In Defense of Animals
National Goose Protection Coalition
Contact us at geese@idausa.org

Humane Goose Management Guide

By Coalition Mentor Arlene Steinberg, Waterfowl Community Liaison

Dear Community Leadership,

We are pleased to be able to provide information for your community leadership to help with your Canada goose situation. The interest and involvement of the community, and cooperation and commitment of the community's leadership, are the keys to the success of this venture. When the public and leadership are dedicated to making this plan work, it is amazing what can happen. If you have water, you will always have SOME waterfowl – best to appreciate and co-exist with them. They can be managed humanely.

There are 5 objectives of any effective plan:

1) Population stabilization, 2) Site aversion, 3) No feeding of wildlife, or feeding in preferred, limited areas, 4) Education outreach, and 5) Clean-up program.

We have provided links to manuals, websites and articles to help you with a variety of modalities and ideas that you can use to manage your geese. We find that the combination of three or more humane management techniques makes for the best long-term outcome. Once the population has decreased, some techniques may be discontinued while others remain in place. Volunteers can be trained to help!

BASIC INFORMATION

Below are links to several excellent guides – each is extremely comprehensive in detailing specific techniques that should be the basis of goose control efforts. Cornerstones should be landscape modification, egg oiling, clean up and education.

1. Link to Friends of Animals' 20-page Habitat Modification Manual written by an ornithologist:
https://www.friendsofanimals.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Goose-Habitat1.pdf

2. Friends of Animals' article
https://www.friendsofanimals.org/news/the-best-way-to-live-in-harmony-with-canada-geese/

3. Link to 10-page general overview and planning guide from GeesePeace and Humane

Society of The United States:
http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/wild_neighbors/canada_goose_guide.pdf

4. Link to 16-page protocol specifically dealing with egg addling (oil treatment to prevent eggs from hatching):
http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/WILD_Goose_Egg_Addling_Protocol.pdf

5. Link to a comprehensive 61-page Urban and Suburban Goose Habitat Modification Source Book:
https://www.animalalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Goose_Manual-Habitat-Modification.pdf

6. This is one of the best and most effective efforts - a role model community for non-lethal goose population management is the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, Canada. The goose management program was developed with the help of Environment Canada, the federal government. The Okanagan Valley is a major tourist area, it is Canada's California, climate and geography-wise, and it is about the same size as the state of NJ. They have about 2500 non-permanent, resident Canada geese. During the past 14 years, more than 17,000 eggs have been prevented from hatching through this minimally invasive approach. Key to the success of the program is finding new nests, and the public is asked to report lone geese, pairs of geese, or nest locations on private or public land. Here is a link below to the 2019 program with extensive information: http://www.okanagangooseplan.com/content/

GUIDELINE AND TIMEFRAME

This timeline gives you an idea of the kind of results that can be accomplished and that you can use as a guideline. This is what GeesePeace was able to achieve when communities followed their recommendations:

The First Year
With a dedicated campaign and effort, parks and recreation areas should experience a reduction in the numbers of geese and related conflict by Memorial Day, with many/most geese gone by mid June. There may be an increased number of geese in September, when the early geese hunting season begins, driving the resident geese from the rural areas into the cities, if this happens in your location.

The Next Years
After three years, there should be a dramatic reduction in geese numbers in the area during the nesting period. The juvenile geese (under three years old) that were hatched in the area before your plan began will have found another place to nest because they will have learned that the area where they hatched is not a good place to nest or molt. The geese who originally nested in the area will continue to do so, but will leave soon after the nesting season ends (early May) and start on a molt migration by early June. After three years, the site

aversion component of your plan can be reduced to cover only the period of early May to the first or second week in June. In some instances where feeding geese has totally stopped, the site aversion aspect may not be necessary at all or only needed just to remind the geese it's time to get moving. The geese will have learned that the earlier they begin their molt migration, the better it is for them since they know they cannot molt in your area and in previous years they have found an alternative place to molt, possibly a great distance away.

Each year there may still be geese in the area if nests were missed. The presence of these few geese will be a positive addition to the natural areas. In the following year, they too will join the molt migrant flocks.

Less Effort Each Year

As more and more communities/areas implement an egg oiling program, the resident Canada goose population will be stabilized with a significant reduction in the numbers staying in the area during the spring, summer and fall as more and more of the resident geese will go on a molt migration because they do not have goslings keeping them in the program area. The molt is, in part, nature's way of keeping the parents with the babies, after all.

