

## Education



### DON'T FEED WATERFOWL

Feeding waterfowl is a popular activity for many people, but it is a significant cause of high urban bird populations. Consider implementing a "No waterfowl feeding" ordinance or policy. Congregating wildlife by hand feeding can be unhealthy nutritionally for geese and more easily spread disease through waterfowl populations. Feeding also disrupts natural patterns and concentrates waterfowl which can act as a decoy attracting more birds to the location.

### Urban Wildlife Damage Abatement and Control Grant

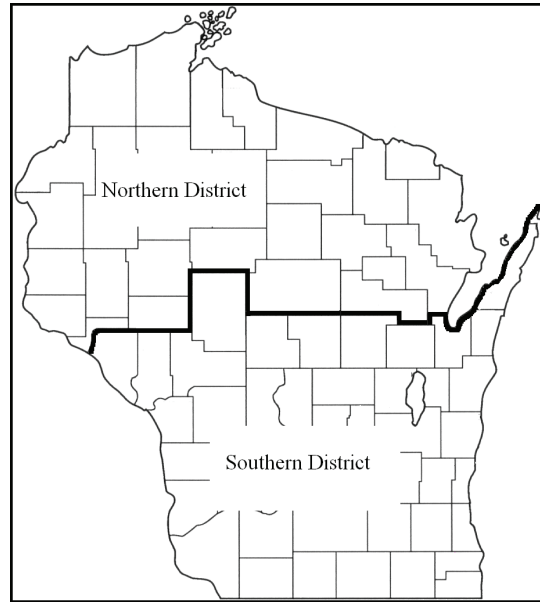
UWDAC grants are available from the DNR to any town, city, village, county or tribal government in an "urban area." Grant funding is available to help urban areas develop wildlife plans and/or to implement specific damage abatement and/or control measures for white-tailed deer and/or Canada geese.

A statewide 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). Advance payments of 50 percent (not to exceed \$2500) of the grant award can be requested at the time the grant agreement is signed.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/Urbanwildlife/grants.html>

## For Further Information

*If you have any questions regarding Canada goose management, please contact your region's USDA Wildlife Services district office for more information.*



**Northern District:**  
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services  
PO Box 1064  
Rhinelander, WI 54501  
(800) 228-1368

**Southern District:**  
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services  
1201 Storbeck Drive  
Waupun, WI 53963  
(800) 433-0663

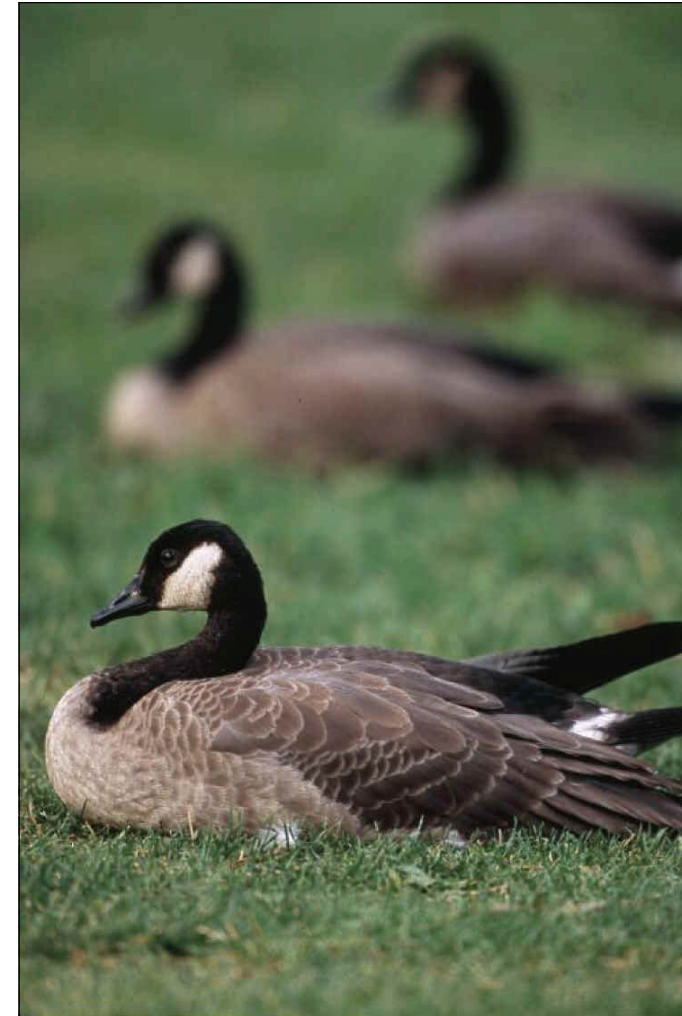
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This publication can be made available in alternate format upon request. Please call (608) 264-6036 for information.

