

GOOSE TRACKS



Status Report on Humane Canada Goose Management from The Humane Society of the United States

GeesePeace in Stratford-upon-Avon

IN FEBRUARY 2005 GEESEPEACE PRESIDENT DAVID FELD AND VICE President Holly Hazard traveled to Stratford-upon-Avon, England, to conduct workshops and train volunteers in the GeesePeace management program. Stratford-upon-Avon is the first community in the United Kingdom to implement humane methods for the management of resident Canada geese. The following status report was received in August 2005.

Dear Holly and David:

A quick note to thank you for helping us so much with the GeesePeace program and to bring you up to date with where we are.

First for the thanks. We could not have got this program going without your help. If we had tried on our own, we would probably have made a mess of things and given up. So thanks to both of you for showing us that it could be done and then teaching us how to do it ourselves. We will remain eternally grateful to you for it.

Second, how is the program going? The geese have basically cleared off. There were over 100 birds at the Fisherman's Car Park on day one, 28 yesterday, and only nine today. The main part of the river is basically clear of Canada geese.

We have now analyzed the egg oiling data and estimate that there are less than 100 resident Canada geese in our exclusion zone. We only found 31 nests and treated about 180-190 eggs in them. The rest of the Canada geese—about 500 to 600—are out-of-town visitors.

I will keep you updated on progress.

Best wishes.

*Ian G. Heggie
Chairman, Stratford-upon-Avon Society
Treasurer, Town Management Partnership
IRF Counsellor for Road Finance*

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GeesePeace, Inc. (www.geesepeace.org)*



They Asked for It; They Got It

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animal welfare and wildlife groups. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) was instrumental in putting key players together by convincing First Selectman Jim Lash to invite representatives of GeesePeace to present their humane approach to resolving goose conflicts.

Once the town announced on June 1 that there would be no kill that season, GeesePeace demonstrated how well harassment with border collies can work. Two dogs, one on the shore and one in a kayak, did a multiday demonstration to show how geese could be evicted before the molt to alleviate the worst of the conflicts at town parks during the high-use summer season.

In 2006, Greenwich is participating in GeesePeace's full program to manage conflicts, including adding to limit flock growth and harassment. Volunteers were trained in egg oiling at the end of February to kick off the 2006 program.

New U.S. Fish and Wildlife Regulations for Resident Canada Geese

MAGGIE BRASTED, DIRECTOR, URBAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT RESOLUTION, THE HSUS



In September the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's final Canada Geese regulations will take effect.

Long-Awaited Final Regulations Released

After more than three-and-a-half years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released the final version of its plan for managing resident Canada geese in a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in November 2005. Final regulations that turn the plan into specific rules that will have to be followed by anyone dealing with resident geese were recently circulated and will take effect on September 11, 2006.

What's the Final Plan?

The Final EIS and regulations detail what the USFWS plans for resident geese. That plan is to dramatically reduce the population of resident Canada geese and to turn over most management to state wildlife agencies, significantly reducing the federal protections these birds enjoyed for nearly a century. Carrying out this plan means killing hundreds of thousands of geese each year for at least a decade—all in order to reach an arbitrary population number.

Federal wildlife managers' support for outmoded—and unsuccessful—responses to conflicts with wild animals through expanded hunting and other forms of killing contradicts the public's expressed desire for geese conflicts to be resolved humanely. Of the more than 2,900 public comments the USFWS received on the proposed rule to implement this plan, 94 percent opposed lethal methods.

And killing even many geese over a broad area won't resolve the specific conflicts people have where attractive habitat will continue to draw geese.

For adding programs, the plan includes a new Egg and Nest Depredation Order that will remove much of the current paperwork. Instead of permits, property owners and public land managers will register their property at the beginning of the season and report the numbers of nests and eggs treated at the end of the season. The USFWS will use a website for registration and reporting, making signing up a property for adding a matter of a few clicks.

What the New Regulations Look Like

The table on page 3 summarizes the new regulatory scheme for resident Canada geese. Some elements of the new regulations will apply everywhere, but others will apply only in parts of the United States. The USFWS uses Flyway Councils' geographic areas to define where things will be allowed or not.

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They Asked for It; They Got It

Local people demanded humane program for geese; town abandoned plan to kill

Selectman Peter Crumbine said he'd never received so many calls or letters on *any* topic before a proposal to kill 200 Canada geese in Greenwich, Connecticut, hit the local press. Calls and letters asking Greenwich to drop the plan to kill geese in favor of a humane program to deal with goose conflicts in the town's parks have arrived daily. Last spring, public controversy erupted when upscale Greenwich was the first Connecticut municipality to ask the state for permission to kill geese. The town planned to pay the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services to round up the birds during the midsummer molt and kill them.

Local opinions were a key factor in convincing town officials to abandon the plan to kill geese. Residents, the local press, and the local chapter of the National Audubon Society—Audubon Greenwich—came out against killing geese, joining national

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Goose Tracks is published by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) Urban Wildlife Conflict Resolution Program, 2100 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037; 202-452-1100; wildlife@hsus.org. This newsletter is a forum for humane Canada goose management programs and a resource for anyone interested in humane solutions for Canada goose conflicts in North America. Information about humane Canada goose management is also available at www.wildneighbors.org.

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Where Are Things Happening?

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EPA Registers Hatch Control

INNOLYTICS, LLC, RECENTLY ANNOUNCED that its “hatch control” contraceptive for Canada geese, OvoControl™, is now registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). OvoControl formulates a low concentration of nicarbazin, a drug used for decades to control coccidiosis in domestic chickens, into a ready-to-use bait designed in size and taste specifically for geese. Geese who consume the treated bait lay eggs that simply do not develop and hatch.

