



Down may seem like a luxury and a product of the 'meat' industry, and while true that most down and other feathers are removed from ducks and geese during slaughter, birds in breeding flocks and those raised for meat and foie gras are often *plucked repeatedly while they are still alive*. Down is the soft layer of feathers closest to birds' skin, primarily in the chest region. Plucking causes geese and ducks considerable pain and distress. Their feathers are ripped right out of their skin, and the birds can be plucked so hard that their skin is torn open and wounds are sewn closed using needle and thread – there are obviously no painkillers in use. Plucking may begin when the animals are mere weeks old, and be subjected to this horrific procedure every 6 weeks or so until death! The most prized down, and therefore the one that pays the pluckers the most, is hand-stripped from live birds, because the process of mechanically taking it from carcasses before washing and drying it can affect the quality.

While most shoppers would never consider buying or eating foie gras, they are unaware that the seemingly innocuous down in their duvet is actually a by-product of the cruel foie gras process!



Plucked birds.

Even manufacturers who state they don't use down from live-plucked birds cannot be 100% sure of their claim. The same applies to most of the down and feathers used in 'natural-filling' pillows and quilts sold.

The birds who are not plucked alive suffer equally horrifically. The cruelty dealt out to geese and ducks to produce foie gras is well known: tubes are rammed down their throats several times a day to force-feed them until their liver is ten times its normal size. Then their throats are slit. The production of foie gras is banned in many countries, including Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic, Norway, Poland, the Netherlands, Israel, Switzerland, South Africa, Luxembourg, the UK and Denmark, and most U.S. states.

Here is but one video clip of the reality <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqIL-7njHFY>

Live plucking of geese and eider ducks for down <http://www.upc-online.org/livepluc.html>

A leading Swedish veterinary, commenting on the footage, called the practice "torture" and compared it to ripping out the hair of a human skull. "Double torture"... "...their lives are Hell on earth", was the commentary of Johan Beck Fries, member of a Swedish governmental commission.