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# Resident Canada Goose Management in Wisconsin



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## Resident Canada Geese

The population of resident Canada geese in Wisconsin has dramatically increased over the last 25 years. This phenomenal growth has been recorded throughout the United States as well as internationally. This is partially due to the development of large open mowed grassy areas that humans have created and the protection that they provide. Resident Canada geese are large, very adaptable, long lived, productive, and protective of nests and young. These traits often lead to conflicts with citizens.

## Conflicts

As the population increases, so does the incidents of human conflict. High concentrations of resident Canada geese can lead to landscape damage, decreased water quality, disruption of recreational activities and decreased aesthetics from abundant droppings. However, there are solutions to these problems for landowners and local governments. In Wisconsin, the management strategy for these geese is 2 fold: 1) Manage the overall population through hunter harvest and 2) Address property or community specific problems with professionally guided integrated management.



## Management Decision

The decision and cost, to manage the local Canada goose situation lies with local leaders in accordance with State and/or Federal rules.

## Integrated Management Plan

It is recommended that an integrated plan, utilizing multiple techniques be implemented to successfully resolve conflicts with resident Canada geese.

Techniques to consider include:

**Habitat modification.** Habitat modification is altering the characteristics of the site so that geese do not find it attractive. This can be achieved by allowing grass to grow or planting buffer strips of native grasses or shrubs around water bodies to block the geese's clear view of potential predators, making them feel uncomfortable.

**Fence barriers.** Fences can prevent geese from conveniently walking from water to grass areas. Many different cost effective varieties from mesh fencing to monofilament lines can work well at disrupting access to feeding or loafing areas.

**Scare devices.** It is legal to harass Canada geese without a state or federal permit as long as the geese are not touched and adults are not kept away from their nests with eggs. These techniques are designed to make the geese uncomfortable and encourage them to find friendlier habitat. Trained dogs, auditory calls, predator effigies, mylar flagging, pyrotechnics and human harassment can be a critical part of an integrated plan.

**Repellants.** Chemical repellents can be applied to grassy areas where geese are accustomed to feeding. Typical goose repellents coat the grass with products that the geese find distasteful. They often associate the repellent's slight discoloration of the treated areas with the bad taste and avoid feeding in the area. Landowners should contact the Wisconsin DNR before using repellents because a permit may be needed.

**Population management.** Population management is achieved by either reducing the recruitment and/or increasing the mortality of the local population. This can be done several ways. Where possible, hunters harvesting geese during the early September hunt can be effective at reducing local populations and establishing that the area is no longer a safe refuge for the geese. However, local ordinances may have to be altered to allow hunting in developed areas. In order to manage the local population outside of the established hunting season, either by reducing nesting success or removal of adult and juvenile birds, a State and/or Federal permit is



necessary to conduct these activities in Wisconsin. Nesting success can be reduced by obtaining a nest destruction permit. This will allow the permit holder to oil, addle or destroy a nest with eggs. Destroying alone may cause the geese to attempt re-nesting. Nests without eggs may be destroyed without a permit. The removal of adults and juvenile geese or "round-up" is conducted in mid-June to early July during the molting process when geese are flightless. Prior to removing geese the population must be sampled for environmental contaminants. Captured birds are processed and made available to local food pantries for human consumption.

## Important things to consider

**Consider the timing of your actions.** Goose behavior and damage changes throughout the year.

**Reduce the available food** and eliminate the ability of geese to walk from the water to feeding areas.

**Solicit public involvement.** While some people enjoy observing geese others would rather have them removed. Consider all opinions to avoid negative reactions.

**Be aware of laws and regulations.** These change over time.

**Consider reducing geese, not eliminating them.** Most successful plans aim to reduce goose numbers to a level tolerable by all stakeholders.

**Be proactive.** Many people wait until the problem is out of control before seeking help.