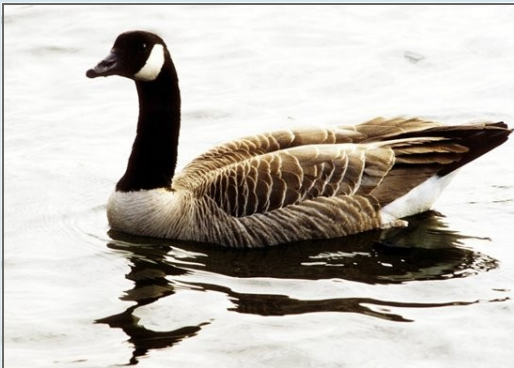


Human Encounters with Geese

The Virginia Beach SPCA Wildlife Program assists countless people with wildlife encounters every year including hundreds that include waterfowl and the Canada goose in particular. We are hoping this brochure will assist in making humane options in dealing with wildlife in our community. Please visit our website www.vbspcawildlife.com and share this brochure freely!



Wildlife

HOTLINE:

(757) 263-4762

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Living with Wildlife:

The **Canada Goose**



757-263-4762

Goose Reproductive Behavior

During most of the year Canada Geese stay in large flocks. They mate for life. The male Canada goose is usually larger than the female. In February they start looking for a nesting site and establish territory. The female Canada goose builds the nest, lays and incubates the eggs. The male will guard the nest. Incubation takes anywhere between 25 and 30 days. The goslings when hatched are unable to fly for approximately three months due to the development of their feathers. They will



stay with their parents up to a year and parents are extremely protective. A threatened goose may pump their head up and down, open their beak with their

to n g u e raised, hiss and honk, and even charge or fly at an intruder. Geese that have become dependent on human feeding may become even more confrontational, not to mention dependent on humans. This leads to overcrowding, disease, malnutrition due to an inappropriate diet, starvation and death.



A Guide for Landowners

A common misconception is that Canada geese have stopped migrating and that is why we see more in residential areas. In truth, however, is the fact that increased hunting pressure, and the loss of natural habitat is driving geese to where the grass is greener: lawns, parks, golf courses, airports, and the like.

What is needed is a diligent plan to prevent encroachment and reduce geese population.

1. Discontinue Feeding: Geese fed by humans are difficult to harass away, and will accumulate in great numbers. These geese have a higher incidence of disease, and may suffer from deformities and poor health due to nutritional deficiencies.
2. Habitat Management: Geese like to graze on short grass in open expanses next to a water source. Replace lawn with pachysandra, vetch, wildflowers, or other native ground cover. (This also conserves water!)
3. Access to Water: Geese concentrate feeding, nesting and brooding activities near water. Removing/covering reten-

tion basins, or installing perimeter fencing around ponds and lakes will prohibit access and/or remove water from view.

4. Fencing: Fencing installed in February/March will deter geese from nesting in areas such as ponds, playgrounds, and picnic areas as well as limit access to these areas later. Fencing should be three-to-five feet in height, be sturdy, firmly affixed to the ground, and completely encircle the protected area. Chicken wire, snow fencing, mylar tape, and hedges work well and are visible to other animals and humans.
5. Repellants: Methyl Anthranilate (MA) is a non-toxic taste aversion agent that renders grass unpalatable to geese. Commercially available as RejeX-iT, MA is FDA approved and poses no threat to pets, wildlife, or humans.
6. Harassment: Best results occur when harassment method is initiated early in the season and include horns and other noise makers, remote-controlled devices, and **trained** dogs. (Please contact Barbara Gipson, VBSPCA Shelter Manager, 427-0070 or shel-termgr@vbspca.com for contacts).
7. Reproductive Control: May only be done with USDA APHIS approval and permit. Permits need to be applied for in January to ensure receipt by March. Permit approval will include nest search and egg treatment techniques. Adhere to all permit conditions and carry your permit with you during control work.