

Non-migratory Resident Canada Geese

Branta canadensis

Information Sheet

Capital Regional District | April 2024

Canada Geese in the Capital Region

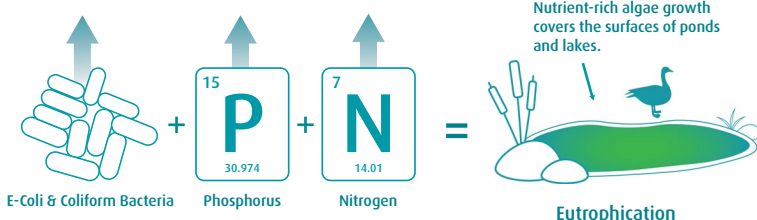
Historically, Canada geese found on Vancouver Island were occasional migratory visitors over the autumn and winter months. In the 1960's and 70's, various programs were implemented to increase wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities in the region. The introduced geese were unable to learn migrating behaviour patterns from their parents. Eventually these geese interbred, creating a steadily growing population of non-migratory resident geese which are not native to the region.

Why Are They a Problem?

Overpopulation, Public Health, Water Contamination & Financial Woes

Canada geese are very protective of their nests, eggs, and goslings during breeding season and can act aggressively towards people. Geese have found that public spaces such as parks, farmland, beaches, lawns, school grounds, and even planters make very attractive nesting locations. Excessive amounts of goose feces can contaminate these areas, as well as lead to algae growth in water sources, decreasing water quality and resulting in beach closures. Geese spread invasive grass species through their feces, threatening rare and endangered plant species and sensitive ecological reserves that include endangered Garry-oak ecosystems. Overgrazing can impact estuaries and tidal marshes. These areas support coastal fish and wildlife and are vital habitats for young salmon.

Canada geese cause significant financial problems for our local farmers, recreation providers and businesses. Unfortunately, they damage crops, increase maintenance costs, cause soil erosion, and contaminate areas with fecal matter.



When Canada geese feces comes in contact with water sources, levels of e-coli, coliform bacteria, phosphorus, and nitrogen can become elevated.

These elevated elements can cause a rapid growth in algae and other plant life, causing harmful effects such as death of animal life due to lack of oxygen.



Did you know?

- Canada geese have an average lifespan of 10-24 years and can produce well over 100 eggs in their lifetime.
- One goose can eat up to 4lbs of food and create up to a 2lbs of feces in one day!



Goose eggs marked during nest surveys completed by our goose management technicians.

How Can You Help?

1. Do not feed Canada geese

Feeding Canada geese and other waterfowl can cause them to become habituated to an area and look to humans as a food source. The resulting congregation increases the spread of diseases, water pollution and overcrowding. Canada geese have been known to beg people for food and can become aggressive when food is not offered.

2. Modify your landscape

You can modify your lawn to make it less appealing to geese:

- Keep grass longer than 25cm, geese prefer to graze on short grass and young shoots
- Plant tall native vegetation along shorelines and around water features
- Cover planters with mesh to help prevent nesting
- Install fencing or eco-enclosures to create exclusion zones

3. Egg addling

An ethical and humane egg addling program can help prevent the increase of Canada goose populations. A damage or danger permit through the Environment Canada - Canadian Wildlife Service is required before these activities take place.

Contact us at goose@crd.bc.ca for more information.

4. Spread awareness

Spread awareness about the impacts of Canada geese and encourage your neighbours to goose proof their properties and stop feeding geese and other wildlife. Consider volunteering! Many local stewardship groups are doing great work restoring ecosystems previously damaged by Canada geese.

5. Let us know

Report locations of mated pairs, nests, banded birds and young of the year to goose@crd.bc.ca This information helps technicians make future management plans.



What do they look like?

Large goose with a brown body, black head, beak and legs, white cheeks and a white or light brown rump.



Did you know?

Canada geese are the number one threat to the 28 rare and endangered plant species found on Trial Island Ecological Reserve.



To learn more about the management of non-migratory resident Canada geese:

www.crd.bc.ca/goose

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