



Newsletter

Autumn 2024

Out and about along the river

The Swan Food Project was set up to create sustainable support for Worcester's swans. Whilst providing good nutrition for them is a key activity, we also look out for sick or injured swans, and are committed to protecting their environment. Here are some of the things we've been up to during the summer.

Health checks

During feeding we scan the flock for problems and deal with straightforward issues, referring to Wychbold Swan Rescue or Vale Wildlife Hospital for more serious matters. Here are a few cases from this summer.

A 13ft length of fishing line was unwrapped from bushes by Pitchcroft, where we also removed a hook and line from a swan's leg.



Swan with a fish hook in her face. Treated at the river.



This swan had a serious eye problem and was taken to Vale.

Please collect and dispose of fishing debris you can reach safely, and send us a photo.

Making things safer for swans and for people

We clean the lower boathouse steps daily at feeding time, but we also 'deep clean' all the steps regularly, to remove bird droppings and make it safer for the public to reach the waterside to feed the swans.

Willow branches had drifted into the feeding area, making it difficult for the swans to feed and for the rowers to tie their launch. We managed to pull them out. They will be used

Clean steps!



for fencing at the screen house, near Worcester Bridge, to deter illegal fishing.

Volunteers cleared the ground around the screen house recently, to retain an important resting and preening area for the swans.



Meet Barker



In August, volunteers introduced the public to 'Barker', our latest recruit!

This was a drive to engage with dog owners to encourage them to put their dogs on a lead, particularly along Bromwich Parade between Worcester Bridge and the exit to Chapter Meadows, where swans are most likely to be out of the water and therefore vulnerable.

Even if dogs are friendly and won't bite, swans don't understand this and are afraid. They are slow and ungainly when out of the water, and can hurt themselves badly trying to get away down the boathouse steps.

Preparing for winter

Swans have already come in from outlying areas as natural food resources dwindle with the change in weather. The rise in river levels means the swans can reach more natural food, but they are expending more energy swimming in strong currents.

With more swans in Worcester, and hungrier ones, we need to maintain the stocks in our food store.

To this aim, we invite you to join us for our **Swan Puppet Fundraiser!** We'll be outside the Guildhall with collection buckets and a larger-than-life swan puppet, originally made by a craft group for the 2023 Worcester Show. Please come and support us, and the swans in Worcester.

- ❖ **Date:** Saturday 16th November
- ❖ **Time:** From 11:00 to 15:00

The Big Christmas Swan Feed

Welcome once more to the Big Christmas Swan Feed at South Quay. Each day we'll be giving away a whole sack of floating swan pellets, so come along to give the swans a treat, and enjoy the breath-taking spectacle of a large gathering of these amazing birds.



This year's dates are:

- ❖ Thursday 26th December
- ❖ Sunday 29th December
- ❖ Wednesday 1st January

We'll be there from 14:00 to 14:45.

The Mayor, Councillor Mel Allcott, will be helping us hand out pellets on 29th December.