



## A Guide for Friends of Urban-Nesting Ducks

Mother Mallard ducks lay eggs in tree boxes, courtyards, parks, and on roofs around the city – sometimes in areas with high foot and/or vehicle traffic. Mallards are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act; it is illegal to harm ducks and to remove or otherwise interfere with nests. If there is a duck nesting near your home or office, do not touch her or her eggs. Here are some ways you can help:

- ◆ Preventing Accidents  
Depending on the placement of the nest, it may be vulnerable to accidental trampling by humans (e.g., while getting out of cars parked next to a nest on the ground). Consider creating a barrier or using hazard tape.
- ◆ Discouraging Pesterers and Predators  
The mother duck will leave her nest to feed periodically during the day. It is not necessary to supplement her diet **and best not to do so as food attracts attention to the nest**. However, some people love to feed ducks and you may not be able to stop them. If this is the case, try to discourage well-meaning folks from leaving foods that attract other birds and rodents, e.g., bread, nuts, seeds, and chips. To reduce the risk of rats visiting the nest at night (they eat duck eggs) the duck’s human team should clean up and discard any food that is on the ground at the end of the day.
- ◆ Hatching and Walking to Water  
The ducklings will hatch about 25 days after the last egg was laid. Within 48 hours, their mama will initiate a “parade” to water. Humans can direct traffic as needed and steer the ducklings away from street grates or other hazards. **Let the mama duck lead; she knows where she wants to go!** City Wildlife Duck Watch volunteers may be able to help with the walk and/or provide assistance if distance between the nest and the ground or other barriers are hindering the parade.
- ◆ Local Resources  
There is more information about how to help urban-nesting ducks at [www.citywildlife.org](http://www.citywildlife.org). If a duck is injured, DC Animal Care and Control (DCACC) will transport it to CW’s rehabilitation facility.

### Contacts

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DCACC	202-576-6664	Emergency responders; open 24/7
City Wildlife	202-882-1000	Open daily 9 am - 5 pm
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