

**Like a duck to water... : but not for factory farmed birds... / Juliet Gellatley.**

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# Like a duck to water...

Photo: Bruce Coleman Collection



*But not for factory farmed birds. Britain's favourite wild bird is being cooped up in intensive farms. These poor ducks never see water.*

**This is an urgent appeal by Viva! to end the factory farming of ducks**

*Dear Friend*

I'm appealing to you because ducks desperately need your help.

*Viva!*, the high-profile campaigning group, which won the first *Daily Mirror's* Linda McCartney Award for Animal Welfare, has launched a major investigation into duck farming. We have visited almost all the major duck producers in Britain.

Recently in one unit, we saw thousands of adorable, yellow fluffy ducklings – but without their mothers to protect them, to teach them how to swim, what to eat, how to preen. In these places no one cares. These birds are to be killed for the growing market in duck meat and, like every other 'new meat', it is hailed as the healthy choice. But is it?



Factory farmed ducks are often covered in excreta and their injuries ignored

*Viva!* has launched a national campaign to expose – for the first time – how ducks are reared for meat. And we need your support.

Almost all duck meat comes from factory farmed birds. Our footage shows they are crammed into huge sheds on concrete or wire floors and given dry pelleted food. These are largely aquatic animals – they are meant to eat, swim, dive, clean and play in water – and yet they never see it, except in their drinkers. One of the main breeders of ducks in Britain has even added an enzyme to the feed of the ducks to reduce the amount of water they drink! Why? Because ducks like to splash the water around and over their bodies but this causes ammonia to build up in factory farm sheds...

**Viva!**  
CAMPAIGNS

12 Queen Square, Brighton BN1 3FD. Tel: 01273 777688





Little water birds who will never know water



Some of the many who don't even make it to seven weeks old



Thousands of birds are imprisoned in this Suffolk unit



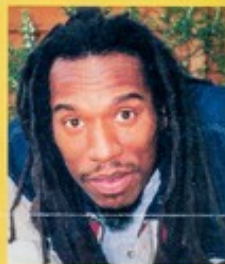
"Once again, Viva! exposes a new horror - duck factory farming. I defy anyone with the smallest amount of compassion to look at the facts unearthed by Viva! and not be upset by them. It is a terrible shame that people in a so-called civilised society should be involved in horrific practices such as these."

Sir Paul McCartney

No doubt like me, you've spent many happy days watching ducks on your local river or pond. You'll have seen that these inquisitive animals spend lots of time preening. It is vital to ducks' health that they can immerse themselves in water. At the very least, ducks should be able to dip their heads under. But in intensive farms, limited water supply makes this impossible, leading to poor feathers, difficulty in keeping warm, eye problems and even blindness.

As part of our investigation, we went back to the duck farms five weeks later. The ducklings were already fully grown, white feathered, beautiful but dejected birds. The sight of thousands of ducks waddling through excreta around a dark shed, with no way to escape and nothing to do was dreadful. Some could barely walk, others had fallen on their backs and hadn't been able to turn back over - they died a horrible, stressful death.

These poor birds have been bred from the wild mallard. The Council of Europe has ruled that **farmed birds are essentially wild**, and despite what factory farmers claim, they 'retain many biological characteristics of their wild ancestors'. In the wild, mallards are mainly aquatic and social, living in large flocks in autumn and winter but in pairs in spring and summer. The female lays about eight eggs, two to three times a year. The ducklings learn from their mother - even their downy feathers are oiled by her. She teaches them what to eat - seeds, plants, insects and worms. They forage on land but eat mainly in water by dabbling their beak along the surface straining out plankton.



"If there's one image that warms all of our hearts it's that of a mother duck with her ducklings. These birds never even get to see their young. The answer? Don't buy duck meat and do support Viva!"  
Benjamin Zephaniah, poet and musician

## Viva! Victory

Their beak has a rich supply of nerves and is very sensitive. And yet in factory farms - to stop birds pulling at each other's feathers, the end of their beak was cut off with a hot blade. This process causes extreme pain. Throughout 2000, Viva! vigorously campaigned to end debeaking - and won! We focused our campaign on the six supermarket chains that sold meat from debeaked birds - and one by one they agreed to stop debeaking ducks. Harrods withdrew all its factory farmed duck meat due to 'Viva!'s well researched campaign.'





Viva! had major features in the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail* and *The Times*, as well as in hundreds of local papers across the UK

## The campaign today

Two of the largest producers of duck meat in the UK are Cherry Valley in North Lincs and Green Label in Suffolk. Cherry Valley boasts it is the 'world producer of ducks' as it rears 13 million table ducks each year. It states that 'only one person... looks after as many as 85,000 birds' – genetically altered to produce more meat and eggs.

