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Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzW0QnkGz6E>

DUCKS ARE SITTING PRETTY AFTER HUGE DROP IN STARCHY TREATS FOLLOWING CHARITY'S CAMPAIGN

A call by the charity Canal & River Trust to feed healthier food to ducks has been taken to heart by the nation's animal lovers with new figures released today (Thursday, 6 April, 2017) showing bread as a treat has taken a dramatic decline since the launch of the Trust's 'no-dough' campaign.

As the sunnier weather and longer days return, the charity is again reminding people to ditch the bread when visiting their favourite waterside location this spring and instead swap to healthier treats such as kale, lettuce or porridge oats.

Since the charity launched its 'no-dough' campaign there's been a 20 per cent drop in the number of people feeding bread to ducks. In 2015, 97 per cent admitted to feeding ducks with either white or brown bread and by the following year this dropped to 83 per cent but fast forward to 2017 and it has dropped even further, down to 71 per cent of people opting for the lunchtime staple.

Peter Birch, National Environment Manager for the Canal & River Trust, said: "Our waterways are wonderful places where people can spend time together and feeding ducks is one of the most popular pastimes, enjoyed by people of all ages. The Canal & River Trust launched this campaign because we were concerned about the effects of too much bread being thrown into our waterways which are home to hundreds of thousands of ducks and other water fowl.

"The response has been astounding. The public are helping to protect ducks' habitats and are making a real difference."

And the good news doesn't stop there, more people are swapping to healthier treats with a rise of more than a 10 per cent of the population opting to feed their feathered friends leftover vegetables and salad instead of bread – from 10 per cent in 2015 to 23 per cent in 2017.

Peter Birch continues: "It only takes a few simple changes such as swapping bread for healthy food that is closer to a duck's natural diet – like oats, corn or peas. If everyone avoids going to the same duck-feeding hotspots and exercises portion control that also makes a big difference."

However, it still means nearly three quarters of the population are throwing their leftover bread into canals, rivers, reservoirs and lakes across the country. And nearly 40 per cent

(38%) are using the worst offender, white bread, which can be full of nasty preservatives, salt and sugars and can pollute water by causing harmful algae.

5 reasons why bread is bad:

- Uneaten soggy bread can cause a build-up of bad nutrients which can lead to greater algal growth, spread disease and encourage pests such as rats.
- Throwing bread into a canal or river can create overcrowding of bird populations, as the birds will flock to the same location in search of their starchy treat.
- Too many ducks or waterfowl in one place can stress the birds and lead to their habitats being damaged.
- It also creates excessive amounts of bird droppings which, along with being smelly and slippery underfoot, can reduce water quality and clog waterways with harmful algae.

Visit www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/duck-guide to download your free guide of ten fun activities to do at your local waterway.

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Notes to Editors:

For more information, interviews, video footage, or images contact Emma Aitken, National Campaigns Manager, on 07733 124580 or Emma.Aitken@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Images available at: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/6cv2fmju9o6ezdi/AAApYY-x_B46wFFJinxnYPBxa?oref=e&n=347815707

The Canal & River Trust is the guardian of 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales, caring for the nation's third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites.

We believe that *living waterways transform places and enrich lives* and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms

References

Research was carried out by BDRC Continental on behalf of Canal & River Trust. The survey was carried out with a nationally representative sample of 1,800 people across England and Wales (E&W). Data is based on people feeding the ducks in England and Wales at a canal, river, lake, pond or reservoir.