DEFINITION OF WILD GEESE VS. RESIDENT GEESE

Canada geese are waterfowl with 6 specific subspecies that are native to all of North America. These birds originally hatched in Canada and normally migrated south in fall and winter to the United States, returning to their nesting grounds for breeding season in spring and summer as part of their normal pattern.

Wild geese will generally leave once their feathers have regrown and their young have gotten their final flight feathers. No matter how many may stop in the area in spring and summer, come fall, they will leave. This is why it is not only heartless to kill these geese, but it is a waste of money, since they will be on their way anyway.

Resident geese, on the other hand, have a different orientation. These are the geese whose ancestors were stocked in the area after previous generations had been wiped out. Migration is a learned behavior – it is not instinctive. Young geese learn to migrate from their parents. Resident geese were transplanted to the area but without adults to teach them, never learned this skill. So once again, this is not their fault, WE did this to them. They fly, of course, but primarily, they will migrate around to local areas. While both wild and resident geese will benefit from lowering their populations, it is the only way resident geese numbers will decline. Some may migrate with their wild cousins, but most will likely stay.

EDUCATION AS A COMPONENT OF GOOSE MANAGEMENT

Education, through informative signage and public outreach efforts to explain the potential harm feeding can cause geese, is most successful. This cannot be understated as a critical

component to the success of this plan. The public is, to a large degree, responsible for the problem, and they need to learn about these animals, learn to care about them, and become actively invested in their well-being.

Providing a kiosk in the park, where visitors can learn more about geese behavior and biology and why feeding is not recommended, has proven to work. This can also be supplemented by having volunteers at tables with informative flyers and displays at community events. The use of peer pressure can serve as another important tool to discourage people from feeding geese—enlisting volunteers from the community to pamphlet visitors to the park and speaking at local schools and town meetings are great ways to spread the word.

This can be done in fun, interactive ways. A presentation within the school to teach children not to feed geese is another option. Children can then teach their parents and grandparents why wildlife is best kept wild – which helps expose children to the natural world, a world to which they are increasingly disconnected. Ordinances to regulate feeding may also help raise public awareness, but past experience has shown that people have a more positive response to educational efforts rather than unexplained feeding bans. In general, if you can get people to become engaged and CARE, they will almost always want to do the right thing.

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

There are always new inventions being developed to deal with animal issues, as more communities are moving away from killing, which does not work as a long-term deterrent and tends to divide people in the community. Below are some of the new things being used that you may want to look into to augment your plan.

SPECIAL DETERRENT GRASS:

An interesting development is a hybrid grass called FlightTurf® - this grass helps to deter Canada geese, other waterfowl, and wild animals such as deer from populating areas where they are not wanted, like airports (and possibly also parks, community developments, golf courses), as an alternative to killing. The animals do not stay because they don't like the taste of the grass and don't want to eat it. FlightTurf® also prevents Lyme Disease and doesn't require much mowing. This product is extremely promising as part of a comprehensive program.

USDA Wildlife Services has not endorsed FlightTurf® because they say they have not studied it. However, they certainly have had ample opportunity to do so because 160 acres have been successfully planted at Erie International Airport. There are quite a few airports that wanted to use it, but the USDA did not approve. USDA refuses to cooperate because they derive revenue from massacres of native wild animals. The FAA **HAS** approved its use, because they don't want air collisions with wild animals.

You can follow FlightTurf® on Facebook (FlightTurf.com, as well as the business name, Native Return, LLC), and follow Native Return® on Twitter, etc. Here is the contact information:

Christina Kobland, President
Jon Roddick Sales & Inquiries PH: 832-247-4311 EMAIL: jon@flighturf.com

FlightTurf®
1527 Commercial Way
Santa Cruz, CA 95065

WEBSITE: www.FlightTurf.com

NOTE: Grass sprays can deter geese, but they need to be reapplied often and some contain ingredients suspected of being carcinogens.

TECHNOLOGY:
As for new technologies, lasers and drones are now being used to get geese to depart without having to resort to killing them. Below are articles from Canada where this is being tried successfully, in some cases, as an alternative to using dogs to chase the birds.

