



Newsletter

April 2021

Avian Influenza

Worcester swans were hard hit during the AI outbreak towards the end of 2020. A difficult end to an already difficult year.

An estimated one third of the flock was lost, but thanks to the people of Worcester and regular feeders, the majority were robust enough to survive. Heartfelt thanks to you all for making this possible.

The risk of AI in wild birds is now considered low and Public Health England have allowed boating sports to resume. However, a few isolated cases in England mean that good hygiene around the river remains important.



New Lock Gates at Diglis

March saw Canal & River Trust hard at work replacing and repairing the lock gates at Diglis Bottom Lock. For safety reasons, water levels in the Pound (the body of water between the top and bottom locks at Diglis) had to be kept low. A pair of swans got trapped there, so we alerted CRT. They built them a sturdy ramp so they could get out.



Going forward, this is a useful addition to the Pound, as territorial fights often occur here. The varying water levels due to canal boats coming through mean that swans under attack can't always get out.

Cygnets and Duckling Ramp in Diglis Basin

Young cygnets and ducklings often have difficulty getting out of the water at Diglis Basin. Getting out to preen is critical when newly hatched, otherwise their soft, downy feathers get waterlogged and they drown. Being unable to get out can also hinder development, as more of their food goes into keeping them warm rather than enabling them to grow.

Using materials begged and borrowed Steve, one of our volunteers, made a smart ramp for them. Moorhen chicks have been spotted locally, so it may not be long before the ramp comes into its own.



Swan rescues

We've undertaken 21 rescues involving 27 swans since the end of January. For example, four mature cygnets under attack from their parents at County Hall were brought to the river for their safety, and this swan was rescued from someone's garden!

Swan rescues are not The Swan Food Project's main focus, but we help out where we can. We collaborate with Wychbold Swan Rescue (07867-672758) and Vale Wildlife Hospital (01386-882288).

When reporting injured swans or swans in danger, please provide precise details of the situation and where and when you saw them. Please provide your contact details and stay with the swan if you possibly can.



Word is spreading

A warm welcome to our new supporters, some of whom have signed up as a giver with *The Giving Machine*. If you register and select *The Swan Food Project* as the cause you want to support, retailers you buy from when logged onto TGM then generate commission for us. You don't even have to shop - you can just quickly log on each day and click the 'Collect Now' button to generate a small bonus donation for us. Interested? You can register at: <https://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk/causes/the-swan-food-project/>

New Swan food outlets

Warmans, in Mealcheapen Street, and *Pack It In*, at the New Street end of the market hall, have recently started selling our small bags of floating pellets. As lockdown eases, you should see us back in the Cathedral shop and other outlets too. For a full list, see the pinned post on our Facebook page.