



Newsletter

Autumn 2021

Leaving home

Autumn – children go back to school, older offspring maybe leave the family home to study and become independent... and it's no different for cygnets.

Swans look after their young for several months, sometimes bringing them to the river as they mature, to show them where they can be safe in the flock. If cygnets don't leave home, the parents will often chase them off, and can be quite aggressive about it.

Intruding on other swans' territories can have serious consequences.



This cygnet had been attacked when it landed in territory belonging to a pair with 6 cygnets at County Hall.

A member of the public called Wychbold Swan Rescue, whom we helped with the rescue and relocation to the river.

Work parties



Although our main focus is on improving the nutrition of Worcester's swans, we get involved in a variety of activities, including regular work parties.

Tasks including cleaning, litter picking, ground clearing, weeding – and anything else that helps maintain a healthy natural environment for local wildlife.

We recently cleaned a thick coating of slippery mud off the steps by Worcester Bridge. Important as this is an additional swan release site.

Work parties are held the first Monday of every month, from 2 pm to 4.30 pm.

If you're interested in volunteering, contact Marilyn at:

theswanfoodproject@gmail.com

New Avian Influenza outbreak

We've put a post on Facebook, but for those who don't use it - DEFRA confirmed an outbreak of Avian Influenza (AI) at Wychbold Swan Rescue on 26th October.

The next day, several dead swans were found in Worcester, and two went for testing. Since then, many more swans have fallen sick and some have died. H5N1 strain of AI has now been confirmed. *Updates will be posted on Facebook.*



Sick swans tend to look listless and trance-like, and have difficulty keeping their neck upright. Some occasionally spin in circles.

There is a low risk of AI transmission to humans, but to help prevent spreading the virus, avoid treading in bird droppings, and keep dogs away from droppings and out of the river. For more detailed information, go to local authority or government websites.

DEFRA asks people to report sightings of dead birds via their helpline: **03459 335577**.

Please also email/message The Swan Food Project with the **precise** location. Like last year, we are keeping a map of body locations to help the authorities recover them.

The Big Christmas Swan Feed

Before lockdown, we hosted this event each year at South Quay. Last year we were unable to have a gathering, so instead we invited the public to send in photos of themselves feeding the swans. We had an enthusiastic response, with some feeders wearing fancy dress, others just wearing a smile, but you all seemed to have fun. We 'raffled' the photos and drew a winner, whose prize was a sack of floating swan pellets.

We plan to be back at South Quay this year, just a bit more spread out (the photo below was taken pre-Covid). We'll have a whole sack of floating swan pellets to share with you on each of the days. Everyone is welcome, so come and feed the swans for free!



This year's dates are:

- ❖ Sunday 26th December
- ❖ Tuesday 28th December
- ❖ Saturday 1st January

We'll be there 2-2.30pm.

The Mayor and Mayoress, Stephen and Lucy Hodgson, will be helping us hand out pellets on 26th December.