



For More Information Contact

wildlifecontrol@sPCA.bc.ca
BC SPCA Animal Helpline
1.855.622.7722

BCSPCA
SPEAKING FOR ANIMALS

GEESE & SWANS

WILDLIFE CONTROL BEST PRACTICES

Species

Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*), Snow goose (*Chen caerulescens*), Trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*), Mute swan (*Cygnus olor*)

Legal Designation

Protected, *Migratory Birds Convention Act*

Disease Risks

Contamination of water sources with parasites and *coliform* bacteria

Seasonal Considerations

Babies take several weeks to learn to fly and adults go through a summer moult that leaves them flightless

Did you know?

Geese and swans are attentive, devoted parents. Healthy orphaned babies can often be introduced to a new family, in consultation with a wildlife rehabilitator.

Canada goose, Photo Credit: Patricia Goldberg

Common Conflicts

Geese and swans can come into conflict with people because of their droppings, by nesting in urban structures, gathering in golf courses, parks and other green spaces, flying close to airports and/or flight routes, crossing busy roads with babies, acting defensively while protecting a nest, and gathering in large groups.

Sometimes Canada geese will nest on balconies or rooftops and their babies may need help to come down safely. If the flightless babies end up in a backyard pool, they will need to be rescued immediately with a ramp or a net.

Call an **AnimalKind** accredited company if you need help managing geese or swans

Visit www.animalkind.ca for more information



Conflict Prevention

The nests and eggs of these birds, including the introduced mute swan, are protected. Empty nests must be registered as “abandoned” with the federal government and empty for a designated wait period before they can be removed. Discourage intentional feeding of geese and swans – feeding may be illegal in some municipalities.

Habitat modification can help prevent gathering or nesting, examples include:

Plant barriers: use dense, tall plant cover (minimum 75 cm high, 6 m wide)

Plant attractants: attract birds to winter cover crops, like cereal grasses, to help reduce conflicts elsewhere

Barriers: erect grids of overhead rope, cable, wire, flagging or Mylar® tape, or a perimeter fence around ponds or swimming pools

Landscaping: increase slope of banks to 64° or more within 2 m of water, mow grass less frequently, or change to a coarse grass species

sPCA.bc.ca/urban-wildlife





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Snow geese, Photo Credit: Debbie Thiessen



RECOMMENDED

Actions & methods for control

Geese and swans can be hazed using devices like flags, balloons, reflective tape, purpose-designed lasers, motion-activated sprinklers, noise canons or pyrotechnics, or goose repellent sprayed on lawns. A permit is not required to haze birds with specially-trained dogs as long as there is no contact with the birds or their eggs (*Migratory Bird Regulations 24 (1), 24 (3)*). A federal permit is required to haze migratory birds with a raptor. To be most effective, hazing should begin as soon as birds appear, before they establish territories or begin nesting. Most pairs have an established breeding territory by mid to late March.

Egg addling and other fertility control can prevent egg development and limit reproduction. A permit is required for egg addling and should be conducted with minimal disturbance to nesting bird(s). Damage permits are always required to kill migratory birds.



NOT RECOMMENDED

Actions & methods for control

It is illegal to kill geese and swans without a permit. If a permit is granted, a legal control method must be used. The following are legal methods, but they are not recommended as they can cause suffering, may be high risk to non-target animals, and/or are difficult to administer. Check local bylaws and/or regulations to confirm whether the method is legal in a municipality.

- Alpha-chloralose
- Carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide
- Cervical dislocation (< 3 kg)
- Captive bolt or shot to brain
- Round-up during flightless moult period
- Pinioning or permanent “de-fighting”



ILLEGAL

Actions & methods for control

- Bait poisons or chloroform
- Blunt force trauma
- Crossbow
- Drowning
- Suffocation
- Freezing (including dry ice)
- Vehicle exhaust
- Cervical dislocation (> 3 kg)



Photo Credit: David Bartlett