

Canada Goose Management



The Canada Goose (*Branta Canadensis*) is native to Ontario, but was extirpated from southern Ontario in the early 20th century. Increasing areas of preferred habitat and successful reintroduction has caused their populations to rise quickly and migration patterns to change. This increase in population has led to higher instances of conflicts with human activities. Conflicts include aircraft collisions, damage to agricultural crops and lawns, and aggressive behaviour potentially causing injuries. Defecation from large numbers of birds fouls public areas, can reduce water quality, and can be harmful to human health. Areas of concern include beaches, urban parks, farmlands, airports, golf courses, schools, cemeteries and residential properties, especially those near wetlands.

Key Identification Features: Black head and neck, with white cheeks. Tan breast, with light-grey to chocolate-brown flanks. Dark brown or black tail with U-shaped white band on rump. Black bill.

Habitat: The Canada Goose prefers habitats near water and grassy fields. They eat grass and sedges in the spring and summer, and in the fall and winter they rely more on agricultural grains. They generally avoid areas with views obstructed by tall grass or shrubs, as they may disguise predators.



Control Methods: An integrated management approach is recommended to resolve nuisance goose problems. The Canada Goose is federally protected under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*. Permits from the Canadian Wildlife Service are required for many management techniques. At present, the Canada Goose population is not threatened and there is no conservation risk to provide permits to eligible people to reduce damage and danger caused by the geese on their property. More information on population control methods can be found at <http://www.ec.gc.ca/mbc-com/default.asp?lang=En&n=6D2B893B-1>.

Landscape Modification and Barriers:

Creating natural barriers of shrubs and tall grass along shorelines, and physical barriers such as fences makes areas less inviting to Canada Geese. Plastic mesh placed over grass, or grids of wire placed over ponds or new plantings will impede access and discourage use. Mowing lawns less frequently is recommended, along with planting native grasses and shrubs. Habitat modification is often the preferred long term solution.



Scaring: Using techniques to scare geese is most effective if done when they first move to an area. If a Canada Goose is damaging or likely to damage a property, scare techniques such as using dogs, propane cannons, sounds, flagging tape, and scarecrows may be used to scare away geese. Use of firearms, aircraft, or raptors requires a permit.

Do Not Feed Geese: Geese will not abandon a site if their food is supplemented by people and may even alter their migration patterns. Feeding of geese causes overcrowding at unnatural sites, can cause aggression towards people, and human food often causes health problems in waterfowl.



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