

Canada Goose Management Series: *Capture and Euthanasia*



Joseph B. Paulin, Program Associate in Wildlife Management & David Drake, Ph.D., Extension Specialist in Wildlife Management

There is a wide range of non-lethal and lethal options available for Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) management. This fact sheet, part of a series that examines goose management options currently employed, will present information on **capture and euthanasia** techniques that may be used to remove geese from your property. For information on non-lethal goose management techniques, please contact your county's Rutgers Cooperative Extension office. We define the technique and explore the advantages and disadvantages of capture and euthanasia in terms of, among other factors, amount of effort required to implement, effectiveness, and cost. Please keep in mind that each particular situation where conflict exists between human and goose populations is unique and usually involves the integration of more than one management option. More importantly, resolution of the conflict often requires support from residents of the community where the problem is occurring.

Migratory vs. Resident Canada Geese:

There are two distinct populations of Canada geese that can be found in New Jersey and throughout the continental United States. **Migratory Canada geese** nest in localized areas throughout Canada, Newfoundland, Labrador, and Alaska and **migrate** annually to winter in the continental United States with some reaching as far south as northern Mexico. **Resident Canada geese** nest and/or reside predominantly within the continental United States and typically **do not migrate** to annual wintering grounds. As the name suggests, they are usually permanent residents of the area in which they are found.

Definition:

It is necessary to secure and have on your person a federal depredation permit in order to capture and euthanize geese. Special Canada goose permit applications can be obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services [(USDA-APHIS-WS) 908-735-5654] and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://forms.fws.gov/3-200-67.pdf>).

Capture and euthanasia involves trapping and euthanizing captured geese according to methods approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). An example of a commonly used AVMA-approved method is a carbon dioxide gas chamber. Authorities listed on a Federal/State permit may significantly reduce local resident Canada goose populations by capturing and euthanizing geese involved in a damage situation. Geese are most easily captured from early-June through early-July when they molt, or loose their flight feathers. Molting of the flight feathers cause geese to be flightless for approximately 30 days, or until new flight feathers are grown. Acceptable means for capturing geese include netted panel traps (during the molt), swim-in traps, decoy traps, dip nets, cannon or rocket nets, and by hand. Upon capture, geese are placed in poultry crates and euthanized, then buried, incinerated, or donated to food banks. Only a trained professional should euthanize captured geese. Carcasses intended for human consumption must be processed and donated according to state regulations. Federal and state regulations permit the annual capture and removal of resident Canada geese. This typically occurs in New Jersey during June and July, when migratory geese are not present.



Advantages:

Where circumstances call for lethal removal of resident Canada geese, public attitudes, safety concerns, and firearm ordinances may prohibit conventional control methods, such as hunting and permitted depredation shooting, from being implemented. If accepted by the community, capture and euthanasia can be used to reduce resident Canada goose populations, or can be used in conjunction with hunting and permitted depredation shooting programs. The public may accept capture and euthanasia as a lethal resident Canada goose removal program if it is done in a humane manner. The report of the American Veterinary Medical Association Panel on Euthanasia has approved euthanasia methods deemed humane.

Disadvantages:

Perhaps the largest drawback to capture and euthanasia is that it can be cost prohibitive and continued annual expenditures, permits, and processing fees are required to maintain resident Canada goose populations at an acceptable level. In addition, communities consist of a diverse public representing many different stakeholder groups. As with any lethal method of resident Canada goose management, capture and euthanasia may be controversial and may generate protests from groups opposed to lethal approaches to wildlife management for reasons including public safety concerns or moral objection. Therefore, it is recommended that lethal management techniques are preceded by non-lethal approaches as well as public involvement in the decision-making process to determine the best resident Canada goose management protocol for your community.

Costs:

Relative to other resident Canada goose management options, capture and euthanasia can be labor intensive and expensive. Capture and euthanasia is relatively expensive due to the necessity of establishing trap

sites, purchasing material for constructing traps, and personnel required for safe and humane animal handling.

Additional Sources of Information on Canada Goose Management:

Rutgers Cooperative Extension:

- Contact your local Rutgers Cooperative Extension office, listed in the blue pages under County Government, or visit the RCE, web site, www.rce.rutgers.edu.

United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services:

- State Director: 908-735-5654

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife:

- Principal Wildlife Biologist: 609-628-3218

References:

- American Veterinary Medical Association. 2001. *2000 Report of the AVMA Panel on Euthanasia*. Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Vol. 218, No. 5.
- Bucknall, J.L. 1999. *Controlling Canada Goose Damage*. United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services.
- Drake, D. and J. B. Paulin. FS1024. 2003. *A Goose is a Goose? Identifying Differences Between Migrant and Resident Canada Geese*. Rutgers Cooperative Extension.
- Drake, D. and J. B. Paulin. FS1027. 2003. *Positive Benefits and Negative Impacts of Canada Geese*. Rutgers Cooperative Extension.
- Drake, D., Lock, M. and J. Kelly. 2002. *Managing New Jersey's Deer Population*. Rutgers Cooperative Extension.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service. 2002. *Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Resident Canada Goose Management*.

Mention or display of a trademark, proprietary product, or firm in text or figures does not constitute an endorsement by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and does not imply approval to the exclusion of other suitable products or firms.

© 2004 by Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension, NJAES, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Desktop publishing by Rutgers-Cook College Resource Center

Published: March 2004

**RUTGERS COOPERATIVE RESEARCH & EXTENSION
N.J. AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION
RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK**

Distributed in cooperation with U.S. Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of Congress on May 8 and June 30, 1914. Rutgers Cooperative Extension works in agriculture, family and community health sciences, and 4-H youth development. Dr. Karyn Malinowski, Director of Extension. Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension provides information and educational services to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Rutgers Cooperative Research & Extension is an Equal Opportunity Program Provider and Employer.