

Canada Goose Damage Management in Wisconsin



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United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Wildlife Services Mission

“to provide leadership in wildlife damage management in the protection of America’s agricultural, industrial and natural resources, and to safeguard public health and safety.”

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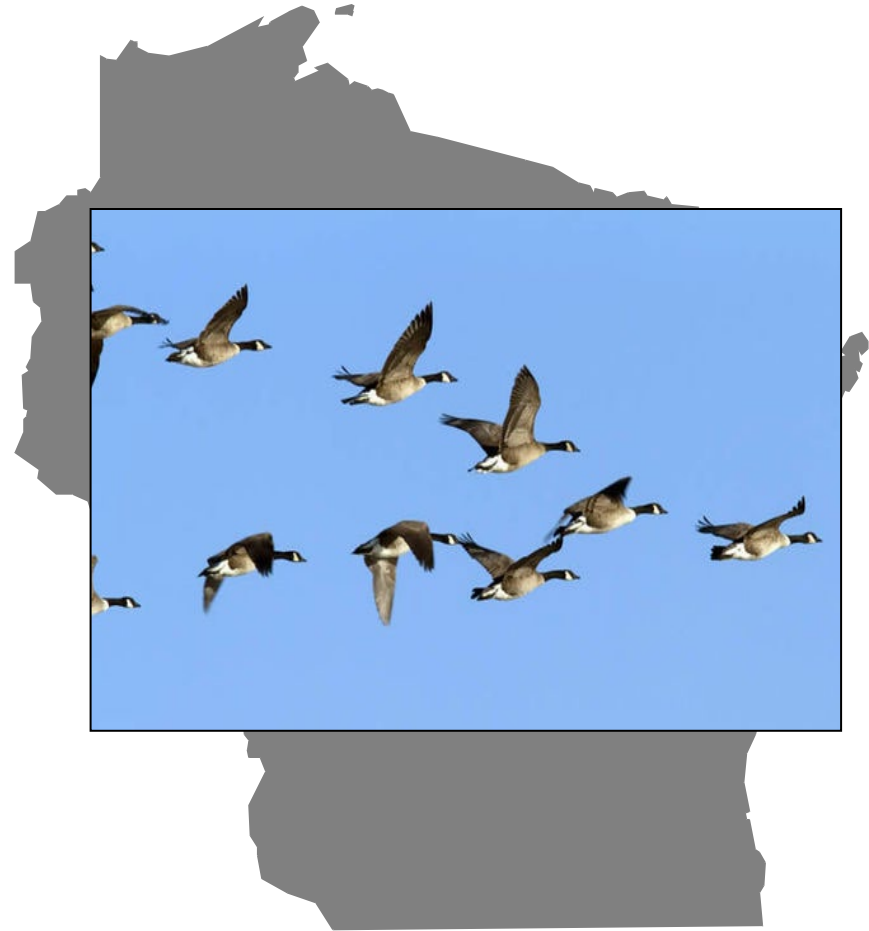


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Canada Goose Biology

Two distinct populations of Canada geese in Wisconsin and separate approaches aimed at their management.

The **migrant** birds pass through in fall and spring more readily to harassment measures.



Canada Goose Biology

The **resident** geese are the birds most associated with nuisance problems since they breed and live in Wisconsin almost year-round. Leave briefly during harsh winter weather.

Productive, average 5 young per nest.

Long lived, 20+ years.

Adapted to live alongside humans.

Return to where learned to fly.



Natural Predators



Can they make a difference?



Management Strategy

Hunting Seasons

Early goose season (September 1-15) targets **resident** birds with liberal bag limits before migrants arrive.

Traditional goose season for **migrant** birds (late Sept – Dec), long season with low bag limit to control harvest impacts.



