

# LEAD POISONING

- ❑ Most cases of lead poisoning occur in late fall, winter and early spring. This is primarily because the swans have to dig deeper into the sediment to find food, and are therefore more likely to pick up pellets.
- ❑ There are cases in the summer as well, which may be related to low water levels or areas that are remarkably high in lead pellets.
- ❑ It is vitally important to treat a sick swan as soon as possible – most swans will die without treatment, and the promptness of treatment can increase their chances of survival.

These are the general symptoms, but the list is not exhaustive. Whenever you see a swan displaying any unusual behaviour, let me know as soon as possible.

Early symptoms:

- ✓ Lethargy, sleeps a lot
- ✓ General weakness
- ✓ Eats very little or stops eating altogether
- ✓ Segregates itself from other swans
- ✓ Abnormal behaviour
- ✓ Reluctant to fly

Advanced symptoms:

- ✓ Unable to fly
- ✓ Bright green diarrhea
- ✓ Unusual vocalizations
- ✓ Head shaking
- ✓ Gaping
- ✓ Drooping wings
- ✓ Eventually is unable to walk

## **What to do if you suspect lead poisoning:**

- ❖ If you think a bird might be showing minor/early signs, let me know as soon as possible: leave me a note or message so I'll get it the next day.
- ❖ If you're fairly sure that a bird has lead poisoning (advanced signs, highly unusual behaviour), contact me right away. If I can't be reached, call the OSPCA.