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Contact: Tony Madunich, 363-5458

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## **WE ENCOURAGE DUCK WATCHING!**

*But please let the ducks and geese find their own food*

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Duck watching is one of the really nice things you can do in Manito Park. There's no denying that. And it's free!

We're hoping that with gentle reminders you too will become a "duck watcher" and not a "duck feeder." And you may just find a whole new hobby to boot.

### **Duck feeding facts from the Spokane Audubon Society:**

- Ducks can be divided between dabblers and divers.
- Dabblers stay at the surface to eat.
- Divers dive below the surface of the water to retrieve food.
- Dabblers eat seeds, aquatic plants, aquatic invertebrates and insects.
- Divers eat aquatic invertebrates and fish.
- Bills are all designed to eat certain foods.
- Narrow bills with a point at the end are designed for holding onto slippery fish.
- Flat bills help grab and filter out food from the water.
- Prior to laying eggs, female dabblers are feathered eating machines foraging 50 to 70% of the day.
- **Bread is bird junk food which can result in deformed wings and spindly feathers.**

- Birds need protein and fats to stay healthy and warm during cold winter nights.

We encourage you to bring binoculars and a bird book so you can get a close look at the identifying field marks and identify the various species including:

Dabblers: Mallard; Wood duck (not as common)

Divers: Bufflehead; Goldeneye Hans

### **About the Spokane Audubon Society**

The mission of the Spokane Audubon Society is to provide services to the Spokane region that allow natural ecosystems to become more healthy, thriving and restorative, to nurture and protect birds and other wildlife and their habitats, and to encourage biological diversity for the benefit of people and nature in the Spokane region and the world in which we live. For more information please go to [www.spokaneaudubon.org](http://www.spokaneaudubon.org)



### **About Mirror Pond in Manito Park**

The pond in Manito Park, originally a natural lake called Mirror Lake, would dry up during summer months. To prevent that a concrete base was eventually installed and as the pond then stayed full year round, canoes could be rented on site. From 1905-1907 a dance hall was opened on one side of the pond and open air movies were shown nearby. By tradition, people have brought bread to Mirror Pond to feed to the ducks and other water fowl. Over time this has created an artificial food supply that is attracting well more ducks that the pond's fragile ecosystem can support. Feeding ducks not only encourages the ducks to stay

longer than they should, but creates an unhealthy environment with the potential for spread of disease. Parks and Recreation staff members along with The Friends of Manito are currently working on a proposal to determine the best alternatives to renovate and improve the water quality at Mirror Pond. The public can help by not feeding the ducks so as to sustain a fun and safe environment for all who use the parks.

### **About Manito Park**

The Spokane Parks and Recreation Department maintains Manito Park's 78 acres of native and cultivated landscape and 20 acres of world class botanical gardens. Comprised of five major garden areas, the Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden, Duncan Garden, Rose Hill, Lilac Garden and Ferris Perennial Garden, Manito Park is nationally recognized for its diverse horticultural displays. In 2007, Rose Hill was named number one in the nation by All-America Rose Selections (AARS), a nonprofit association dedicated to the introduction and

promotion of exceptional roses. Manito Park was officially established in April 1904, and has evolved from an undeveloped recreational area with a few flower beds, picnic spots and a zoo to one of Spokane's primary showplaces. Other Manito Park features include: Mirror Pond, a favorite of those who enjoy watching ducks and other water fowl; the Park Bench Café, open in season for light meals; the Loop Drive and Bridge offering majestic views of the Rose Garden; Upper and Lower Playgrounds – a favorite gathering spot of children; and the large basalt rock office building constructed in 1912. Central to the Park is the Gaiser Conservatory where beautiful flowing displays change seasonally.

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