

Project Information

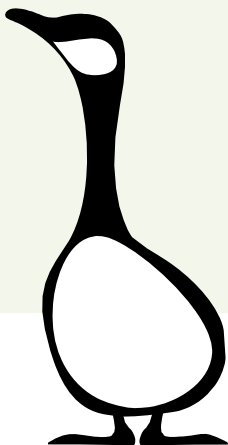
The **Canada Goose Information Network** seeks input from the public. The network will also provide volunteer opportunities and facilitate the distribution of educational materials about geese in the City.

Any citizens interested in Canada geese in the City of Winnipeg are encouraged to join.

For more information and how to get involved in the project, please visit:

<http://winnipeg.ca/publicworks/Naturalists/Goose.asp>

The City of Winnipeg belongs to the **Urban Goose Working Group**. The group is a collaboration between the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Airport Authority, and other stakeholders. The Urban Goose Working Group was formed to help address some of the issues that high populations of Canada geese can create in the City.



Urban Canada Geese

Across Canada and the US, Canada Goose populations have been on the rise in urban areas. Canada Geese are able to thrive in cities and have adapted well to the presence of humans and the noises of the city.

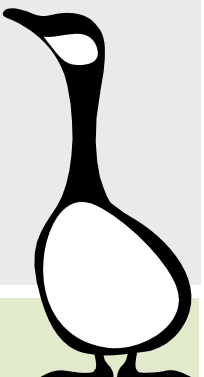
As the population of Canada geese increases, people's tolerance for geese can decrease. More geese intuitively results in an increase in droppings, more noise, and greater amounts of lawn damage. Residents may become concerned about aggressive birds and other safety issues.

Even in light of these issues, the positive impact of having wildlife in the City cannot be overlooked. Geese provide recreational opportunities for bird watching and wildlife photography. More simply, there is joy in seeing a gaggle of goslings.



There are two distinct populations of geese. **Resident or urban geese** are found in Winnipeg throughout the spring, summer and fall. Urban geese nest, raise their young, and moult in cities. They spend a lot of their time feeding on the grass in parks, on school fields and on people's lawns.

Migratory geese arrive in the fall. These geese are staging for migration arriving from outside the City. They use retention ponds as roosting sites, usually leaving at dawn and returning at dusk.



Canada Geese in Winnipeg

In 2012, populations of Canada geese were counted in the City of Winnipeg with the help from members of the Urban Goose Working Group. Resident geese (adults and goslings) were counted in the summer at 89 retention ponds. During the fall migration, geese were counted at retention basins and at parks and fields located both inside and just outside of the perimeter.

We found:

- Resident geese numbered **just over 2000 adult geese** and goslings.
- The arrival of the migratory population increased the population to over **70 000 geese**.
- Areas that had higher numbers of resident geese did not necessarily have the highest number of migratory geese in the fall.



Living with Canada Geese

Canada Geese often use backyards and parks near retention basins for setting up nests and for feeding on grass. Here are some ideas if you would like to prevent geese from using your yard:

Barriers

Use short fences, densely planted shrubs or large rocks and boulders as a barrier between the water and your lawn.



Landscaping

Geese prefer to eat the fresh, new shoots of grass commonly found in residential areas. Reducing fertilizer use, letting grass grow longer and letting grass go dormant in the summer months can help with discouraging from geese using your lawn as food. Seeding fescue instead of Kentucky bluegrass can help, too.

Scaring/Deterrents

Scare devices could be: fake coyotes, an owl decoy, or scare tape. It is very important to move these devices around often to prevent the geese from getting used to their presence.



Tips:

- Once geese have a nest on your property it will be very difficult to encourage them to move away, using these techniques before the geese even arrive will increase success.
- Using a combination of techniques will lead to greater chance of success.
- Any techniques used must respect City of Winnipeg by-laws and the Migratory Birds Act.



Canada Geese are protected under the federal **Migratory Birds Act**. The Act prevents hunting, killing, capturing, translocating, disturbing, selling, purchasing or possessing Canada Geese or their parts (feathers, nests, eggs, etc.), except as permitted by regulations under the Act.

Keeping the *wild* in wildlife

Feeding geese is *not* recommended for a few important reasons:

Changes the behaviour of geese

Geese that are fed lose their natural wariness of humans which can place them at risk.

Feeding attracts more geese to the area

Geese congregating in areas where food is being provided concentrates their droppings which can be problematic.

Feeding can delay migration

Let geese respond to the natural cues to move south in the fall.

Geese do not need this food to survive

Geese are herbivores and have an almost endless supply of grass and other plants to eat in cities. This food fits the nutritional requirements of geese.

It is understandable that people like to have close connections to wildlife but consider fostering this connection through other ways, wildlife photography is one example.

