

Canada Geese Management

Our lakes provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife; from insects to small mammals, to outstanding fisheries, to numerous birds and migratory waterfowl. Occasionally, the natural balance of a habitat is stressed by human interaction or by excessive wildlife population. Such is the case of Canada geese.

Fall migration historically starts in late August and early September so that birds can escape the cold weather and freezing bodies of water by traveling to warmer southern areas with open water. Spring migration starts in late January and early February, during which birds fly north, following the melting snowline until they reach nesting grounds in the northern United States and Canada. **Migratory Canada geese have in general become non-migratory**, causing them to stay in their current environment near bodies of water where food sources are available. This changes their federal classification from migratory waterfowl to resident waterfowl and allows us, with a permit from the US Department of Agriculture, to reduce the population or suppress their reproduction.

The primary risk to humans is the extraordinary quantity of feces deposited on our lakes and surrounding property. Not only is this aesthetically unpleasant but it is a real threat to the health of our community. This creature is the major contributor to high fecal coliform counts on our beach and phosphorus and nitrate levels that nurture plant growth in our lakes. Collateral damage results from geese grazing and pulling grass and crops up by the roots. They are also aggressive during mating season and can break human bones if they attack from the air.

With the support of the United States Department of Agriculture Lake Arrowhead has initiated an aggressive addling program that targets early stage newly laid eggs in the spring. In 2016 over 40 eggs

were prevented from hatching. Nevertheless we still have a resident population of between 30 and 40 adults.

So what to do? There are at least a dozen methods available to reduce the population. The most extreme methods involve euthanizing by means of capture or hunting. Lake Arrowhead believes the most humane method is an alternate termed "Nest Management". This method is called "addling" and involves finding the nests, pushing the goose off the nest while guarding against a gander attack. The eggs are removed one at a time and pierced with an ice pick to make the egg non-viable. This is done within the first 13 days of their 28-day gestation. Geese lay eggs through the entire season so we check the nests every two-week to assure new eggs have not been laid.

Please do not destroy eggs or nests. We monitor all nests that we are aware of. If the eggs are destroyed the geese will lay more. Or they may move to a location were not monitoring. **If you see a nest please let me know by calling 973-886-4000** and we will take appropriate action. It is our belief that preventing gosling from being hatched is preferable to dealing with a full grown goose that can live 10-20 years. The methods we employ are by permit issued by the US Department of Agriculture through the Township of Denville.

Please do feed the geese. It is a violation of Denville Township Ordinance 3-12.24 to feed wildlife:

d. Prohibited conduct. No person shall feed, in any public park or on any other property owned or operated by the Township, or on any private property, any wildlife, excluding confined wildlife (for example, wildlife confined in zoos, parks or rehabilitation centers, or unconfined wildlife at environmental education centers).

e. Enforcement. All police officers of the Township and the Division of Health are hereby given full power and authority and are charged with the duty to enforce all provisions of this section.