



# Home owners guide to Canada Goose Management

2009/2010

## Canada Goose overview

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The “resident” or non-migratory Canada goose is widespread and prolific in many communities. Resident geese have been very successful partly due to the excellent habitat offered by urban and suburban landscapes: an abundance of lush manicured lawns, landscaped water bodies, food handouts from people, and relative protection from predators and hunters.

Many times, large or concentrated goose populations raise concerns about risks to human health and safety and also damage to property. Common problems include excessive accumulations of feces, nesting season aggression, and generally impeding the public’s ability to enjoy properties such as parks for their intended use.

Wildlife Services recommends using an Integrated Wildlife Damage Management approach, in which multiple techniques are employed to reduce damage. This approach may include cessation of any waterfowl feeding, removal of domestic waterfowl, habitat management, harassment, and nesting control. In some situations, limited lethal removal is approved and or a goose round up can be done by Wildlife Services (See page 3).

### Special points of interest:

- *Canada Geese are considered a migratory species that is protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty act.*
- *NH has a Canada goose hunting season available by license and the duck stamp. See Fish and Game website at [www.Huntnh.com](http://www.Huntnh.com).*

## Harassment of Geese on Landowners Property

Harassment of Geese on your property can take many forms. Harassment of geese with pyrotechnics, propane cannons, trained dogs, vehicles, horns, and other devices can be effective in reducing goose damage. Success depends on the technique, nature of the problem, the number and habits of geese present, and the timing and diligence of the harassment.

In general, the best results are obtained when harassment is initiated as soon as the problem is detected. Also, it is necessary to vary the location of devices and use more than one harassment device each day to avoid habituation. Harassment can be more effective when there are multiple property owners in a local setting who are working together. This coordinated harassment may discourage a nuisance flock from flying from one property to the next. A community approach can make the difference.



## Harassment continued



**Important Safety Rule: Pyrotechnic launchers and pyrotechnics should be treated with respect and handled as if they are firearms, with the potential to cause injury and death.**



Being less accustomed to disturbance, migratory geese may be more responsive to harassment than resident geese.

### Types of Harassment:

Pyrotechnics are noise-making devices shot from a starter pistol (e.g., screamer sirens, bird bangers). The discharge of pyrotechnics may be prohibited in some areas, as they have the potential to start fires, ricochet off buildings, pose traffic hazards, cause dogs to bark excessively, and may injure or disturb people. Another form of noise harassment is the use of boat horns. Critter Gitters have had some success. These are motion-activated devices that emit a loud siren. In some cases Wildlife Services can lend some harassment devices depending on the situation.

### Visual Deterrents

These techniques are very cost-effective, safe, readily obtainable, quiet and convenient, and can be easily implemented with other harassment.

Habituation to visual deterrents is normal and they should be moved periodically.

Mylar is a reflective tape that is silver on one side and red on the other. It is available in various widths, and is used as a perimeter “fence” using the 1/2-inch width tape attached to stakes around the boundary of the protected area. Mylar should be twisted and left somewhat slack to permit movement in the wind. It is attached to wooden stakes that are pushed into the ground so the tape is approximately 2 feet above the ground.

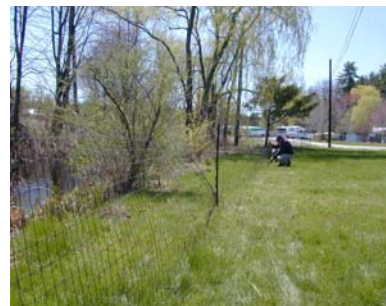
Other methods include the use of balloons, windmills and garbage bags to deter geese from entering an area or dock.

### Exclusion and Habitat Management

Habitat modification is considered a long term management practice involving altering vegetation to reduce its attractiveness.

Geese are grazers, and prefer to feed on short grass in areas that are open and within sight of water. Long grass management is maintaining grass at approximately 10 inches, so that tender new growth is not easily browsed. Cutting the grass before seed heads form is advisable.

Fences should be sturdy, affixed to the ground, and completely encircle the area to be protected. Fences can be made of chicken wire, snow fence, dense hedges or tall vegetation. Fences should be 3-5 feet tall, and installed by March to deter geese before nesting and molting.



## Nesting Removal

A recent regulation change by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) now allows private landowners, public land managers, and local governments the opportunity to treat or destroy resident Canada goose nests and eggs on their properties from March 1 to June 30. A permit is no longer required to treat or destroy nests or eggs. However you will be required to register online with the USFWS. [www.fws.gov/permits/mbpermits/GooseEggRegistration.html](http://www.fws.gov/permits/mbpermits/GooseEggRegistration.html), or go to [www.fws.gov/permits](http://www.fws.gov/permits) and click on “New: Resident Canada Goose Nest Egg Registration.”

There are multiple methods of coating the eggs so that the geese believe they will hatch. Please call our office for more information and a separate information sheet on the methods used. Reminder: Geese will act aggressively to defend their nests and caution should be taken when approaching and handling a nest. Wildlife Services can be reached at: 603-223-6832.



## Lethal Removal

Occasional shooting of a few geese may improve the effectiveness of other harassment efforts. A Federal permit is required. Shooting may be impractical and/or prohibited in most urban and suburban goose damage situations, due to safety concerns, local noise/discharge ordinances, and adjacent land uses.

Consult with your municipal offices, and local police departments to determine if shooting could be implemented on your site. Applications for depredation permits are available from USFWS. You must contact Wildlife Services at the above number.

NH has a goose hunting season where a duck stamp and a state hunting license are required. See NH Fish and Game website for more details.



## Goose Roundups

This method is used after all other available methods have failed. Wildlife Services will round up geese, remove them from the site and euthanize and then donate the meat to a wildlife rehabilitator. The cost of the service is dependent on a multitude of factors. This method should only be considered after all other methods have been tried. This method is used at the discretion of Wildlife Services, as not all sites are conducive to a goose round up. For more information or for questions please contact Wildlife Services at 603-223-6832.



PLEASE DO NOT FEED  
GEESE, DUCKS, OR  
OTHER WATERFOWL



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## Wildlife Services and Goose Management

### Protecting Human Health and Safety From Canada Geese—

An estimated 20,000 Canada geese reside in the State. Although people enjoy observing geese, conflicts often develop as feces accumulate, overgrazing damages landscaping, and aggressive geese attack humans. WS assists over 70 state residents and businesses annually through advice, equipment, and local population reduction projects.

### USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

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### USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Hampshire

Every day, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on Wildlife Services (WS) in New Hampshire for expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS responds with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

New Hampshire's landscape is a diverse mix of urban, suburban, and rural environments with forests and agricultural lands hosting an equally wide array of wildlife. WS' work reflects that diversity. WS cooperates with State and Federal officials, municipalities, industry, and individuals to prevent game animal damage to fruit, row crops and livestock; protects property; guards natural resources from wildlife depredation; reduces wildlife hazards to aviation; protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management.

Specific projects conducted in New Hampshire by WS include: mitigating bear-human interactions; protecting endangered piping plovers and Karner blue butterflies; conducting sampling and monitoring for rabies, chronic wasting disease, and avian influenza.

