

The Town of Oakville Features Living With...

Canada Geese

Co-existing with Canada Geese

Wild animals have the same basic needs as humans - food, water and shelter. Sometimes, we come into conflict when animals are trying to meet their basic needs. Often conflicts can be prevented if we're willing to make small changes to how we think and act.

- Keeping parks and naturalized areas with longer vegetation, helps to deter geese.
- Bright, flashing strobes can disturb geese after dark or before dawn.
- Never feed Canada Geese.
- Sound recordings of eagles or falcons may scare Canada Geese away.
- Cutting your lawn less frequently and planting native shrubs and plants near shorelines and waterways can help deter Canada Geese



CANADA GEESE FACTS

Canada Geese are native to North America and can be found throughout Oakville. While some of these birds stay in Canada during the winter months, the majority of them migrate south to the United States or Mexico. Canada Geese live in family groups and tend to nest near waterways such as streams, lakes, and ponds.

By the early 20th Century, hunting and habitat loss had resulted in a dramatic decline in numbers of Canada Geese in their native range. Habitat preservation and re-creation, along with improved game laws have helped Canada Geese populations recover in most of their range. Once endangered, these birds have now become the most common waterfowl species in North America.

Impacts of Rising Canada Geese Populations

Due to their increased numbers, Canada Geese are often considered a nuisance in and around waterfront areas. Many people consider Canada Geese pests for the abundance of droppings they produce, the fecal bacteria in their droppings that can contaminate water, excessive noise levels, their tendency to interfere with human activity, and their confrontational behaviour. Problems associated with Canada Geese are exacerbated in urban areas due to an absence of natural predators, no hunting, and an abundance of safe, man-made bodies of water near food sources, such as those found on golf courses, public parks, and waste water retention ponds.

As Canada Geese populations increase, the negative impacts associated with them will also increase. If left unchecked, Oakville's Canada Geese population could potentially double in size every three years. While it is illegal to disturb, kill, capture, injure, remove or disturb a Canada Goose or damage, destroy, remove or disturb its eggs or nest, special permits may be obtained from the Canadian Wildlife Services to use acceptable deterrent techniques. Town of Oakville staff are employing an overall goose management program in order to control the population of resident geese.

DID YOU KNOW

- If left unchecked, Oakville's Canada Goose population could potentially double every three years
- Every June the Parks and Open Spaces department round up and relocate approximately 1000 Canada Geese from Oakville to the Aylmer Wildlife Management Area
- No geese have ever been injured during the town's Goose Roundup

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Canada Goose Population Management

Town staff are employing a host of programs and techniques designed to deal with the overpopulation of Canada geese along Oakville's waterfront. Programs include egg oiling, turf sweeping, habitat modification, relocation, and more.

Egg Oiling

Every spring for over 20 years, town staff have undertaken the egg oiling program, an initiative aimed at population control that involves locating nests and coating geese eggs in mineral oil which will deprive geese embryos of oxygen and kill the egg. This initiative concentrates on nests along shorelines, in harbours, and along the Sixteen Mile, Fourteen Mile, and Bronte creeks.



Canada Geese Relocation Plan

At the beginning of every summer Canada Geese go through a molting process which results in the loss of their flight feathers for around 6 weeks. At the beginning of this period staff from the Parks and Open Spaces department carry out the annual Canada Geese relocation plan. This involves rounding up and relocating geese to the Aylmer Wildlife Management Area where they remain until they are ready to fly south again. This plan is operated under a permit from the Canadian Wildlife Service. Every June, town crews round up and relocate approximately 1000 Canadian Geese from Oakville to the wildlife sanctuary in Aylmer. No geese have been injured during the annual Goose Roundup and goslings are left with their parents. For more information visit www.oakville.ca.

Feeding Canada Geese

Geese have a very specific diet and when they are fed foods like bread by humans they do not get the essential fats, proteins, and nutrients they require and can thus become malnourished. When humans feed wild animals it can create a dependency on humans that can jeopardize the animal's survival. Feeding geese can potentially attract even more birds to human habitats which can result in land degradation, water contamination, overpopulation, and increased instances of accidental death. In order to prevent the negative impacts associated with feeding Canada Geese, the Town of Oakville has passed By-law 1999-159, which prohibits feeding Canada Geese and other waterfowl.

Aggression

On occasion, Canada Geese can become aggressive when they feel themselves or their goslings are threatened. First, they will stand erect, spread their wings, and make a hissing sound. Then they will charge, bite, or attack with their wings. Aggressive geese on Town property should be avoided and reported to the Parks and Open Spaces Department

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE

Ministry of Natural Resources:

Phone: (905) 713-7400

Website: www.mnr.gov.on.ca

Hinterland Who's Who:

Website: www.hww.ca/en/species/

Or contact the Town of Oakville at:

1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, ON L5H 0H3

Phone: (905) 845-6601

Website: www.oakville.ca

Email: environment@oakville.ca

Oakville Wildlife Strategy & Conflict Guidelines:

Website: www.oakville.ca/environment/wildlife-strategy.html