings and other small, cute pets may seem like great gifts for kids this time of year. But chicks grow up to be chickens and ducklings grow into ducks, and soon even the kids, let alone Mom and Dad grow tired of taking care of live animals. And that's when a city park pond might seem like a good place to park a duck, especially with other ducks on the water.

But it's not a good idea, and here's why. Spokane Parks and Recreation is working diligently to manage the waterfowl population on park ponds to improve water quality. Through an Adopt-a-Duck program we found great rural homes for more than 40 domestic ducks that had been set afloat on park ponds by well-meaning people. We are continuing that campaign and asking the public not to feed the wild ducks and to allow them to migrate as they would in the wild. Those who continue to feed ducks bread should consider:

- Bread is not nutritious for waterfowl
- Poor nutrition results in malnourishment
- Too many ducks in an area spreads disease
- Ducks become tame and unable to escape predators
- Duck droppings create water pollution in ponds
- Birds can potentially spread disease to humans

Food handouts often result in large numbers of birds competing for very limited food supplies in small, concentrated areas. Such crowding and competition for food, combined with the stress of less nutritious food and harsh weather, increases their susceptibility to disease.

The end result of this seemingly kind act of feeding waterfowl can result in a continuing cycle of the birds being subjected to diseases that can spread as

easily as humans spread the common cold.

The Spokane Parks and Recreation Department staff is working diligently to - improve the water quality of park ponds, to manage the number of ducks in the area, and especially to sustain a fun and safe environment for all who use the parks.

If you care about the wild ducks, you'll stop feeding them and allow them to return to their natural habits.

And please, PLEASE don't abandon pets in park ponds or grounds.

### **About Spokane Parks and Recreation**

City of Spokane Parks and Recreation is responsible for the professional management and prudent caretaking of more than 4,100 acres of developed parks and conservation land. The Golf Division maintains and operates four championship municipal golf courses, including Indian Canyon, Downriver, Esmeralda and the Creek at Qualchan. Park Operations has responsibility for the maintenance of all park land and park facilities in the City of Spokane including Riverfront Park, Manito Park, Gaiser Conservatory and the many city-wide gardens, Finch Arboretum and the Urban Forestry Program. The Recreation/Entertainment Division offers classes, special events, athletic leagues and activities for youth, teens, adults, seniors and persons with physical and mental disabilities. It also operates Riverfront Park attractions, activities and events including the Spokane Falls SkyRide, the Loeff Carrousel and IMAX Theatre, and provides support for community centers, senior centers, the Northeast Youth Center, Corbin Art Center and outdoor swimming pools. For more information please visit [www.spokaneparks.org](http://www.spokaneparks.org).

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