

# GOOSE TRACKS



Status Report on Humane Canada Goose Management from The Humane Society of the United States

## In a Fog about Chemical Repellents?

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RESOLUTION PROGRAM

**S**PRAY GEESE AWAY? LOSE them in a fog? That is the aim when people turn to chemical repellents as part of their humane Canada goose management programs. Repellents are sprayed on the grass geese eat or dispersed into the air by special foggers to teach geese to avoid a specific site.

### Better Living Through Chemistry—for Geese

Two chemicals are registered in the United States to repel Canada geese: methyl anthranilate and anthraquinone. Both have been tested and proven effective in controlled situations when used according to manufacturers' instructions.

Anthraquinone is a naturally occurring compound, not harmful to plants, mammals, or birds when used properly. By triggering a strong, harmless digestive irritation in geese who eat treated grass, anthraquinone conditions the birds to avoid treated areas. This compound also absorbs light in the ultraviolet range that geese—but not humans—can see. Treated grass looks different to geese, so they learn to avoid treated areas by sight once they associate the look with the irritation.

Methyl anthranilate is a grape-flavor food additive approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for human



*Chemical repellents sprayed on the grass geese eat or dispersed with foggers can help manage goose populations—but users should keep their expectations realistic.*

consumption and exempted from the Environmental Protection Agency's pesticide residue tolerance requirement. Sprayed on grass, it makes the grass unpalatable to geese. Used in this way, it is a taste-based repellent—and geese must eat grass from each treated site before they learn to avoid it. Methyl anthranilate can also be dispersed into the air from special equipment as a fog that irritates geese, causing them to leave the area immediately.

### Muggle Tool, Not Magic Wand

A bottle of chemical repellent is not a magic wand that can simply be waved at unwelcome Canada geese to make them go away. People have to use them correctly and have realistic expectations for results.

Geese must eat treated grass before

they learn to avoid it. Geese do not eat docks or sidewalks, so spraying repellents on surfaces like these is not the most effective use. If geese rest or walk on treated grass but do not eat it, sprayed repellent will not affect them. Fogging is one way to use repellent in these places.

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## Where Are Things Happening?

### Contact Names and Numbers

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## USFWS Plan Moving Toward Final Release

**T**HE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (USFWS) plan to make state wildlife agencies responsible for managing resident Canada geese, released in a *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* a year ago, triggered a flood of comments from individuals and organizations. The HSUS questioned the absence of humane, community-based programs in the plan—and what seems to be a randomly selected population goal for the geese that would necessitate killing millions of them. The USFWS must respond to all comments in its *Final EIS*, so it has had considerable work since the comment period ended last May.

The USFWS expects to release its *Final EIS* early in 2003 but could provide no details about

the contents before this issue of *Goose Tracks* went to press. The USFWS must circulate the *EIS* for at least 30 days before it declares what action it will take. Any comments it receives during that 30-day period must be considered in its decision on its program for 2003. Anyone who commented on the *EIS* will be sent a copy of the *Final EIS* when it is released. To review the *Final EIS* when it is released, contact the USFWS for a copy by e-mailing [Canada\\_Goose\\_EIS@usfws.gov](mailto:Canada_Goose_EIS@usfws.gov).

## Two New Programs in Missouri

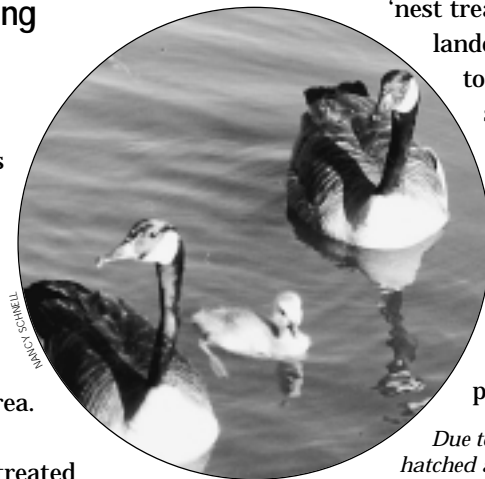
### Three Groups Working on Goose Solutions in Kansas City

Peaceful Kingdom Inc., People for Animal Rights (PAR), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services all oiled eggs and removed nests in the greater Kansas City, Missouri, area.

