

## Reasons NOT to Feed Alligators and Waterfowl

Many people like to feed wildlife in lakes and waterways, but what seems like kindness can be very harmful.

**Feeding alligators is against the law and risky for you and them.**



Feeding alligators is dangerous because it causes them to lose their natural fear of humans - making them more likely to approach and demonstrate aggressive behavior toward people and pets. This unnatural behavior is dangerous for alligators too, because they may need to be captured and relocated or destroyed. **NC General Statute § 113-291.11 makes it illegal to feed alligators in the wild.**

**Feeding waterfowl is not good for them or the environment.**

Human food, like bread, is junk food for ducks and geese. It lacks minerals needed to make strong, healthy birds. Human-fed waterfowl suffer from more illness and disease because they are not eating their natural diet of plants, seeds, berries, roots, shoots, insects, and aquatic invertebrates.



**Interferes with Nature** Feeding waterfowl actually increases their local population, causing them to over-winter here, which interferes with their natural breeding and migration patterns.

**Spreads Disease** Higher concentrations of waterfowl result in more feces and bacteria in and around a waterbody. Bacteria, such as e. coli, can be spread from waterfowl to humans. Also, bird-to-bird diseases can cause large die-offs of waterfowl.

**Promotes Algae** Waterfowl waste pollutes water because nutrients in their droppings cause green algae blooms and aquatic weed growth. This leads to low dissolved oxygen levels, fish kills, and poor water quality.



Stormwater Services  
209 Coleman Drive  
Wilmington, NC 28412  
910-343-4777 or Dial 711 TTY Voice  
[www.wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater)

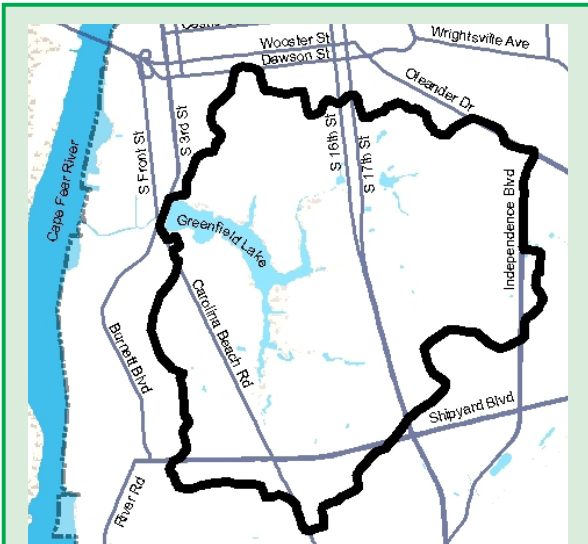


What puts the  
**GREEN**  
in  
Greenfield  
Lake?

And how can we  
take it out??

## What's Wrong with Greenfield Lake?

Greenfield Lake is a unique treasure in downtown Wilmington. The lake is host to magnificent Cypress trees and a wide variety of wildlife including alligators, turtles, and many species of waterfowl. However, the water in Greenfield Lake is polluted. To understand why, you must first understand the Greenfield Lake Watershed.



The area within the black line is the Greenfield Lake Watershed, which is approximately 2,500 acres. When it rains, runoff in the watershed flows through the storm drainage system and into Greenfield Lake. The lake water eventually empties into the Cape Fear River.

The Greenfield Lake Watershed is highly urbanized, meaning it has a lot of development including streets, parking lots, driveways, homes, buildings, and rooftops. These hard, or impervious surfaces, create stormwater runoff when it rains. Runoff picks up pollution on the ground like pet waste, fertilizer, pesticides, grass clippings, litter, and motor oil. This polluted runoff flows through the storm drainage system and into Greenfield Lake - **untreated!**

## What's That "Green" Stuff in Greenfield Lake?

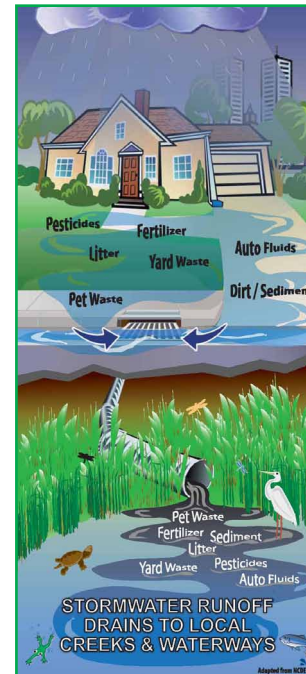
Polluted stormwater runoff flows into Greenfield Lake causing problems for wildlife and water quality. Bacteria and nutrients cause the overgrowth of green algae and aquatic weeds in the lake. This harmful plant overgrowth reduces the available oxygen in the water, disrupting the lake's natural balance causing fish kills and the death of aquatic life. In addition, seemingly innocent plants, like water hyacinth, are invasive and become a major problem when people dispose of them in the lake.



Over the years, the City has taken action to help the lake by: 1) stocking grass carp fish to eat nuisance vegetation, 2) selectively applying herbicide to treat algae and aquatic weeds, 3) installing solar-powered circulators to improve oxygen levels, and 4) raising awareness with the public to stop water pollution at the source.

**FACT:**  
To prevent water pollution in Greenfield Lake, citizens and businesses must take action and be part of the solution to stormwater pollution!

**Learn more!**  
[wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater](http://wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater)  
or  
**910.343.4777**



## Top tips to protect Greenfield Lake

- ◆ **Never put anything** into a storm drain, drainage ditch, or waterbody like Greenfield Lake.
- ◆ **Always clean up** after your pet and dispose of the waste properly.
- ◆ **Practice water-friendly lawn care:**
  - Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly
  - Get a free soil test from the New Hanover County Cooperative Extension to learn the exact nutrients your lawn needs (798-7679)
  - Don't over-fertilize, fertilize the sidewalk, or use fertilizers or pesticides before rain
  - Install native plants which eliminate the need for fertilizers and pesticides and are drought-tolerant
  - Compost or leave grass clippings on the lawn to act as a natural fertilizer and soil conditioner
  - Keep yard waste out of streets, storm drains, and ditches
  - Re-route gutter downspouts to allow rainwater to soak into the ground instead of running off
- ◆ **Prevent soil from washing away;** cover beds with mulch, install plants to anchor soil in place, or pick up soil/sediment and dispose of it.
- ◆ **Put litter** in the trash. Practice the 4 R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, and refuse.
- ◆ **Wash your car** on the grass or at a commercial car wash.
- ◆ **Dispose of paint, chemicals and electronics** at Household Hazardous Waste Collection events/sites.
- ◆ **Recycle used auto fluids and batteries** at an auto parts store or the NH County landfill.
- ◆ **Check your vehicle** for leaks and repair them.
- ◆ **Tell friends and neighbors** how they can help protect Greenfield Lake too!