

Prepared to keep a duck 10 years?



State Law Prohibits the Release of Ducks

Thinking of buying a duckling? Before making your purchase, please consider that these birds can live more than 10 years. Often, well-meaning people tire of caring for their pet ducks and release them into the wild. First, this is illegal: **State Law Prohibits The Release of Ducks.** Second, released ducks can transmit disease and compete with native wildlife for food and space. Third, released Mallard ducks threaten the existence of the native Florida duck. *(Please see other side for Florida duck information)*

A permit is required to purchase and possess a game animal, call 850-488-6253.

Hybridization is a problem for Florida Ducks

The Florida duck is genetically unique and occurs nowhere else in the world. These birds are nonmigratory and spend all of their life in peninsular Florida. Store-bought mallards threaten the Florida duck because they also are in Florida year-round. Hybrid mallard/Florida ducks occur when these store-bought (domestic) mallards are released or escape into the wild and mate with Florida ducks. Wild mallards do not contribute to hybridization because they have migrated north, out of Florida, by the time Florida ducks' mating season begins.

What does this mean?

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is concerned about the future of the Florida duck. Continued mallard duck releases, and subsequent hybridization, could lead to the loss of the native Florida duck as a distinct species.

What can be done?

Don't release mallards. Don't feed or shelter existing mallards. Spread the word to your friends and neighbors that releasing or supporting mallards threatens the existence of the Florida duck. Notify your golf course or neighborhood association's manager of the problems caused by these birds. Ask for their commitment to not release mallards. Finally, you can make a donation to the Wildlife Foundation of Florida. These funds will be used to further the research and management of the Florida duck. Just remember to write "Waterfowl Management" in your check's memo section. Make checks payable to: Wildlife Foundation of Florida, P.O. Box 11010, Tallahassee, FL 32302-9903.



floridaconservation.org/duck