Adaptable Species



Adaptable nesting sites



Seek water and mowed grass



Damage Concerns



70 geese = 70 lbs feces/day



- Concerns with droppings
- Erosion/water quality concerns
- Seldom used parks and beaches
- Added maintenance costs

Human Health and Safety Concerns



Aggressive
Nesting Birds



Swimmers Itch



Threat of Birdstrikes

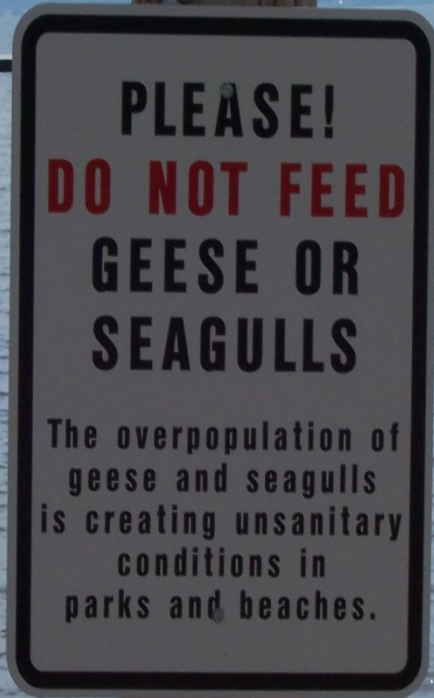


Sanitary Concerns

Goose Damage Abatement Methods



Remove Attractants



No feeding ordinances are encouraged.

Congregating wildlife can spread disease.

Disrupts natural patterns.

Birds act as decoys and attract more birds to site.

Habitat Alteration

Allow grass to grow longer



Allow shoreline vegetation



Shoreline modifications



Exclusion

Overwater grids



Harassment and Repellents



Distress Calls



Scare Devices



Taste Repellents



Trained Dogs

Pyrotechnics



Remote Control Devices



Predator Decoys



Population Management

Managing populations is achieved by either limiting reproduction or removing birds.

- 1) Allow hunting during established seasons
(particularly the early September goose season)
- 2) Reduce nesting success
- 3) Round-up and remove birds



Management Authority

Population management authority approval ultimately rests with the USFWS and WDNR.

Population management is a local decision. Must be in accordance with Federal, state, and local requirements.



Nest Destruction

- Limits population growth
- Oiling limits re-nesting
- Nesting birds sometimes leave for summer after nest fails
- Quick, cheap, and effective
- First oiling around April 15
- Finding nests can be difficult
- Requires free DNR permit and registration on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website



Round-up and Removal

Window of Opportunity

Geese undergo a molt of their wing feathers in June into July, making them flightless for 2 – 3 weeks. Geese can be captured and removed during this time period.



Round-up and Removal

Goose Capture

Trained Wildlife Services staff with netted panels, capture geese on land and load them into a trailer. DNR does not allow relocation. Geese are used as human or animal food.



Food Pantry Option for Adult Birds

Guidelines for Food Pantry Donation

For first 2 round-ups conducted, 10% of the adult geese (minimum of 5 birds) are tested for lead and mercury at a current cost of \$125/sample. Additional testing for pesticides and PCB's may be required by the DNR.

Ground meat from processor is stored until results are reviewed by DNR Toxicologist to provide guidelines for safe human consumption. After labeling, meat is distributed by food pantries.

Geese donated as animal food are not tested and therefore no additional costs.

Round-up and Removal

Require 35+ birds to warrant round-up, need to know by June 1st.

Average round-up is 60 - 70 geese.

Need written permission from each landowner.

Local assistance required to find birds just prior to our arrival, guide us to the geese on land.

DNR issued permit required.

Flat fee of \$3,500 for round-up.

Over 100 Wisconsin locations since 1999.



Round-up Effectiveness

Immediate reduction in goose damage.

Provides long term management by removing local breeding birds.

Allows non-lethal options a chance to work.

Round-ups in consecutive years may be most effective to remove juvenile, non-breeding birds that may return to nest the following year.

Fewer migrant geese are attracted to the site.