During the spring 2002 season, 1,336 eggs were treated and 258 nests removed by these three groups. Peaceful Kingdom and PAR plan to offer egg addling to more communities needing assistance this season, as well as encourage landscaping changes and trained dogs to discourage geese.

### Cooperation between Volunteer Program and Government Agencies in St. Louis

The presence of GeesePeace™ in St. Louis has stirred things up significantly since its 2002 arrival. In 2001, 362 nests were oiled in the metropolitan area. In 2002, the number jumped to 530. According to Dave Graber, a Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) wildlife research biologist, "GeesePeace has helped alleviate conflicts caused by geese in the St. Louis area by actively participating in

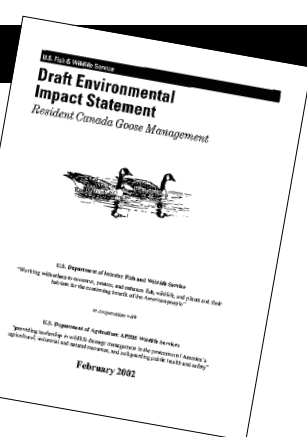


'nest treatments,' by helping landowners to treat their geese to make landowners aware of the services provided by wildlife agencies such as the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services on MDC estates. Canada geese are being treated by GeesePeace volunteers this season to reduce the population in the

Due to GeesePeace activities, many geese have hatched at the University

## 2003 International Canada Goose Symposium

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will host an International Canada Goose Symposium (ICGS) in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2003. This event will cover all aspects of Canada goose ecology and management, including research, focusing on resident Canada geese. As an organizer, it will "allow researchers, natural resource administrators, and accurate information regarding Canada geese." John Hadidian, Ph.D., director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Program, will speak at the symposium. Interested? Visit [www.dnr.state.wi.us](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us), ICGS@dnr.state.wi.us, or call 920-933-3333.



## Canada Goose Management, Canadian Style

**C**ANADA'S LARGEST CITY IS SEEKING solutions to conflicts with Canada geese. As in many North American cities, resident flocks have been expanding in Toronto, which is also a temporary home to migrant Canada geese during the molt season. The geese congregate on golf courses and in city parks where waterfronts with large, open grassy areas offer ideal habitat. Humans also prefer to spend time in these places, leading to conflicts between Canada geese and Canadian people. Toronto estimates that 7,500 geese share the city for at least a portion of the year with 2.48 million human residents.

### Progressive Program

In December, the Toronto City Council adopted a progressive program to manage Canada goose conflicts at city properties. Because the most common and persistent complaints are about goose droppings, the city will buy equipment specially designed to sweep them up. Signs in parks, pamphlets, and radio and television spots will get the word out that feeding wild geese also feeds conflicts between geese and people. Two trained dogs will join the city's existing canine work force of one to move geese from five golf courses and the Toronto Island parks. And an egg-oiling program in the parks will expand to limit the number of new resident geese hatched.

### Limiting the Habitat, Finding a Place for Tolerance

In five of the most heavily impacted city parks, landscaping changes will remove some attractive goose habitat. Toronto is fortunate to have large city-owned sewage and water management facilities along the waterfront, according to Liz White of Animal Alliance of Canada. With no public access, geese could be tolerated on these properties in larger numbers than in city parks. Animal Alliance is encouraging the city to use these properties as tolerance zones for geese and will work with the city to increase the amount of park habitat modified. Toronto may reap a double payback on habitat modification efforts by applying them to its commitment to reduce global warming.



Toronto has adopted a progressive, integrated program to manage Canada geese at city properties.

### Time to Leave Outdated Ideas in the Past

"Animal Alliance's continued task is to get the city to see the geese as a wildlife asset, not a wildlife problem," said White. She noted that—while the city is adopting many positive approaches—it clings to the outdated idea that started many of the conflicts with Canada geese in the first place. Toronto is looking for options to move geese to other cities and even other counties. Wildlife managers no longer recommend these expensive relocations of resident geese. Temporary relocation of molt migrants also appeals to the city. It is investigating so-called "goose camps"—enclosed areas where molt migrants are penned until their flight feathers grow back. Animal Alliance believes the city's preventive program will make any relocation or goose camps unnecessary.