LASERS -
http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/laser-scarecrow-geese-1.3714454

DRONES -
"Drone acts as goose buster in Nelson"
http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/drones-chase-geese-nelson-1.3746142

"Canadians Find Another Use for Drones: Chasing Geese"
https://www.wsj.com/articles/canadians-find-another-use-for-drones-chasing-geese-1439510869

"Bird-scaring drone saving seed crops in the Ord Valley"
http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-19/bird-scaring-drone-saving-ord-valley-seed-crops/7852742

A word about using dogs to harass the geese – these are usually Border Collies or other dogs with strong herding instincts that have been trained to work with handlers to chase and generally harass the birds into leaving because they don't feel safe. There are a number of goose management companies that do this and this forms the main, in some cases the ONLY, control method they offer. Dog harassment by itself is no solution and only stresses the birds, which only leave temporarily. Without a comprehensive complete program, this is not going to be effective. Also, needless to say, unless someone is trained to do this, and their dog is trained to do this, no one should be siccing their dog on geese!

CLEAN-UP OPTIONS

Clean-up is a core element of goose management. The real problem people have with geese is their droppings.

There are excellent community options for clean-up programs. This could be done by volunteers, perhaps with a breakfast or lunch bonus or gift card (active seniors or retirees or after school extra credit project). Alternatively, this could be done as community service for minor offenses. Goose droppings make excellent fertilizer so another option is to have it processed and packaged locally into fertilizer that can be sold in the community to help fund these programs.

There are goose poop clean-up machines that clean up the droppings. This device could be rented out and shared with adjacent communities to recoup some of the cost and also benefit other locations – this is the link to their website (look for the Tow and Collect series of models): https://towandfarm.com/us/

A handy mechanic could likely rig up something similar.

HEATH ISSUES AND GEESE AS FOOD

In this next section, we provide educational information on two issues most frequently mentioned to the public to get them onboard with goose roundups and killing: health dangers from goose droppings and food pantries. This is because these two issues get to the root of what matters to people: 1) terroristic health fears and 2) being able to feel good about killing the geese because at least they will be helping the poor.

HEALTH RISKS FROM GEESE

There is NO bacterium that presents any problem to humans in goose poop. There are DNA tests today that can prove with absolute certainty where bacteria are coming from; NO PLACE should be killing anything without doing this. How the Canada goose metamorphosed into a "major health threat" is a case study in manipulation of public attitudes. It has been done through a series of wrong inferences, insinuation, exaggeration, and omission. It appears to be [a] full-time, on-going project at taxpayer expense. The problem is local health officials can insinuate the geese may be a health threat and the USDA takes that at face value without requiring any evidence.

Eva Ries, Florida Master Naturalist, addresses the issue of goose poop being harmful in her article about one of the recent goose roundup/killings articles (Boston, MA area):

"To call geese feces unhealthy and unsafe is one of the most unprofessional and biased pieces of sensationalist "journalism" I've seen so far on this situation. Does anyone know what a DNA fingerprint study is and why it's used? Let me educate those who don't: it helps to determine the sources of bacterial loads, namely coliform bacteria and in NO case has any study registered higher than a 38% trace to waterfowl. This means 62% of contributing factors are man-made, even when the microbes are carried through local inland flooding (leaking leach fields, agricultural runoff, dog/cat waste pollution, etc). Was a study conducted here? Then there's the matter of the supposed "smell." Avian waste doesn't have the aroma that predator

feces has - geese are vegetarians. The geese feces are actually high-grade fertilizer and will help vegetation grow. The real "problem" here is that people evidently think that every place they wish to go/monopolize must be "safe" for them, and therefore devoid of other living creatures, germs, bacteria, or anything else - even when the problem is of our own making, and not that of other creatures. If you want to live in a sterile "safe" environment, go pitch a tent in the nearest laboratory. Otherwise, stop lying to the public about the real reasons this was done - INTOLERANCE - and not for any scientific or public health reasons. It's time to be honest about why humans are habitually extirpating, persecuting, and eliminating other species, and it's all sociological reasons (i.e., we are intolerant and violent towards other species deemed "in our way" or "pests"), so let's finally be honest about that, shall we?"