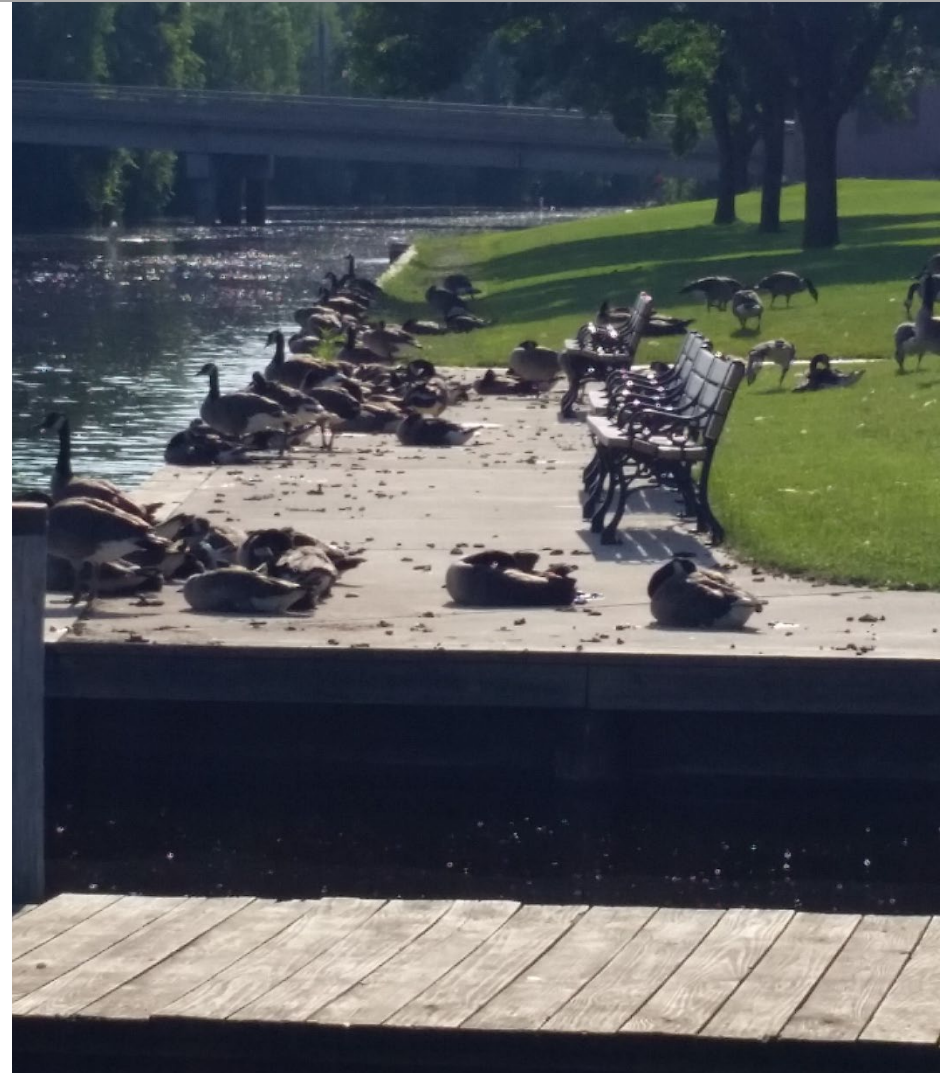
Summary

Use a variety of management tactics for best results. Including habitat modifications, fencing, harassment, hunting, egg oiling, and removals if needed.

Consider the timing of your actions. Migrant birds respond to harassment. Harassment of nesting or molting birds is ineffective.

Solicit public or neighborhood involvement. People enjoy seeing geese, get feedback on management.

Be proactive. Manage goose issues before the problem is out of control. Geese return to the same locations each year. Rarely do the issues go away without management measures.



DNR Urban Wildlife Damage Abatement & Control Grant

Grants are available from the DNR to any town, city, village, county or tribal government with a population density of 125 persons per square mile. Grant funding is available to help develop wildlife plans, implement specific damage abatement or control measures for white-tailed deer or Canada geese.

Apply starting October 1 with a December 1 deadline.

A total of \$25,000 is available annually. This program provides 50 percent project reimbursement up to a maximum of \$5,000 (\$10,000 total project cost).

Visit DNR website to see if eligible to apply.



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For further assistance with migratory bird problems please call our helpline.

920-324-4514

Thank you



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