On balance, Toronto's program has great promise to defuse conflicts between park users and geese. Canada's leading city is leading in the right direction to live humanely with its Canada geese. ■

## Lessons for Success from All Over

Check out these websites for humane Canada goose management information:

- [www.wildneighbors.org](http://www.wildneighbors.org) – The HSUS Wild Neighbors™ program
- [www.geesepeace.org](http://www.geesepeace.org) – GeesePeace™
- [www.canadageese.org](http://www.canadageese.org) – Coalition to Prevent the Destruction of Canada Geese™

Check out these websites for U.S. and Canadian government information:

- <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov> – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management
- [www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/birds](http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/birds) – Canadian Wildlife Service, Migratory Birds Conservation Division

Check out this website for information on goose biology and research:

- [www.goose.org](http://www.goose.org) – International Goose Research Group



ives during considered in its final resident Canada geese. n the Draft EIS should EIS. Others who wish to it is released can contact calling 703-358-1714 or EIS@fws.gov. ■

elping to train private t nests, and by helping ners aware of similar led by government a as the Missouri of Conservation and Wildlife Services." Based imates of the area's e population, St. Louis will target 700–800 nests help stabilize the goose ne metropolitan area. ■

ivities, only one gosling, Wesson, of Missouri-St. Louis.

## al Symposium

Natural Resources da Goose Symposium March 19–21, 2003. s of Canada goose nding a special session ese. According to the chers, biologists, and s to share pertinent nding Canada geese." of The HSUS Urban the symposium. [www.hsus.org/conferences](http://www.hsus.org/conferences), e-mail 202-892-8756, Ext. 3045.

# Chemical Repellents

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Sprayed-on repellents only last as long as the grass. Every mowing removes some of the repellent along with the clippings.

The longer geese have used a site, the harder it will be to get them to move. So use repellents at the right times of year. Geese are more willing to relocate before they establish nesting territories and again after goslings are flighted.

## Priorities, Persistence Win Out Over Quick Fixes

Although treating large areas with chemical repellents can be costly, repellents may be the right tool for high-priority areas that are heavily used by both geese and people. Sites where people place a high value on open grassy areas near water to sit, walk, and play—such as swimming beaches and picnic areas—are often top candidates.

Since repellents condition geese to avoid a site, they must be reapplied or followed up with other techniques to reinforce the conditioning. In areas used by both resident and migrating geese, the residents may be conditioned to avoid the treated grass but migrants may continue to stop over because they are not conditioned.



*Chemical repellents are most useful in high-priority areas—at the right times—and when geese have somewhere else to go.*

## Tolerance Zones

When repellents encourage geese to leave, they have to go somewhere. But where? It is important to set aside areas where geese can be tolerated and leave those areas untreated. These tolerance zones are both more humane and more effective. When geese have ready access to an alternative location, they will be more willing to leave a site where people find them most unwelcome.

## Get Integrated

Chemical repellents can be one useful tool in an integrated program to humanely manage Canada geese. They work best when combined with other humane tools, including addling, habitat changes, and other harassment techniques. Managers and owners of sites considering chemical repellents should have qualified and experienced applicators demonstrate their use and instruct in proper application procedures. ■

## Chemical Repellents for Canada Geese

No endorsement of specific brands or product lines by The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is implied or intended by inclusion in *Goose Tracks*. This list gives information about various goose repellents on the market. We have tried to make this list a starting point to find humane deterrent methods. Contact information is given for manufacturers who can refer interested parties to retailers and distributors.

### Active Ingredient: Anthraquinone

#### FlightControl® Plus

Arkion Life Sciences, 1-800-468-6324, [www.flightcontrol.com](http://www.flightcontrol.com)

### Active Ingredient: Methyl Anthranilate

#### Bird Shield™

Bird Shield Repellent Corporation, 1-866-272-2473, [www.birdshield.com](http://www.birdshield.com)

#### GooseChase™

Bird-X Inc., 1-800-662-5021, [www.bird-x.com](http://www.bird-x.com)

#### Goose-B-Gone™

Bird•B•Gone, Inc., 1-800-392-6915, [www.birdbgone.com](http://www.birdbgone.com)

#### Rejex-it® Migrate and Rejex-it® Fog Force

Becker Underwood Inc., 1-800-232-5907, [www.beckerunderwood.com](http://www.beckerunderwood.com)



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