E.COLI and GEESE

Fact sheet from Boise, ID regarding E. coli, proving goose transmission is extremely minimal.

https://www.cityofboise.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/parks/quinns-pond/general-fecal-bacteriae-coli-questions/?fbclid=IwAR1IHo8d-

The E.coli problem was studied extensively in the Great Lakes area and would apply to any location: The logic of the geese contaminating lake/beach areas with E.coli is completely unsubstantiated. E. coli very likely is more a problem with people and dogs passing waste in the lakes, not the geese. The fact is, no one really knows where the E. coli in the Great Lakes area is coming from, as The Duluth MN News Tribune had reported as far back as 2006 that the bacteria that has forced the closure of many Great Lakes beaches in recent years may not be coming from people, geese, diapers or sewage spills after all, but that it may in fact, be from the sand.

A Central Michigan University report published in the Journal of Great Lakes Research confirms that E. coli can live and thrive in beach sand without a warm-blooded host. It has been widely believed that E. coli could come only from the guts of warm-blooded animals, and that, if found in the environment, there must have been a recent source of excrement from one of those animals. While not necessarily a threat to human health, E. coli has been used as an indicator of other pathogens in the excrement, such as viruses, that could make people ill. But Elizabeth Alm, a Central Michigan University microbiologist, says E. coli is growing in Lake Huron sand with no contribution of fecal matter from people, birds or animals. E. coli even survived winter in the sand and during summer expanded to high numbers for several weeks with no new source, Alm found in her research. **"The source of these bacteria may be resident in the sand," Alm reported. The finding means scientists and public health officials need to find a new indicator for harmful pathogens in the water, Alm and others say. It also could mean that more dangerous organisms may be thriving in the sand. "Geese and gulls and diapers may still be sources of some fecal matter and some E. coli, but we clearly can have E. coli without any of them," Alm said.** "We need to do a lot more research to see what else may be naturalized in the sand."

It's not clear what the original source of the sand-dwelling bacteria was, or even if there was an outside source. The findings echo research in the Twin Ports by University of Minnesota-Duluth biologist Randall Hicks. Hicks, who is using DNA fingerprints to trace the sources of local bacteria, has found in recent summers that bacteria seemed to be naturalizing in the sand and sediment of the harbor.

Wind and waves are the culprits that disrupt the bacteria in the sand and bring it in contact with people. Beach monitoring programs then pick it up in water samples and post beaches as closed. That's happening every summer now along the waterfront of the Duluth-Superior harbor where E. coli problems are chronic and some waterfront areas remain posted most of the summer for people to stay away.

"They (bacteria) seem to do just fine in the sand and sediment, out of the sunlight, if nothing disturbs them. We don't know how long they've been down there or how they got started," said Heidi Bauman, who leads the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Lake Superior beach monitoring program. "It backs up what they found in Chicago recently where the bacteria in the sand were higher than in the water. So they dug out the sand and brought in new sand and within a few weeks the bacteria levels were right back up."

Alm's tests on Lake Huron were conducted in the "swash" area where waves wash onto the sand — also the area where people have the most contact with sand and water. "It means we're going to have to come up with a better way of determining if the water is safe or not," Alm said.

Contacts

For information about the Journal of Great Lakes Research, contact Stephanie Guildford, Scientific Co-Editor, Large Lakes Observatory, University Minnesota Duluth, 2205 East Fifth Street, Duluth, Minnesota, 55812-2401; llo.jglr@gmail.com; (218) 726-8064.

Original Publication Information

Results of this study "Persistence and Potential Growth of the Fecal Indicator Bacteria, *Escherichia coli*, in Shoreline Sand at Lake Huron," are reported by Elizabeth Wheeler Alm, Janice Burke and Erin Hagan in the latest issue (Volume 32, No. 2, pp. 401-405) of the Journal of Great Lakes Research, published by the International Association for Great Lakes Research, 2006.

For more information about the study, contact Elizabeth Alm, Department of Biology, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan 48859; alm1ew@cmich.edu; (989) 774-2503.