Mother ducks have been bred to produce 100 per cent more ducklings than five years ago. Cherry Valley say that they have produced a 'superduck' which lays up to 275 eggs a year – ten times what she has evolved to lay. This unnaturally high output of eggs causes a disease – egg peritonitis – that is the main cause of death in laying ducks. The duck's ovaries become inflamed and the reproductive tracts rupture causing agony.

Wild birds fly, swim, dive and walk – however, the farmed birds are bred to be heavy. They may be unable to fly, have difficulty in walking and are prone to leg disorders. All this in a seven week life. The natural life-span of a duck is 15 years.

And what of their death? They are usually hung upside down on a conveyor system, causing great pain to birds which may already have broken legs or injuries. Their heads are then supposed to be dipped into an electrical waterbath. However, both the Council of Europe and Bristol University have shown that many ducks are not stunned properly – and are knifed fully conscious.

Duck farming must be stopped. You can help. No one has exposed the horrors of duck farming or slaughter before Viva!'s campaign – please enable us to continue to do just that. We believe we have the British public on our side, we just need the means to reach them. Your donation will help fund secret investigative work, TV and press reports and the production of a national campaign against this sickening trade.

Thank you so much for helping.

Yours for the animals,

Juliet Gellatley  
Founder & Director



Thousands of ducks are crammed into each shed



Twigg appeared on GMTV and other media to call for an end to the factory farming of ducks



Wendy Turner-Webster, presenter of *Pet Rescue*, called on Tesco to stop debeaking ducks. One day later they agreed to end this barbaric practice.

Viva! groups across the nation are taking the facts about the factory farming of ducks to the public



"I used to love taking my children to feed the ducks. They are obviously water birds and to see them factory farmed in darkened sheds is obscene. I don't believe the British public want ducks to be treated this way. Help Viva! reach more people and we can stop it."  
Hayley Mills, actress





***Yes! I want to help  
stop cruelty to ducks***

These little water birds will never know water and many don't even make it to seven weeks old. Your donation will help Viva! STOP THIS NEW ATROCITY.

Title: ..... First Name: .....

Surname: .....

Address: .....

Postcode: .....

I enclose a donation of: £10 ☐ £15 ☐ £20 ☐ £30 ☐  
£50 ☐ £100 ☐ £250 ☐ other £

(please make cheque/PO payable to *Viva! Campaigns*)

OR please debit my Visa/MasterCard/Switch/Delta card no. (delete as appropriate)

[illegible]

Expires: ..... Switch Issue no: .....

Cardholder's Signature: .....

**Donate by phone on 01273 777688**

### Standing Order

You can also give by regular standing order. Giving just a small amount each month has a great impact on *Viva!*'s work. For example, a £3 or £5 monthly donation enables us to plan ahead how best to save animals.

I wish to give **Viva!** a monthly gift of: ☐ £3 ☐ £5 ☐ £10 Other amount ☐ £.....

Your bank's name  
and address  
(inc. postcode)

[illegible]

**Bank Instructions:** Please pay the above amount on the same day every month starting on  until further notice.

**Bank Sort Code** (six digit number at the top right of your cheque)

Account Holder's Name

Account Number

**Signature**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Bank:** please quote the following reference: (Viva! use only)

To the Co-operative Bank  
(08-92-99) for the credit of *Viva!*  
*Campaigns Ltd* account 65052996

Please tick here if you would prefer **not** to have your details passed on to like-minded organisations ☐

28/8/01 - w/4 Time Out

*"The cruelty of modern farming has to end – and you have the power to do it. Don't buy meat from these diseased and dejected creatures."*

Joanna Lumley, actress



"I could barely watch Vival's video of duck farming – it is so upsetting to see these poor creatures crammed together

without ever being able to swim or feel the sun on their backs... it is indefensible. I'm with Viva! in campaigning to end the shame." Pam Ferris, actress and Viva! patron

*"The systematic brutality to these creatures must be challenged. I congratulate Viva! on their work."*

Rt. Hon.  
Tony Benn MP



*"I thought I couldn't be shocked again by farm animal abuse. I was wrong! To confine what are essentially wild animals in*

these conditions is a sad, sad commentary on the human race. A duck that never sees water – what an abomination. We have to stop this now.”

*Please return this entire side  
(so that your name and address  
is included) to:*

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Tel 01273 777688  
E: [info@viva.org.uk](mailto:info@viva.org.uk)  
W: [www.viva.org.uk](http://www.viva.org.uk)**

**Viva!**

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