

15 February 2018

## Protecting our Waterways and Wildlife

In response to public concern about the welfare of ducks in local lakes, City of Palmerston has been working collaboratively with Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory, with expert veterinary advice provided by Dr Stephen Cutter of The Ark Animal Hospital.

Council aims to manage the duck population at Palmerston lakes, focusing primarily on the welfare of the animals, and assist our community to understand how to protect our native wildlife.

Official Manager, Mark Blackburn, advised that the area of primary concern is currently Sanctuary Lakes.

“The duck population here has an imbalance in the ratio of male to female ducks. This has led to males fighting each other for breeding rights. Two injured male ducks were recently removed for treatment and will be re-homed by Dr Cutter.

We also plan to remove and re-home two female Muscovy ducks for the welfare of the animals. Rehoming the females will improve the welfare of the duck population. Some domestic ducks may pose an ecological risk to native ducks, due to interbreeding with them, and may also be removed and re-homed.”

He added that signage has been installed to explain that feeding wildlife can be harmful to the animals’ health and our environment as well.

“People love to feed wildlife, often with bread. Unfortunately, bread has no nutritional value for ducks and can make them ill. As well, wildlife relying on humans for hand-outs may eventually stop foraging for their natural food. Uneaten human food in lakes reduces water quality, and decaying food is not healthy for any of the animals.”

Parks and Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory will be conducting further surveys, monitoring the area and the duck population. In conjunction with The Ark Animal Hospital, they have been reviewing the health of individual ducks. To ensure the welfare of the ducks, individuals may be removed and provided with treatment, or re-homed.

“This program is not about removing the duck populations from any of our lakes. It is about providing a healthy, safe environment for all wildlife and improving water quality. Where possible, ducks will be left at their usual location,” said Mr Blackburn.

Please report injured wildlife to:  
Wildcare INC. NT  
8988 6121

Please report Crocodile sightings to:  
The Crocodile Management Team  
0419 822 859

- ENDS -

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