OTHER HEALTH ISSUES AND GEESE

Dr. Timothy Ford, professor at the Harvard School of Public Health and author of "Microbiological Safety of Drinking Water: United States and Global Perspective 1999," states: *"Numbers of Cryptosporidium oocysts associated with Canada geese and waterfowl in general*

are likely to be MINIMAL, UNIMPORTANT RELATIVE TO THE POTENTIAL for oocysts shed from other forms of wildlife and humans. IN MY MIND, THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY THAT THE Canada goose will ever be a major route of infection. To suggest otherwise is utterly ludicrous and you can quote me." Ref: https://www.umass.edu/sphhs/person/faculty/timothy-e-ford

Dr. Milton Friend, former director, Wildlife Research Center Waterfowl Disease U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is adamant: *"On occasion we have been wading in that stuff [feces], dead birds up to our elbows... THERE IS NOT A SINGLE DOCUMENTED CASE of any of us coming down with any kind of a disease problem as a result of Canada geese... WE DO NOT HAVE A HUMAN HEALTH SITUATION, NOT IN THE URBAN GOOSE, NOT IN THE WILD GOOSE, NOT IN THE CAPTIVE GEESE that we have also worked with. We do have a lot of diseases out there that can affect people. Most of them come from different places and do not come from the Canada goose and I'll leave you with that."* Ref: https://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/staff/milton_friend.jsp

And David S. Adam, Coordinator of Health Projects, Vector Control, Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program for the State of New Jersey Department of Health, writes: *"Giardia lamblia, as well as Cryptosporidium, is most commonly transmitted to humans by person-to-person fecal-oral contamination or by water fecally contaminated by humans or other mammals. Infection is usually asymptomatic with children infected more frequently than adults, often in the day-care setting. In summary, the role of Canada geese in the transmission of Cryptospordium or Giardia to humans is not well established, but APPEARS TO BE SMALL COMPARED TO OTHER MODES OF TRANSMISSION."* Mr. Adams adds that Canada geese have been wrongly blamed for beach closings: *"A number of beach closings including several in New Jersey have been attributed to this cause [high fecal coliform counts attributed to Canada geese]. However, research on this subject (including surveillance conducted in New Jersey) has usually found very low levels of pathogenic bacteria such as Salmonella sp. in the feces of waterfowl not exposed to human sewage effluent."*

Giardia sp., is common throughout the world. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that prevalence is higher in areas of poor sanitation and in institutions where children are not toilet-trained. The CDC lists "institutions and day-care centers as the principle mode of spread." Principle reservoirs are listed as "humans, possibly beaver and domestic animals" -- GEESE AREN'T EVEN MENTIONED.

In animals, Crytosporidiosis is found almost exclusively in newborn puppies and kittens. Even then, "there has been no transmission to humans." (CDC, June 1999.)

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOMS, SEPTIC TANKS AND GEESE

Goose droppings are only a minor factor in Blue Green Algae, as these articles indicate. In some articles, they aren't even mentioned at all. Other conditions must be in place for this to happen and are more contributory to this issue than geese:

http://www.neagle.com/news/20160725/lake-wallenpaupack-water-in-good-shape

http://www.goerie.com/news/20170717/tracking-harmful-algae-in-erie-area-waters

https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/09/blue-green-algae-iridescent-but-deadly/261794/

http://marionrecord.com/direct/goose_poop_a_cause_or_result_of_algae_blooms_+4848poop+476f6f736520706f6f703a204120636175736520f7220726573756c74206f6620616c6761652062626c6f6f6d733

With regard to Septic Tank issues, below are 5 links to various articles concerning the relative harmlessness of goose droppings. According to Sheila Bolin, world-renowned conservationist and waterfowl and swan expert, in almost every situation where goose feces are blamed for any water problems, the common elements are sewer treatment plants or more likely, septic tanks. As of the 1990's septic tanks are supposed to be pumped out every 3 years, but this is not being done. Calling the EPA to investigate your community's septic tanks will likely reveal that they are the problem and not geese. In each of these articles, goose droppings are used in the heading but septic tanks turn out to be the main problem.

1–https://www.postandcourier.com/news/charleston-floodwaters-are-crawling-with-unsafe-levels-of-poop-bacteria/article_9a120c08-5780-11e8-b5eb-4b448c32fc94.html

2 – https://q13fox.com/2017/08/11/goosed-again-local-beach-closes-for-fecal-contamination/

3 - https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgxwBVWMvxlqpzWnZWLhmDnxgtdGZ?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1

