



Environment
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BEST PRACTICES FOR MANAGEMENT PLANS

Canada Goose and Cackling Goose Management Canadian Wildlife Service



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For large landowners with recurring conflicts, the permit applicant should be encouraged to develop a goose management plan for approval by the Canadian Wildlife Service. Examples of entities that would benefit from having a management plan include: municipalities and conservation authorities, golf courses, corporate campuses, and cottage associations.

In particular, municipalities with airports should develop a goose management plan in conjunction with the airport authorities. Most airports will hold migratory bird control permits issued by CWS under the *Migratory Birds Regulations*, but those permits are only valid directly on the airport grounds. The risk of airstrikes is directly related to the number of geese in the surrounding area – an important determinant of goose use is the land use activities in the vicinity of the airport.

The plan must include a population target, an approach to achieve and maintain the target numbers, and address public opinion. Killing is not to be the primary management approach, however a one-time or even periodic removal of birds may be part of the plan if preventative measures are also applied. Preventative actions identified in the management plan must be completed. Lack of action may result in no permit being issued in subsequent years.

REQUIREMENTS OF A GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Identify area(s)

The affected area must be described in detail. Details include land use (park, beach, residential, commercial, crop etc.), ownership, size and exact location of the area. A map would be helpful. Areas where geese can be accommodated should be shown as well as areas where geese must be excluded.

Assessment of problem

Number and type of geese

Counts of the number of geese present must be provided. General statements like “lots” or “too many” are not acceptable. If the number varies throughout the year, seasonal counts are expected (for example during early spring, mid summer, fall and winter). Proponents must also describe the behaviour of geese (flying into the area to feed or loaf, nesting, raising young etc.).

Duration and nature

How long has the problem been occurring? Is this the first time geese have been observed at the site? Or have they been present for more than one year? What is the nature of the problem? Are the geese causing damage to crops or turf? Are their droppings a source of annoyance? Are they posing a direct threat to people or motor vehicles?

Identify root cause

If geese are present in an area, it is because something is attracting them there. All goose attractants must be identified including food sources (crops, grass,

hand feeding), water bodies (size, depth, shoreline characteristics), nesting structures (islands, rooftops, other).

Target number of geese

Proponents must identify a target number of geese. In many cases this will be zero. If geese are allowed to occupy an area, it is very difficult to control the number of geese present. For large landowners, most likely there will be parts of the land where geese can be accommodated without causing damage or danger, and control activities will focus in particular problem areas.

Short-term solutions

Applicants who can demonstrate that they have employed or will employ preventative short-term deterrent measures will be considered for a permit if it is a first-time request. Potential short-term solutions begin with preventative measures (scaring, barriers, allowing grass to grow longer etc.). If the problem continues to be serious and preventative measures have not been effective, actions requiring a permit may be proposed (destroying/removing nests/eggs, translocation, kill). The proponent must clearly demonstrate that they understand the consequences of proposed actions and that either they are competent to undertake the action or that they will hire someone who is.

Long-term plan

The long-term plan is the most important component of the management plan. Short-term actions requiring a permit are to be employed on a temporary basis (one to several years) only. For the most part, they do not represent a long-term solution to conflicts with geese. The long-term plan must describe in detail how the proponent plans to make the affected area less attractive to geese. In some cases (such as golf courses and agricultural crops) the very nature of the land use means that they will always be attractive to geese, but that doesn't mean that nothing can be done. Long-term plans may include strategies to scare geese away. Permanent scaring programs may be required and if employed properly at appropriate times, can provide long-term results. Management Plans must include two actions, as follows: 1) Feeding of geese has been banned, with appropriate signage and enforcement, and 2) hunting is allowed in all areas where it is safe to do so. Allowing hunting wherever it can be practiced safely is a long-term solution to suppressing local populations.

MANAGEMENT PLAN TEMPLATE FOR NUISANCE MIGRATORY BIRDS

A) PERMITTEE INFORMATION This can be based on information already collected as part of the existing permit application process.

Name or Organization:

Legal Description of Property:

(include a scaled map, if available)

Town:

Municipal Designation:

Province:

B) NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE CONFLICT

- Species Involved in Conflict(s)
- Property Type: Agriculture, Business, Government, Institution, Personal, Other
- Specific Locations Where Conflicts are Occurring
 - Waterfront, Lawns, Agricultural Land, Other
 - List any known attractants on the property (Water, feeding area, other)
 - Brief description of location
- Timing and Duration of Conflicts
 - Time of Year: seasonal (March-May; June-July; August-December; December-February) or specific dates
 - Time of Day: general (morning, afternoon, evening, night) or specific times of day
- Number and Age of nuisance birds using the property
 - Provide a count of the number of birds for the period(s) of conflict. If possible, provide a count by age class. If birds are nesting, provide information regarding the number of nests on the property
- Use of the property by the birds
 - Why are they there? (Nesting, feeding, loafing, roosting)
 - List any known attractants
- Nature of the conflict
 - Health Concerns, Crop or other Damage, Aesthetic/Nuisance

C) LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Outline the goals and objectives of the management plan. (Are they achievable and measureable?
Examples
 - 1) Reduce the number of birds nesting on my property by 50%
 - 2) Eliminate all moulting birds from my property
- List of management techniques currently being implemented to discourage birds from using the property
 - What efforts has the permittee made to reduce the frequency and/or severity of conflicts on the property?

D) PROPOSED MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES: FOR EGG DESTRUCTION, RELOCATION AND KILL-TO-REMOVE PERMITS ONLY

For **Egg Destruction/Sterilization Permits** please provide the following information:

- Justification and details for the egg destruction
 - Outline the need for the egg destruction and why other management techniques have proven ineffective or are not feasible
 - Provide detailed information regarding the location where this technique will be used, the maximum number of eggs to be destroyed and the methods that will be used

For **Relocation Permits** please provide the following information:

- Justification and destination details for the relocation
 - Outline the need for relocation and why other management techniques have proven ineffective or are not feasible
 - Provide detailed information regarding the maximum number of birds to be relocated and from where, methods for how the birds will be relocated, and the destination of relocated birds, including GPS coordinates and photographs of the site

For **Kill-to-Remove Permits** please provide the following information:

- Justification for killing birds
 - Outline the need for killing birds and why other management techniques have proven ineffective or are not feasible
- Provide detailed information regarding the maximum number of birds to be killed at which location, methods used to roundup live birds, and methods used to dispose of carcasses
- Provide details on consultations with other stakeholders and interest groups

For **ALL Egg Destruction, Relocation and Kill Permits**:

- Propose alternative management activities to reduce or eliminate the need for future lethal techniques or relocations
 - Provide a detailed list of other techniques and strategies that will be implemented to reduce the need for future lethal management techniques and/or relocations
 - A general timeline should be included outlining when efforts to reduce reliance on destructive techniques and/or relocations will be implemented
- Indicate how success will be measured (e.g., counts of nuisance birds using property are maintained at a set objective, amount of crop damage is reduced by X percent, the number of customer complaints is reduced by Y percent)