

# Duck, Duck. . . Canada Goose!

Canada Geese, which have become well-adapted to the presence of humans, can cause “human-goose conflicts” within the community. With nesting areas located within close proximity to people, management of goose nesting can be an important part of an overall integrated management approach to living with Canada Geese in our community.



## Legal Status:



### Protection Status:

- All Canada Geese, their nests, and eggs are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act & by Illinois State Law.
  - Regardless of if they migrate or not.
- Federal & State laws prohibit capturing and/or killing of Canada Geese in Illinois outside of the legal hunting season.



### Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR):

- Some management methods may require a permit; which can be obtained from IDNR.
- State permits can be obtained (before any activity is conducted) to destroy nests & eggs.

### Capture & Relocation:

- IDNR does not currently permit this practice.
- Geese have strong homing instincts:
  - Will often return to original site.
- Relocation has potential for disease spread & increased conflicts with other geese.

## Stages of Nesting:



### Nesting Season:

- Late February through mid-May
- Geese begin to establish nesting territories

### Hatching: Early May

### “Clutch” of Eggs:

- A pair of geese will produce a single “clutch” of eggs.
  - Consisting of 4-7 eggs (Average: 5)
- Lay one egg every 1-12 days



### Incubation Period: 28 days .

- Female incubates the eggs.
- Male guards the nest from a short distance away.

### Goslings:

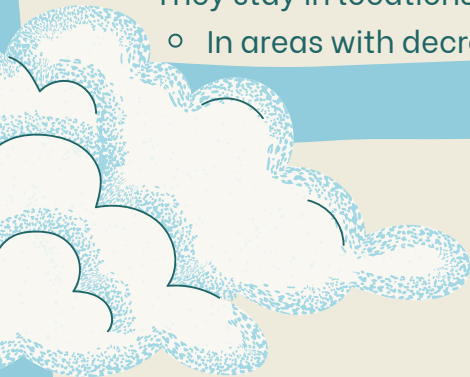
- Can walk, swim, & feed within 24 hours.
- Able to fly within 2-3 months of age.

## Habitat:



### Migratory:

- Canada Geese have become more & more adapted to human-altered areas.
  - *Examples:* parks, golf courses, planters, landscaped areas in parking lots, etc.
- While they tended to be primarily migratory birds, they can be seen present year-round.
- They stay in locations where food and water (i.e., ponds) are plentiful; and
  - In areas with decreased hunting and/or predators = security.



## Conflict Management:

*Feeding wildlife human-food can quickly make them dependent on humans; causing these birds to be unable to forage for themselves.*

### Eliminate Feeding:

- Canada Geese will congregate where food is easily found (i.e., where people feed them).
- Human food is not a nutritionally-appropriate diet:
  - Young goslings fed human food are prone to developing a wing deformity.
  - This permanent deformity prevents/limits flight.



### Natural Diet:

- They eat a variety of foods, including: grasses, clover, aquatic plants, grains, etc.

*Remember, without a permit issued by IDNR, there are limits to what can be done to control Canada Geese.*

### Site Aversion:

- Geese are more willing to relocate in early Spring, prior to establishing a nesting area.
  - Also in late summer, when goslings can fly.

### Understanding Behavior:

- Canada Geese have adapted well to living among people; and are predisposed to ignore people.
- Approaching a nest (territory) or family of goslings will provoke defensive reactions.

### Physical Barriers/Fencing:

- Barriers put at the water's edge (or around another area you want to exclude geese).
- Ensure geese are not able to walk around the fence.
  - Geese will tend to go elsewhere.

## Treatment of Nests & Eggs:

### “Addling”:

- Refers to any process by which an egg ceases to be viable.
  - Prevents goose eggs from hatching.
- Aids in curbing the rapid growth of goose populations at a local scale.
  - Controls goose nesting.

