

GOOSE TRACKS



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

Town of Brighton, NY, Forms Canada Goose Task Force

By JO ANN ARCAESE, BRIGHTON TASK FORCE

First Year of Cooperation

After several years of complaints about "goose poop" and goose-related traffic jams, tempers flared in Brighton, NY. As a result, a task force was formed representing the community, the town council, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The task force is taking four steps to deal with Canada goose conflicts:

- 1) a ban on feeding wild geese
- 2) habitat modification
- 3) egg addling to prevent hatching
- 4) nuisance abatement

Working closely with The HSUS and GeesePeace of Virginia, the task force had a successful first year.

Students Volunteer

With the help of about 20 students from the conservation program at

Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua, NY, the task force located 31 Canada goose nests and added 190 eggs in 2001. As a result at one suburban pond, 9 goslings—instead of the usual 30—were hatched.

Habitat Change

The task force added ground covers, boulders, and grasses to the town's landscaping, helping to deter geese from walking into and out of bodies of water. The town of Brighton also contracted the help of Geese Control of New York, which was quite successful with its border collie in discouraging the geese from "hanging out."

Contact Jo Ann Arcarese, task force member, at 716-442-7594 or arcases@attglobal.net for more information on the town's success. ■

Humane Alternatives To Goose Roundups in The Mid-Atlantic

By BARBARA DYER, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE, THE HSUS

Inspired by Michigan's successful program, The HSUS Mid-Atlantic Regional Office joined forces with the USDA Wildlife Services and the Morris County (NJ) Park Commission on a humane goose management pilot project to addle eggs at three locations. Morris County is the number one county in the state for complaints about Canada geese.



Volunteers assembled and ready to look for goose nests.

Volunteers Make the Difference

Volunteers are key in making a project like this work. The HSUS, USDA, and the Morris County Park Commission worked together to train volunteers and called the group effort the "Geese Team." Volunteers located nests, oiled eggs, and recorded data. When volunteers visited Burnham Park during nesting season, they found 24 nests and oiled 167 eggs.

Since changing the habitat is an important step in reducing the number of geese using a site, the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee received a grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to do just that at Burnham Park. Volunteers planted native trees and shrubs to create a 30 x 300-foot buffer. In addition, the Morristown Clean Communities program provided new "no feeding" signs.

The combination of egg addling, habitat modification, and no-feeding signs made this project a huge success. There were no goslings born!

Contact Barbara Dyer at 973-927-5611 or maro@hsus.org for more information on the New Jersey goose effort. ■

Canada geese often nest in open grassy areas next to water, although their nests have been found in many unexpected places as they adapt to the available urban habitat.



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Promoting the protection of all animals

**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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Michigan Program Helps Geese And Humans for Fourth Year

By LINDA REIDER, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, GREAT LAKES REGIONAL OFFICE, THE HSUS

IN SPRING 1998, THE HSUS and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) jointly launched the Michigan Canada Goose Egg Replacement Study. Having completed its fourth year, the study is demonstrating some surprising and encouraging results. Participants are satisfied with egg replacement on their sites; many are beginning to report reduced numbers of geese and fewer human conflicts with them; and residents statewide are asking the MDNR to expand the program to address goose "hot spots" in their towns. Moreover, MI is receiving requests from across the country for information on the egg replacement study. Starting with only 38 sites, the program has since expanded to 123 sites in three counties. In four short years, 11,572 eggs were removed from 2,336 nests, preventing the birth

and subsequent reproduction of thousands of Canada geese.

Lake associations and local governments within the test area of over 100 square miles participate in the study at no cost. They simply request a permit from the state. Volunteers replace Canada goose eggs with dummy eggs in mid- to late-April and retrieve them in early May. The HSUS and MDNR staff train new permit holders and volunteers to find nests and collect eggs and data. They also teach other available urban goose management techniques. Thanks in large part to the egg program, public tolerance and appreciation for MI's native waterfowl is increasing. Working together is working for Canada geese, at last!

Contact Linda Reider at 419-352-5141 or glro@hsus.org for information about MI's program. ■



Volunteers replace Canada goose eggs with dummies at Belle Isle Park in Detroit.

LINDA REIDER/GLRO/HSUS



Goose Tracks Goes National First Issue Takes Flight

By MAGGIE BRASTED, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, URBAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM, THE HSUS

WITH THIS ISSUE, *GOOSE TRACKS* moves from a regional to a national publication, transferring its editorial and publication process from the Great Lakes Regional Office (GLRO) to The HSUS national operations center in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

While the publication previously had a regional focus, concentrating on GLRO communities dealing with resident Canada goose conflicts, we have broadened its message to a wider audience—to *anyone* interested in learning about humane solutions for goose conflicts *anywhere* in the United States. We hope to offer descriptions and updates on programs that have proven successful and can serve as models for humane management.

Contact Maggie Brasted at 301-548-7753 or mbrasted@hsus.org with news and updates about Canada geese in your community. ■

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Where Are Things Happening?

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Lessons for Success from All Over

Volunteers Are Key—

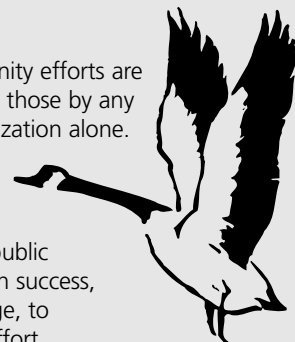
"We couldn't have done it without the volunteers," successful organizers say.

Broad Is Better—

Broad-based community efforts are more successful than those by any one person or organization alone.

