

COPING



Quinte
CONSERVATION

with *Canada Geese*



WHY

are there so many geese?

It's hard to believe that at the beginning of the 20th century the Canada Goose had almost disappeared as a result of unregulated hunting. The re-introduction of the Canada Goose has been highly successful. Some people think it has been too successful! Some of the reasons for increasing populations include increased waste grain availability, loss of predators, decline in hunter numbers, and manicured lawns, parks and golf courses.



Manicured lawns and shorelines, golf courses and sportsfields provide ideal living spaces for Canada Geese. They like short, succulent grass to feed upon because taller grass isn't as palatable to them. These short grasses, besides being a food source, also provide security for the geese. They dislike tall grasses where predators could be hiding.

WHAT

problems do they cause?

Canada Geese can cause many problems for farmers. In the spring they do damage to crops such as winter wheat and rye. In the fall, they feed in swathed or harvested fields. Farmlands aren't the only places where Canada Geese are destructive. Sportsfields, shorelines, parks, golf courses, and private property also suffer from these birds. The cost of cleaning up these facilities is great in terms of labour and supplies. Goose droppings are unsightly and unpleasant and can create slipping hazards.

WHAT

can you do?

CHANGE

the habitat

Deep, landscaped ponds surrounded by mowed lawn contribute to the goose population because they provide ideal goose breeding and feeding areas. You can make your property less attractive to geese by concentrating your efforts on shoreline areas. Creating natural barriers of shrubs and tall grass will reduce goose damage in spring and early summer. Fences can be used alone or along with a natural barrier. A naturalized shoreline will not be as attractive to geese as a manicured one.

Scare devices such as flags or scarecrows can be the most effective and least expensive scaring method. Flags can be made from black garbage bags. No matter what technique you use, you will have to be persistent.



MODIFY

farm practices

Straight-combine cereal grains, whenever possible, rather than swathing. Delaying tillage practices after harvest can provide enough waste grain to attract waterfowl away from vulnerable crops.

Establishing a “lure crop” may also help. Plant a 10 meter strip of forage where geese are exiting the wetland. Any good hay mix will do. This technique can work well when scare flags are placed between the grass strip and the field.

Information courtesy of: Grand River Conservation Authority, Ducks Unlimited, Ontario Stewardship, Environment Canada and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

For more information:

www.quinteconservation.ca

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