4 – https://m.phys.org/news/2015-08-septic-tanks-poo-rivers-lakes.html

5 – https://www.theolympian.com/news/local/article151494062.html

DONATING GEESE TO FOOD PANTRIES

The truth is, while the public may be told that the meat is being donated, it is virtually always thrown in landfills. The liability of feeding toxin-filled meat to a poor population that already has compromised immune systems is why no reputable food pantry will take this meat. Recently, there has been a trend to try to donate the goose meat to zoos or wildlife facilities to feed animals, which indicates some concern that there are indeed potential health issues for

humans inherent in this process. Even zoos and wildlife rehabbers do not want to take it because their animals can get sick. No one wants or likes goose meat. Because of this and the toxin issue, why do you think they are foisted off on the poor? Leadership promotes this to make it sound like killing the geese is acceptable as long as they feed the poor, but it is about as charitable as a murderer donating the organs of his victims to a transplant lab.

Making this even worse is the current situation of the covid-19 virus and the cutbacks in meat and poultry processing places - with so many closed and unable to do their job safely, who would risk processing goose meat and potentially spreading covid-19 into the food chain?

"As for the issue of food pantries, this is a comment from a NY wildlife rehabilitator and it is one of the best responses to this issue, in addition to the facts of cost inefficiency and lack of testing of goose carcasses, etc. perhaps because it addresses the ETHICS of feeding the geese to the poor more than the biology, which the average person doesn't really understand: *The idea that we are "feeding the hungry" also makes about as much sense as going into the local zoo and killing the bears, lions and cougars and saying that it's okay because they will be fed to the poor. If people are homeless, poor and/or hungry, that is one issue. We do not have to destroy our wildlife to feed the hungry. Defending our wildlife is one important value. Caring for our poor and homeless is another important value -- but they are not related. It would be like saying that everyone should take their dog or cat and have it killed to feed the homeless or disadvantaged, otherwise they are just selfish."*

For both safety testing and cost, many if not most food banks will not accept goose meat. This is a statistic from a goose roundup in New York City several years ago, from Mary E. Brosnahan, Executive Director for Coalition for the Homeless in NYC, when the carcasses were sent to Pennsylvania for processing. No one could ever get the name of the processing facility, and this was never done again. She stated: "*From the 575 geese killed by the USDA from New York City parks whereby a food bank in Pennsylvania only got 425 pounds of meat - less than a chicken's breast worth of meat on average, the USDA s fee to roundup our Canada geese was approximately $9.53 per goose. It cost the Bend, Oregon park district $15 per bird to process their mass-killed geese at a slaughterhouse. The cost thus far is $24.53 (!) for less-than-a pound of goose meat. This cost does not include the federal inspection and proper testing for possible contaminants (if that was even done). If not done, then Westchester NY food banks that accepted goose meat participated in a dangerous double standard in which poor men, women and children (ate) unregulated and insufficiently inspected flesh.*" The Director of Coalition for the Homeless in NYC objects to the slaughtered geese going to their food banks on the basis of endangering the health of these people.

Wild waterfowl species may be highly contaminated with PCB's and other environmental toxins, especially the geese who visit local urban parks and golf courses, and the NYC Health Department urges that people do not partake in more than two meals of goose meat per month.
http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/fish/health_advisories/advice_on_eating_game.htm

Birmingham, Alabama Food Banks rejected goose meat, stating that the geese habitat at the city parks provided the biggest risks for the food bank, as they were unsure about what the geese had ingested, such as insecticides and pesticides – http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2011/07/food_bank_turns_down_meat_from.html

Canada considers its own geese unfit for consumption, even by the poverty-stricken, and, says Gail Nyberg, director of Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank (Canada's largest), the meat tastes bad. *"If I won't eat them, I won't serve them -- and I won't eat them. Just because someone is low-income, I don't think we should ask them to eat something that most Canadians wouldn't eat."*
http://blogs.riverfronttimes.com/gutcheck/2011/06/canada_goose_homeless

A Wisconsin veterinarian who has done research into this issue in his state for a legal case makes the following remarks:

"Government officials publicizing that Canada Goose meat is used to feed the poor in a quasi act of "charity" is simply propaganda spread by state agencies that continue to violate their own laws:

1. Meat inspection laws prohibit slaughterhouses that hold a POULTRY LICENSES from taking in and slaughtering wild caught geese.

2. Poultry is defined by the fact that the birds destined for slaughter were raised under "controlled conditions," that is, on a farm or otherwise known environment.

