

Coping with Canada Geese



Marne Titchenell
Extension Program Specialist – Wildlife
School of Environment & Natural Resources



CFAES

Slides & Additional Resources Posted Here:

THEWILDSIDE@OSU

News, Education, and Conversations on Ohio Wildlife

u.osu.edu/wildside



'Dealing with Wildlife: Geese, Moles, Voles...'

The Canada Goose

Giant Canada goose

- Commonly nests throughout the state
- 11-13 pounds on average
- 'Resident geese'
 - Limited to no migration patterns



CFAES

A bit of history...

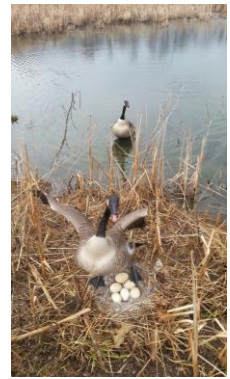
Early 20th century – extirpation

1860's -1900 – no geese in Ohio

1956 - Restoration and protection

1979 – Ohio had 18,000 geese

Present time – nesting in all counties



CFAES

Canada Goose Damage



CFAES

Grazing

- Damages lawns, turf, crop fields, landscaping, ponds edges

Accumulation of feces

- Degraded water quality
- Accumulations in lawns, sports fields, golf courses, etc.

Vehicle/Aircraft Collisions

Aggressive behaviors

- Inside and outside of nesting season

Don't blink...



Goose Habitat is Plentiful.



Goose Ecology

- Highly adaptive species
- Successful reproductive strategy
 - Early nesting in **February – March**
 - Territorial & defensive
- Young imprint birth place
- Long-lived species (20 yr)
 - No natural predators

CFAES



Flightless Period

A lot of damage can occur during this period:

Goslings

- 10 weeks old = flight
- Born late April - late June
- Could last into July

Adults

- End of June-July adults molt for 3 weeks

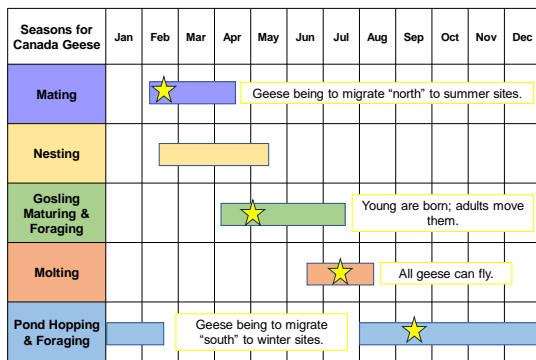
Starting in April, management difficult:

- Adult won't leave goslings
- Adults can't fly



Canada Goose Activity by Month

★ = migration movements



Steps for Canada Goose Management

- 1) Understand the habitat needs
 - Permanent source of water, green grass, nesting cover
- 2) Make timely, cost-effective decisions to reduce damage to a tolerable level
- 3) Employ management options
 - Often involves persistence and commitment
- 4) Monitor and evaluate success of methods.

Geese are here to stay, so don't set impossible goals.

CFAES

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)

Most birds are protected under the MBTA of 1918, which is an *international treaty between Canada, Mexico, Japan, & Russia.*

It is illegal to harm, take, or possess migratory birds, parts of them, active nests, and eggs, EXCEPT during hunting season or by special permit.

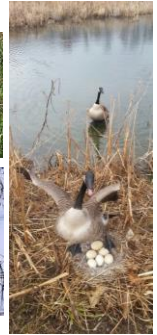
- **Active nest** → contain viable eggs or chick
- **Can remove nest** if no eggs or chicks associated with it



CFAES

Canada Goose Nest ID

- Usually by water, on ground or on raised structure
- Bowl shaped, made from vegetation, lined with feathers and down
- 5 eggs/nest
- Feb. – April
- Up to 11 eggs



CFAES

Options for Managing Goose Damage:



- Education and Outreach
- Repellents
- Harassment techniques
 - Dogs
 - Acoustic deterrents
 - Visual deterrents
- Habitat Modification/Exclusion
- **Population Management**
 - Lethal control
 - Permits

