



Illawarra Birders Inc. PO Box 1355, 116 Auburn St, Wollongong 2500.

Dear Illawarra Mercury,

Illawarra Birders Inc. members were disgusted to read about the killing of Wood (Maned) Ducks at Helensburgh Pool recently 'War on Ducks waged at Helensburgh, Corrimal Pools – Illawarra Mercury 26<sup>th</sup> October'. These ducks are a native Australian species and breeding season usually occurs for them between September and November each year.

Local pools will soon become busy over the summer months and we understand people's concerns about the ducks defecating and fouling the water. We also know that ducks can be extremely territorial and can become aggressive, as do most parents, when they feel their young are being threatened. The ducks should definitely be moved or relocated BUT killing them is NOT the answer!!!

It is extremely unlikely that the ducks will stay around once the pool is busy and if they are continuously being disturbed.

Wood Ducks can definitely be relocated and it is relatively easy to do this. There are several articles online that give step by step instructions as to how this may be achieved see Sydney Wildlife website <http://www.sydneynwildlife.org.au/FAQRetrieve.aspx?ID=41799> and <http://www.awrc.org.au/uploads/5/8/6/6/5866843/huxley.pdf> which links to a Western Australian article explaining several ways Wood Ducks can be relocated.

Wollongong Council's website states that they will '*actively work to protect our natural environment*' and '*demonstrate leadership, responsible planning and decision making to minimise the local and global impacts of our actions*' Unfortunately, we feel that in this particular action they have failed to do both of these things.

Council is also setting an example to members of the public that would say to many people if wildlife annoys you it is OK to kill it to get rid of the problem. Killing the ducks, we believe, is setting a dangerous precedent.

We want people to appreciate and have respect for all of our wildlife. Wood Ducks are beautiful birds and are trying to use the pool as a safe haven for their ducklings. If unable to easily exit the pool the ducklings can catch pneumonia and drown but they are able to swim as soon as they hatch.

We suggest:

1. The best thing council can do is to employ someone to catch and relocate the ducklings – they are NOT homing pigeons and will not repeatedly return to the pool – they were not there several weeks ago!!!
2. WIRES may also be able to relocate them if asked – they ARE wildlife and are under threat of being killed if left where they are.
3. Covering the pool of a night as the ducks will then have to move along – they are not likely to hang around if they cannot access the water.
4. That someone repeatedly, gently scare them (make sure they are safe and will not be scared onto a road etc.) – they will not want to come back if they are scared away repeatedly – they want peace!!

We cannot believe Wollongong Councillors would think killing the ducks was preferential to moving them on. We need to find ways to live peacefully WITH our wildlife. After all we have chosen to live in what used to be their entire territory.

Yours Sincerely  
Michelle Rower  
Conservation Officer  
Illawarra Birders Inc.