3. These restrictions were implemented to prohibit "clean" slaughtering facilities from processing animals that may carry unknown contaminants and bacteria that are hazardous to humans.

Such contaminations are almost guaranteed to happen where wild Canada Geese are slaughtered and meat-grinded (!) , using the same facilities and machines that are also used to process meat from farm animals (meat grinders are hard to clean and disinfect as it is.). Wild waterfowl naturally harbors a large spectrum of potentially harmful bacteria/toxins on their feathers and/or skin surface because they frequent dirty ponds, streams and other human-contaminated water sources. When their meat is put through a grinder to create "goose burgers," all of these bacteria and contaminants will enter the muscle fibers and the bacteria explosively multiply in such an environment.

4. USDA only tests a very small fraction of goose meat for toxins, e.g. lead, mercury etc. BUT NO BACTERIAL SAMPLES and CULTURES are tested. Needless to say, lucky the customer who buys "hamburger patties" or sausages from such a facility that illegally processed Canada Goose burger the day before.

The above is intended to present a short explanation as to where the truth lies, I could go a lot further with this and it would get a lot more disgusting. I did a lot of work investigating the criminal conduct of some agencies. When I looked into the actual use of goose burgers at

a local food bank that was praised as feeding the homeless, I learned that: a) they received only a small fraction of the geese that were massacred, and b) there was basically no demand for goose meat; that is, people in need had no interest in receiving meat from massacred wild geese. It is also a fact that some people died of complications from infections with enteric bacteria in Wisconsin. The agencies in charge were never able to determine the source. These victims were not homeless and included young children, so they did not knowingly consume goose burgers. Of course, there are many possibilities and one of them is that they consumed products from a contaminated facility." Dr. J. Luebow

A RECOMMENDED GOOSE MANAGEMENT EXPERT

Lastly, the most successful goose expert in humane management is David Feld, who runs GeesePeace. It is worth a call to see if he can help. He only helps if asked by the community leadership (i.e., the actual decision makers) and he will come out to assess the situation at little or no cost. Following is an article detailing Feld's work on a specific project:

GeesePeace is available to offer nuisance abatement advice to those community leaders who request help. New GeesePeace programs begin around December or January to begin coordination activities between neighboring communities and outreach to stakeholders organizations. Discussions with GeesePeace can begin at any time.

David Feld, National Program Director, Direct contact cell phone: 703 608 2274
Email: mdavidfeld@gmail.com

TVO-Never Stop Learning/Ontario, Canada

Ontario doesn't have a goose problem. It has a bureaucracy problem.

By Tim Alamenciak
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Dogs, drones, fireworks and freighters – every municipality seems to have its own solution to geese. Why don't we have one that's province-wide?

Canada geese are a nuisance in municipalities across the province, but we're a long way from getting rid of them. (PentaxFanatiK/Creative Commons)

The Canada geese come back from their winter retreats every year, and every year they pester pedestrians, pollute waters with their droppings, and impel municipalities across Ontario to look for new ways to get rid of them.

In Mississauga, Oakville, and Toronto, wildlife officers bundle geese off to rural areas every year. In Ottawa, city council has turned to drones in hopes that they'll scare the geese off. Other cities have hired trained dogs, and used lasers and pyrotechnics. But there is no cohesive, province-wide approach to the goose problem.

But in the Lake Barcroft area of Virginia, a residents' group came up with a solution nearly 20 years ago — and although it's since been exported to communities across the U.S. and the U.K., it hasn't gained a foothold in Canada.

Geese had infested the 160-acre lake just outside Washington, D.C., in 1998. The issue was tearing the community apart, pitting animal-rights activists against beachgoers who just wanted to enjoy geese-free sands.

"I'm an engineer, I like to solve problems," says David Feld, director of GeesePeace, a non-profit that helps geese-ridden communities in need. "Look, we went to the moon — let's see if we can solve this problem without destroying our community in the process. We'll solve it and do it in a way that doesn't move our problem to somebody else, that doesn't hurt the geese."

Feld dug into the science of goose behaviour to pinpoint their weak spots — and he found that timing is everything.

What's good for the goose, gander, and human?

The GeesePeace approach works in two main steps. First, goose eggs are placed in a bucket of water. Eggs that sink are then coated with corn oil, which halts the development of the embryo by filling in the pores of the eggshell and preventing oxygen from getting in. (Eggs that float contain embryos that are too far along in their development and are left alone.) The geese will sit on the oiled eggs for about three weeks before realizing something is amiss, at which point it'll be too late in the year for them to lay another clutch.