CFAES

Habitat Modification

Modify food source

- NWSG over CSG (parks, community green spaces)
- Less desirable turf grasses
 - **Tall fescue**
- Let grass grow taller
 - **7-14" (airfields)**
- Make it taste bad
 - **Use of pesticides**



CFAES

Pesticides

Methyl anthranilate (i.e., Liquid fence)

- Oil-based chemical derived from grapes
- Causes throat irritation

Anthraquinone

- Stomach irritant/visual cue
- **Flight Control Max**
 - Note site use restrictions
- **Flight Control Plus**
 - Municipal sites, urban areas, sports fields, park grounds, residential buildings/home lawns, golf courses

- Both are rain resistant
 - Rarely cost-effective over large areas
- Best Use:** Short-term, temporary protection of small areas



Goose repellents are applied to turf.

CFAES

Habitat Modification and Exclusion

Make water less attractive

- Exclusion – physical or plant barriers
 - **Trees and shrubs, grasses along edges of pond - 10' wide buffer**
 - **Fences - 3' high or 2 wires @ 6" and 18"**
- Plant emergent aquatic vegetation in water
 - **Native, non-invasive**
- Steep banks – 64° for ≥7'
- Rock barriers – 20 x 24" stone



CFAES

Residential Pond Recommendations



Maintain 25–50-ft-wide vegetated buffer strips around ponds.

Maintain native plants in landscape.

Plant rain gardens.

CFAES

Photo courtesy Eugene Braig

Habitat Modification



Remove domestic ducks

- Can act as live attractants to geese
- No state or federal permit required to remove domestic ducks
 - Educate public first as to why they are being removed



Remove Mute Swans

- Non-native species impacting trumpeter swan populations (native species)
- More aggressive than geese

CFAES

Harassment Techniques

- 1) Harassment starts early
 - Geese begin pairing off as early as late February
- 2) Use other management options at the same time
 - Other harassment techniques, population management, habitat modification
- 3) These techniques often require persistence, patience, and commitment



Don't stop until they FLY off the property.



Harassment Techniques

Dogs

- Allow dogs continual access to birds
- At least 4-6 times/day

Visual deterrents

- Green lasers and lights
- Predator effigies
 - Move daily
 - Use prior to nest establishment
- Remote control devices
 - No air drones allowed



Visual Harassment: Green Lasers

Green lasers

- Effective
- Geese, vultures, crows

Available online

Works best in low light conditions (dawn and dusk)

Take caution and be mindful of aircraft



CFAES

Green Laser Used Against Geese

Video courtesy USDA, Wildlife Services



Lasers are NOT effective against geese that are active nesting, on goslings that cannot fly, or on adult geese that are molting and cannot fly (typically April – June).

CFAES

Harassment Techniques: Noise Makers

Screamers, bangers

- Launch pistol

Shell crackers

- 12-gauge break-action shotgun

Must comply with ATF storage requirements

Other pyrotechnics considered a firework – need permit

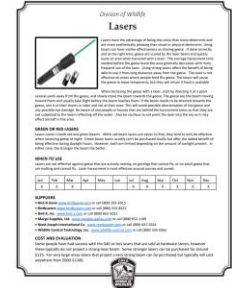
CFAES

Explosive Pest Control Devices (EPCDs)



Store in locked metal container with non-sparking interior.

Ohio Division of Wildlife Tech Sheets:



Available at: u.osu.edu/wildside

Harassment Techniques

Biological

- Dogs – work well on geese
- Mute swans – problem, no solution

Drones – can't use to harass wildlife (Airborne Hunting Act)



Population Management

Hunting

- Early season: September
- Regular season: October – February
- Reinforces harassment



MBTA Nest memorandum

- Can remove nest if no eggs or chicks present



Population Management

When you need a permit:

Out of season hunting permits

- Can reinforce harassment

Egg permit

- Shaking, dipping in oil, drilling
- Egg won't hatch

- *Extends nesting season!*

Goose round-ups

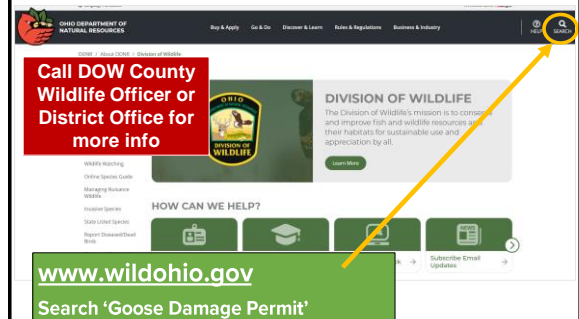
- June - flightless period
- Contract out OR