The EPA registered OvoControl as a restricted use chemical, meaning that it is exclusively for use

by licensed pest control operators. EPA registration may not be the only government approval needed to use OvoControl. Check with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Regional Migratory Bird office for your state and your state wildlife agency for any additional requirements or permits needed.

For more information, call Innolytics at 858-759-8012, visit www.hatchcontrol.com, or e-mail innolytics@cox.net. See *Goose Tracks*, Winter 2004, Vol. 3, Issue 1 for coverage on OvoControl’s development.

One Was Just Never Enough

By JAN HERBERT, PROJECT MANAGER, ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT, ILLINOIS, CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

MANY WHO READ THIS PUBLICATION know about the successful use of lasers for Canada goose management. In Rockford, Illinois, we started by borrowing a unit from our USDA office.

After purchasing a unit, however, we discovered that one laser in a program with three dog handlers, a field supervisor, and many volunteers just wasn’t getting the job done. Unfortunately, the price prohibited us from buying many more. We searched and found others that were half the price of the original, but they technically required a variance from government regulators to use them.

After the smoke settled on that, Field Manager Wayne Bakke eventually led us to the solution for our money-conscious agency. We are now using \$59 lasers, which—because they are so inexpensive—allows everyone in the program to carry one. (We purchased ours at www.z-bolt.com/generic27.html.) Using the best protocols we could find from various studies and programs already using lasers and then adding some refinements of our own, we made the lasers an integral part of our goose management plan.

Because it is not much larger than a fountain pen, we are rarely even asked what we are doing. And if we are asked, people find it hard to believe it will move geese when we show them the unit.

With these lasers we have created yet another



Along with oiling and dogs, lasers have proven to be a humane method of managing Canada geese.

layer of effort combining oiling, dogs, and lasers to prevent geese from diminishing our patrons’ enjoyment of facilities in our district.

When Rockford added laser to our existing program, we had years of adding under our belts, so we are getting very good at “finding” things. In 2005 we located 15 new partners, some who joined the effort with just one nest!

Is it any wonder that the local resident Canada goose population has diminished when nearly 10,000 eggs have been oiled?

The Rockford Park District is the second largest municipal park system in Illinois and serves the communities of Rockford, Loves Park, Cherry Valley, New Milford, and adjacent unincorporated areas of Winnebago County (a population of 202,390).

Year	# Eggs Oiled
2001	1,155
2002	1,732
2003	2,113
2004	2,396
2005	2,157
5-Year Total	9,553

New U.S. Fish and Wildlife Regulations *(continued from page 1)*

Each council’s geographic area approximately corresponds to the areas where migrating populations winter and summer and the places they stop over as they fly between. The councils’ names give a pretty good idea of where each flyway is located: Atlantic, Central, Mississippi, and Pacific.

Check with the USFWS or your state wildlife agency if you’re not sure which flyway you are in.

When the regulations take effect on September 11, 2006, each state wildlife agency will have new discretion on how resident geese are treated in their states. This will be especially the

case in states electing to hold special Canada goose permits, as 18 states already did when the Final EIS was issued. Your state wildlife agency can tell you if it holds or plans to apply for a special Canada goose permit. To find the agency in your state, visit www.fws.gov/offices/statelinks.html.

New Regulatory Scheme for Resident Canada Geese Based on the Final EIS

What	New or Old	Where	Who Implements	What It Is
Expanded hunting methods and opportunities	New	Everywhere except Pacific Flyway	State wildlife agencies	States may allow hunters to use methods that make it easier to attract and kill geese and to hunt after sunset during special resident Canada goose hunting season
Airport Control Order	New	Contiguous (lower) 48 states within 3 miles of any airport or military airfield	USFWS	Airports and military airfields may use any control methods in spring and summer when migrating geese are not likely to be present without getting specific permission
Nest and Egg Depredation Order	New	All states	USFWS	Property owners and managers may addle on their own property without specific permission
Agricultural Depredation Order	New	Everywhere except Pacific Flyway	State wildlife agencies	States may allow farmers to use any control methods in spring and summer when migrating geese are not likely to be present without specific permission; limited to farmer’s own property and to geese eating crops or causing other damage
Public Health Control Order	New	All states	State wildlife agencies	States may use any control methods in spring and summer when migrating geese are not likely to be present and when and where public health agencies recommend, after the health agency determines geese are a specific, immediate human health threat; may not be used for “mere nuisance”
Management take	New	Everywhere except Pacific Flyway	State wildlife agencies	Just like hunting but outside of allowed Migratory Bird Treaty Act hunting seasons and maximum days; states may allow hunters to kill geese “in a hunting like manner” from August 1 through August 31 or shorter period within those dates
Special Canada goose permit	Old	All states eligible; 18 states held permits when the EIS was released	State wildlife agencies	Allows state wildlife agencies to conduct control activities without specific permission; USFWS continues to issue case-by-case depredation permits (see below) in states that do not hold a special permit except for actions eligible under any of the four orders, above
Special and regular hunting season regulatory framework	Old	All states	USFWS sets earliest and latest dates and maximum bag limits; state wildlife agencies may set more restrictive dates and bag limits	Existing sport hunting
Case-by-case depredation permits	Old	All states not holding a special Canada goose permit	USFWS	Existing permits that allow landowners and managers to kill or addle; issued on a case-by-case basis