

## GOOSE POPULATION - FISH / ROYER LAKE



Some residents have complained about the amount of geese on their lawns. Before we discuss, it is important that everyone is aware that Canadian Geese are protected by Federal laws. It is illegal to touch or harm the geese outside of the obtained permitted or licensed periods. Geese, including their young, have strong homing instincts to return to the same area annually. Once geese start nesting in a place, it is almost certain more geese will nest there in the future. The most effective method is to use preventative techniques to deter geese before they become established and any problem begins. After much research, the Association has found that the most effective method in reducing goose population is simply by using harassment and habitat modification techniques; however, we will continue to research and discuss possibilities to help our neighbors resolve their issues, and be happy to discuss further questions at our general meeting(s).

### **Late February - Early March: Harassment - Geese rarely nest where they feel they are not safe from predators**

As spring arrives and ice thaws, geese begin to pair up and scout for a safe location to nest. Geese will look for an open area of property, preferably a nicely groomed lawn adjacent to water, enabling them to watch for predators. Most will take to a place overnight. If not disturbed, they will feel safe and most likely return to consider nesting. When a goose first appears on your property, use a safe, legal, non-nuisance means of harassment to scare them off, and repeat the chosen method each time a goose returns. If a goose gets used to the method, change it up. If the geese feel unsafe, they will not nest. Some techniques that have worked for your lake neighbors are dogs barking, green laser lights, motion sensor lights and motion activated sprinklers.

### **March - June: Nest destruction - Repeatedly removing nesting can encourage breeding geese to relocate elsewhere.**

Building a nest can take several weeks. Whenever you notice nesting, remove it when the geese are not around. Continue this each time you notice nesting, as long as no eggs are present. Once the first egg is laid, no further action can be taken without first gaining permission. Egg destruction can only be done by registering with the United States Fish and Wildlife Services, and following guidelines.

### **Late June - Mid July: Inaccessible Food - Geese cannot fly during molt period, nor can their goslings.**

Mid-June, adult geese molt, leaving them flightless for 15-20 days. Once eggs are hatched, goslings can take up to 70 days to learn to fly. During this time, geese will be looking for easy access, well maintained lawns to feed on. They need to be able to easily walk their goslings up on land to feed, and easily walk back to the water. Proven methods to prevent them from choosing your property includes barriers, harassment and/or environmentally safe lawn treatment. Geese have difficulty stepping over items. A string tied lowed from stake to stake, along your waterfront, can easily discourage the geese from accessing your property. Return to harassment methods to deter geese from feeling safe to feed on your property. Environmentally safe lawn treatment such as Flight Control, when used as directed, is safe for use on your lawn but it leaves a bitter taste that geese will not return to eat.

### **Molt Duration: Removal - Geese can only be removed under permit during their flightless (molt) period.**

After contacting and meeting with different waterfowl control operations, we learned that contracted goose removal is a short-term, low-effective, expensive and not guaranteed. Relocated geese often return, even from hundreds of miles away. Euthanizing geese removed breeders from the population; however, other geese will move into the now available habitat. Removal cost per goose is now ranging from \$20-\$35. On top of service fees, removing 100 geese would cost \$2500-\$4,000, as well as needing to lock into a 3-5 year contract. Some operations would also require access to private properties, and some would need volunteers to assist with round-up. The information obtained does not justify the Association's financial assistance towards removal of geese at this time. However, with that said, we have also received information from other lake associations that also no longer choose to pay for this service. They have groups of residents that gather together to complete the removal process, on years in which the population seems to be overwhelming. If you decide to form a group of volunteers, who must be available mid-June to early July and willing to round-up, herd, trailer, and relocate geese, please let us know. The Association will gladly assist you in obtaining the permit, as well as posting your search for volunteers and posting updated information on your project.

- Additional information and techniques can be found under: *Canada Geese Management (in.gov)*