- *Must be trained by Division of Wildlife*



Goose Damage Permit

Available March 11 – August 31



Strategies for Managing Goose Conflicts

- Timing is critical - before nesting!
- Create a tool bag!
 - There is no "magic bullet"
- Be persistent, patient, and committed
- Consider regional management
- Make the area unattractive to the birds



The most successful plans aim to reduce goose numbers to a tolerable level.

Geese are here to stay, so don't set impossible goals.



CFAES

Canada Goose Fact Sheets

FACT SHEET
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Coping with Canada Geese: Conflict Management and Damage Prevention Strategies

By: Susan A. Leland
Wildlife Management Specialist

By: William T. Leland
Wildlife Management Specialist

Geese, Ducks and Coots

Division of Wildlife
N - GOOSE CONFLICT

GOOSE HISTORY IN OHIO

THE HUMAN - GOOSE PROBLEM

Available at:
u.osu.edu/wildside
Search 'geese'

wildohio.gov

Division of Wildlife GOOSE MANAGEMENT TIMELINE

There are many techniques for managing geese, however none of the techniques will be effective if not employed correctly or at the proper time of year. Knowing goose activities can help you pick the right techniques. Following the timeline below will help you ensure that you are doing the correct techniques at the proper time of the year.

Months	What Geese Are Doing	What You Should Be Doing	Which Techniques Work
January	Migratory geese are moving through the area. Some pairs of breeding pairs may break away from the flocks as nesting begins.	If feasible, allow goose hunting on your property during hunting season dates. Employ harassment techniques to birds that have been in the area as well as any migrating geese that may come onto your property.	Hunting Chasing Laser Visual Deterrents Noise Deterrents Physical Barriers
February	Geese begin to pair up and separate themselves from the flock. The number of migratory geese begins to go down.	Begin EXTENSIVE harassment techniques to get rid of both migrating geese and paired geese. Fence off nesting areas where geese caused conflicts in previous year (i.e. doorways and walkways).	Hunting Chasing Laser Spray Repellents Visual Deterrents Noise Deterrents Physical Barriers
March	Geese are paired and begin to set up nesting territories.	Begin to look for goose nests. Continue to use EXTENSIVE harassment techniques until eggs are found in nests. Contact Division of Wildlife in early March if your tactics aren't working to figure out why. If you have crop being eaten now, call your local district office to see about a Goose Shooting Permit to reinforce harassment of geese.	Chasing Laser Goose Shooting Permit Spray Repellents Physical Barriers
April	Peak of geese are laying and incubating the eggs.	Keep records of where each nest is located. If you find nests, contact your local district office to see if you qualify for a Nest Destruction Permit. Harass non-nesting geese off your property. If you have crop being eaten now, call your local district office to see about a Goose Shooting Permit to reinforce harassment of geese.	Nest Destruction Permit Goose Shooting Permit Spray Repellents Physical Barriers
May	Goose eggs begin to hatch. Flocks of non-breeding geese may be in the area.	If you received a Nest Destruction Permit, remove the number of nests according to the permit stated in your permit. "Nest" flocks groups off your property. Install barriers to prevent geese from walking back onto your property. If you have crop being eaten now, call your local district office to see about a Goose Shooting Permit to reinforce harassment.	Goose Shooting Permit (Agricultural Fields) Spray Repellents Physical Barriers
June	Geese begin their molting and are unable to fly.	Continue to harass the adult and young geese off your property. If you have been doing EXTENSIVE harassment in May, contact your local district office in early June to see if you qualify for a roundup permit. Harass non-breeding geese off your property.	Roundup Permit Spray Repellents Physical Barriers

Marne Titchenell
Extension Wildlife
Program Director
titchenell.4@osu.edu
614-292-0402

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

CFAES