The second step is to scare the geese away from areas where they run afoul of humans before they can shed their flight feathers. Geese need a safe place to molt in the spring, because the process renders them flightless for eight weeks afterwards. Feld says it's best to scare them off when they're searching for a hideout, because the wary birds will fly to safer, more isolated areas. It's also vital to ensure people don't feed the geese, as that can work against attempts to scare them off.

"It works all the time," he says. "Zero failures. The only time it fails is when you stop doing it. You do the program, like cutting the grass, you've got to do it every year. It gets easier and easier every year. We turned it into a recreation activity. We trained people to do it, and we have a group of five or six people. After we solved it in our community, my next step was to make sure we're not moving our problem elsewhere."

Feld and the team at GeesePeace have travelled around the U.S. and across the Atlantic to teach their system. The two-step approach has succeeded in oceanfront towns like Oyster Bay, New York, and in historic Stratford-upon-Avon, U.K., where residents sought to preserve the local swan population while getting rid of the geese.

Municipalities flying out of formation

Every Ontarian has had a run-in with a goose, or at least with its droppings, yet complaints about them typically come too late in the season and are forgotten about by the next year. Municipalities enact short-term measures without looking for permanent solutions, and each government approaches the problem with pilot programs, as if tackling it for the first time ever.

"We don't have a goose problem, we have a human management problem," says Vernon Thomas, professor emeritus of integrative biology at the University of Guelph. "You have to get your act together at the start of the new year to get things operating by the first second week of March at the latest. That's when those birds start looking for nesting sites."

Canada geese haven't always been a problem in southern Ontario — they nearly disappeared from the area altogether just 55 years ago, according to Environment and Climate Change Canada. The population boomed owing to reintroduction, and to humans unwittingly building ideal goose habitats: mowed lawns and manicured parks, and large waterfronts with plenty of food and lots of debris to build their nests on. Today there are around 7 million Canada geese in North America.

"The goose is a remarkably adaptable animal," Thomas says. "We have created conditions that favour its propagation. Every parkland area is mowed to about an inch and a half, it is irrigated and fertilized. This is a six-star restaurant to a goose. The municipalities react to the problem when it becomes apparent, at which point it's too late to do anything for that year."

Daniel Moro, project manager with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, says municipalities shouldn't simply scare geese far enough away to make them someone else's concern. "The biggest problem is, where would these birds get pushed to?" he says. "How far do we keep pushing these birds?"

The TRCA, instead of foisting geese on neighbouring communities, trucks the birds from the Toronto waterfront to willing hosts across Ontario — including Amherstburg, Morrisburg, and Long Point conservation area. Mississauga and Oakville ship their birds to the Aylmer Wildlife Reserve. Moro says 10 percent of them fly home immediately, but the remainder tend to stay away, and each year fewer return to the waterfront.

Feld agrees that pushing the birds from town to town is a flawed strategy. That's why GeesePeace is a regional program, he says — and why Ontario's enduring goose-control problem is more about coordination than it is about the birds themselves.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario, an umbrella organization for the province's municipalities, says its members haven't asked for a broad, province-wide solution.

"I think municipal governments want to make sure that they have the flexibility to manage geese using methods that are both effective in their communities and supported in their communities," says Pat Vanini, executive director of AMO. "If a best-practice comes along, municipal governments will gravitate toward that approach. In the meantime, different municipal governments are using the approaches that they feel are right for their communities."

The issue of jurisdiction makes coordinating goose-banishing efforts more complicated. Canada geese are federal birds, regulated by the Migratory Birds Convention Act, which falls under the purview of the federal government. Municipalities looking to oil eggs or take other measures against geese first have to obtain a permit from the Canadian Wildlife Service — an onerous process that requires them to come up with a full-fledged, long-term management proposal.

"The wildlife don't care about jurisdictions," Feld says. "It's not a matter of economic resources — they don't need a lot. What they need is leadership, cooperation and coordination. If they do that, they'll be successful."

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https://tvo.org/article/current-affairs/climate-watch/ontario-doesnt-have-a-goose-problem-it-has-a-bureaucracy-problem