

Options to manage geese

Plymouth's environment can support more Canada geese than are compatible with public health, good water quality and public tolerance. The core of an affordable, long term solution to coexisting with these birds is in the hands of Plymouth citizens.

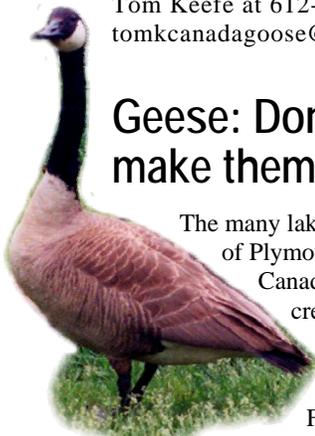
As long as the geese find their favorite habitat (see article below), they will continue to make their home around Plymouth's ponds and lakes.

The best management practices (BMP's) listed at right are the tools residents can use to make Plymouth less hospitable to geese.

Getting Help

Canada geese are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, so physical management methods or trapping requires federal or state permits. The University of Minnesota's Canada Goose Program holds these permits and provides goose management services to both public and private parties through Canada Goose Management, Inc.

Individuals or groups wishing to use their services can contact Tom Keefe at 612-812-0224 or by email at tomkcanadagoose@aol.com



Geese: Don't want them? Don't make them feel at home

The many lakes, ponds and wetlands that dot the City of Plymouth make it a prime stopping place for Canada geese. But it takes more than water to create a haven for the long-necked fowl.

Look at it from the goose's point of view:

First, there's the favorite menu selection – grass. Better still, the grass is fertilized to a lush green, then clipped short enough to allow you to keep a lookout for predators. Without looking too far you can find grass all the way down to the edge of a pond or lake. Now you can enjoy a snack of the tender, emergent plants growing just beyond the water's edge.

Finally, there are those friendly folk who toss you sumptuous treats of corn or stale bread. What a place to raise a family!

It sounds nice, but we are paying a price for our hospitality? The rising populations of geese are destroying developing plant beds along fragile lakeshores. Their droppings are polluting local waterways and adding phosphorus that promotes excessive algae growth.

Without suggesting any drastic or cruel measures, how can we make life not quite so comfortable for the geese? Just a few simple measures may help discourage them from some of their haunts. A buffer of taller plants and grasses next to the shore of a lake creates an unappealing hangout for geese. (Who knows what fox or dog is hiding there, after all?)

BMPs* for goose management

Canada geese are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, so any lethal management methods or trapping are not allowed without federal or state permits. Instead, the most effective way to deter geese is to make an area uninviting to them. Here are some techniques that anyone could use in an effort to deter geese from making their homes where they are not wanted.

Eliminate feeding

Wildlife in general should not be fed. As long as residents feed the geese, any goose management or removal strategy will be ineffective.

Hazing

People or trained dogs chase the geese out as soon as they land in an area.



Exclusion

A fence placed around the water body restricts movement of geese from water to upland areas, preventing nesting.



Landscaping

A buffer of natural landscaping restricts the movement of geese and minimizes their feeding.

Repellents

Naturally derived chemicals are sprayed on the grass to make it less palatable to the geese.

Scare techniques

Various devices are used to scare geese. Life-sized plastic owls, pop-up balloons with eyes and dead goose look-alikes are some techniques.

* Best Management Practices

Discourage family members from feeding the geese. Geese aren't likely to leave a place where they get free handouts.

Protect young plants with fences that don't allow geese to fly in and harvest what you worked hard to plant.

In other words, as much as possible, don't roll out the welcome mat for these graceful birds whose growing populations are becoming a growing problem for water quality.