Start Early and Build on Success—

Start educating the public early on and use each success, whether small or large, to build next season's effort.



Protecting Canada Geese In the Pacific Northwest

By STEPHANIE BELL, WASHINGTON STATE PROGRAM COORDINATOR, PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGIONAL OFFICE, THE HSUS

Thousands Rounded Up and Killed

The Pacific Northwest is known for its progressive stance toward environmental protection. However, government agencies in this part of the country have demonstrated a deadly response to what they and the public perceive as an overabundance of Canada geese. Thousands of birds have been rounded up and slaughtered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services.

If We Create It, They Will Come

Moderate climate, abundant bodies of water, and acres of waterfront lawns make Puget Sound a virtual goose "nirvana." Therefore, The HSUS Pacific Northwest Regional Office (PNRO) has made the protection of Canada geese a priority.

In spring 2000, GeesePeace Northwest, a coalition of The HSUS, the Progressive Animal Welfare Society, Eddie Bauer World Headquarters, and other corporate, private, and public entities, was formed to offer nonlethal goose management alternatives to property owners. GeesePeace Northwest also teaches people to appreciate all wild animals in their communities.

Volunteer Effort

In 2001, more than 60 volunteers tracked the number of geese in problem areas, discovered nests, oiled eggs—to prevent them from hatching—and identified potential sites for next year. Volunteers also documented USDA lethal goose control methods, recording an unprecedented amount of videotape of geese being killed. Volunteers saw hundreds of goslings slaughtered—goslings whose lives (and deaths) could have been prevented with an egg oiling program.



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Canada geese will use habitat that meets their needs—wherever they find it.

GeesePeace Northwest is challenging communities to choose effective and responsible approaches to goose conflicts. Next year, the coalition will work with condominium and apartment complexes, corporate campuses, parks, and the University of Washington on alternatives to killing. The most important goal is to reach the public with the message that a compassionate approach to urban wildlife issues is the right thing to do and the best way to solve conflicts!

Contact Stephanie Bell at 206-526-0949 or pnwro@hsus.org for more information about GeesePeace Northwest's efforts. ■



Golfers and Canada geese have similar tastes for fairways.

THE HSUS

Geese High on the Agenda in the Midwest

By ARNOLD BAER, REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, CENTRAL STATES REGIONAL OFFICE, THE HSUS

Multiple Approaches in Cooperative Effort

The Milwaukee County Parks department is working closely with The HSUS and the Wisconsin Humane Society to implement a suite of nonlethal strategies for goose conflicts. Egg addling was very effective last spring and will continue next year, and herding dogs and other approaches are being considered. Animal advocates are building a positive relationship with the parks department so that issues can be resolved without the roundups and slaughter employed by other WI communities.

Rockford, IL, working with The HSUS and GeesePeace, is on the cutting edge of goose

abatement in using border collies very effectively along park riverfront areas. The HSUS supported the comprehensive approach in this community through consultations and a grant that launched the nuisance abatement program.

Golf Courses Are Hot Spots

Golf courses—with their open, well-tended landscapes and ponds—are frequent hot spots for Canada goose conflicts. And goose roundup and slaughter programs are common occurrences in the St. Paul/Minneapolis area. Last fall, when the management of a golf course troubled by goose conflicts scheduled a bow hunt, The HSUS and local groups and citizens convinced park managers to cancel the hunt and use humane approaches instead. In Wake County, NC, officials at another golf course agreed to call off a planned hunt

Task Force in Maryland County

By MAGGIE BRASTED, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, URBAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM, THE HSUS

SUBURBAN MONTGOMERY County, bordering Washington, DC, has not had widespread discord over Canada geese. At least, not yet. However, resident Canada goose flocks have increased over the last decade. At local hot spots, some residents are at odds over how many geese they can live with. Taking a proactive approach, local and state government agencies and nonprofit organizations are forming a task force, called GeesePeace Montgomery, to work cooperatively countywide.

State, county, and local parks, as well as a large federal agency campus, have been humanely managing resident geese during the last few years. A combined approach involving egg oiling, landscape change, and harassment have been successful at Montgomery County parks. In 2001, more than 1,300 eggs were oiled in 241 nests at 18 locations in the county. City of Gaithersburg

(in Montgomery County) park managers are very satisfied with the harassment techniques used in the last two years, especially those involving border collies.

Now the task force is planning countywide activities for next season. It will be even more important then to reach out to homeowners' associations, shopping centers, office parks, and private property owners who will be able to participate in egg oiling. Particularly, owners of properties where geese are nesting may not be aware that geese may move only to create big problems for their neighbors. Volunteers will be trained and mobilized to treat eggs on public and private land countywide, and property owners and managers can allow volunteers to treat nests on their property when geese nest this spring.

Contact Maggie Brasted at 301-548-7753 or mbrasted@hsus.org for more information or to get involved. ■



Each egg replaced or oiled reduces future Canada goose numbers, possibly by hundreds of birds.

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and worked jointly with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of Wake County and GeesePeace on humane management.

Unfortunately, not every story has a happy ending. Operators of a golf course in Madison County, KY, announced a plan to kill resident Canada geese because of the cleanup costs incurred and golfers' complaints about hissing, aggressive geese on the greens. Unfortunately, goose killing proceeded despite protests and offers of help to implement humane solutions. Maybe this community will be more receptive to nonlethal and long-lasting solutions when replacement Canada geese move in.

Contact Arnold Baer at 262-236-4090 for more information. ■