

## Reasons NOT to Feed Alligators and Waterfowl!

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

### Feeding alligators is against NC 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 euthanized. **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, crackers and popcorn, are junk food for ducks, geese, and other waterfowl. It lacks minerals needed to make strong, healthy birds. Human-fed waterfowl suffer from more illness, diseases and deformities 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 spread from waterfowl to humans. Also, bird-to-bird diseases can cause large die-offs of waterfowl.

**Promotes Algae** Waterfowl waste pollutes the lake 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.



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910-343-4777 or Dial 711 TTY Voice  
[www.wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater](http://www.wilmingtonnc.gov/stormwater)

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STORMWATER

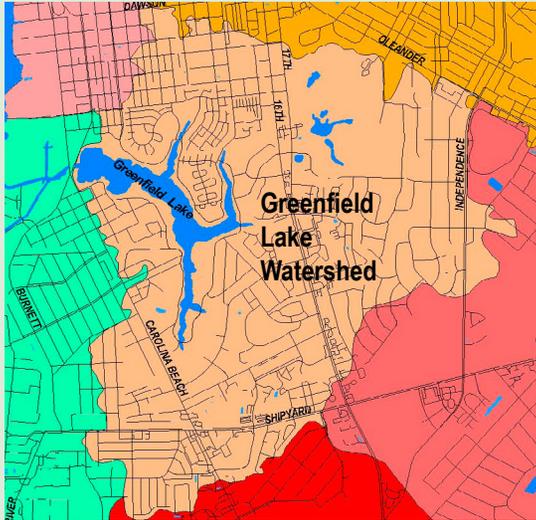
What puts the  
**GREEN**  
in  
Greenfield  
Lake?

And how can  
**YOU** stop it?

## 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 variety of wildlife including alligators, turtles, fish, and many species of waterfowl. However, the water in Greenfield Lake is polluted. To understand why, you must first understand the Greenfield Lake Watershed.

**A watershed is an area of land that drains to a specific body of water.**



The Greenfield Lake Watershed is approximately 2,500 acres of land. When it rains, polluted stormwater runoff from the entire watershed drains into Greenfield Lake. Greenfield Lake eventually drains 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 from sources like pet waste, fertilizers, grass clippings, and leaves which all contain nutrients (nitrogen/phosphorous). This polluted runoff flows through the storm drainage system and into Greenfield Lake - untreated!

Nutrient pollution causes poor water quality and harmful algal blooms leading to low dissolved oxygen and fish kills in Greenfield Lake.

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

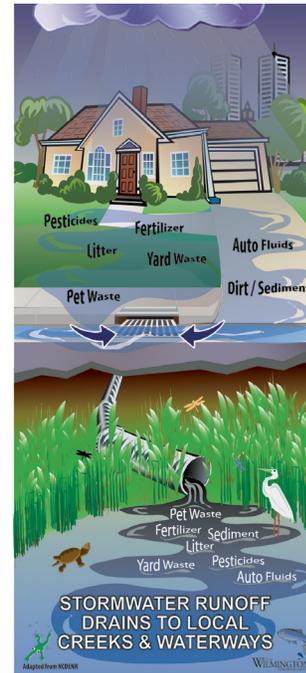
Polluted stormwater runoff flows into Greenfield Lake causing problems for wildlife and water quality. Bacteria and nutrients cause the growth of algae and aquatic weeds in the lake. This harmful plant growth reduces the available oxygen in the water, causing fish kills and disrupting the lake's natural balance. 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 addressed nutrient pollution and resulting algal blooms in the lake by stocking grass carp, selectively applying herbicide, installing solar-powered oxygen circulators, dredging, implementing grant-funded projects, and raising awareness with the public to stop water pollution at the source.

**FACT:**  
To improve water quality 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 in a closed trash can.
- ◆ **Practice water-friendly lawn care:**
  - **Best Option:** Install native plants which are drought-tolerant and eliminate the need for fertilizers and pesticides
  - Use fertilizers and pesticides very sparingly
  - Don't over-fertilize, fertilize the sidewalk, or use fertilizers or pesticides before rain
  - Compost or leave grass clippings on the lawn to act as a natural fertilizer and soil conditioner
  - Get a soil test from the New Hanover County Cooperative Extension to learn the exact nutrients your lawn needs (910-798-7679)
  - Keep yard debris out of streets, storm drains, and ditches (*City ordinance - \$250 fine*)
  - Re-route gutter downspouts to allow rainwater to soak into the ground instead of running off
- ◆ **Prevent soil from washing away.**  
Cover landscape beds with mulch or install native plants to anchor soil in place.
- ◆ **Put litter** in the trash. Practice the 5 R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, refuse, and repurpose.
- ◆ **Wash your car** on the grass or at a commercial car wash to prevent soapy water from entering storm drains, ditches, and waterways.
- ◆ **Check your vehicle** for leaks and repair them.
- ◆ **Dispose of paint, chemicals, auto fluids, batteries, and electronics** at New Hanover County Household Hazardous Waste Collection sites and events.
- ◆ **Inform friends and neighbors** how they can help protect Greenfield Lake too!