

Castlelyons Tidy Towns Project
The Introduction of Duck species to the Picnic Park area
Release Date 6th October 2011



Mallard Ducks

Description: Mallards are the most numerous wildfowl in Ireland and can be found almost anywhere there is water, so it is not surprising that most people are familiar with it.

The male, or drake, is very recognisable nearly all year round by its metallic green head, brown breast that is delineated from the head by a white neck ring, grey body and black tail. During the summer months, June to September, the drake moults and looks very similar to the female - this is called "[eclipse](#)" plumage - and offers better camouflage until their flight feathers have been fully replaced.

The female, or duck, is mainly brown, with blackish mottling and has a plain buff coloured head with a dark line through the eye.

Both sexes have a purple-blue [speculum](#). Further, they both have orange-red legs and a yellow-olive coloured bill, but the duck's bill is much duller.

Juveniles are similar to the female, but duller.



[Ducklings](#)



[Drake Wings](#)



[Eclipse](#)

The duck has a loud "quack", while the drake's call is a softer, higher-pitched "quork".

Castlelyons Tidy Towns Project
The Introduction of Duck species to the Picnic Park area
Release Date 6th October 2011

Feeding: Mallards are dabbling ducks, so they forage near the water surface or upend to reach food deeper down, but also feed off the ground. The diet comprises cereals, plants and Invertebrates and less often fish. They are specially formulated food available for wildfowl which give a balanced diet for the birds.

Bread: is the equivalent to junk food for the birds, and too much bread can lead to excessive weight and malnutrition as well as many other digestive problems. One example of what happens, when a duck feeds on bread and then drinks water the water expands the bread in the stomach making it difficult to digest, then the bird is not able to eat further nutritional food so may die from malnutrition.

Specially formulated food can be fed to the ducks; this pellet food can be purchased from McNamaras Shop. The proceeds will help to maintain and further develop the wildfowl population locally on behalf of Castlelyons Tidy Towns Group.

Please recycle the plastic bag back to McNamaras shop as it can be used again.

Nesting: The Mallards build a nest, from leaves and grasses, among dense vegetation. Mallard eggs are smooth and waxy, and pale green or blue-green. They are about 57 mm by 41 mm. The female incubates the eggs herself.

Movements: Irish Mallards are resident and may be either sedentary or migratory. Many Icelandic and northern European birds spend the winter in Ireland.

Conservation: Mallards may be hunted September to January, but are protected during the breeding season. Despite this, the non-breeding population has declined moderately over the last 25 years and so they are now an [amber list](#) species of conservation concern.

No Mallards have been seen in this area (Picnic Park) for a long time, with the introduction now of Mallards to the picnic park and with you help we hope this will be a new beginning and a pleasing feature for all to enjoy.