

Resident Canada Goose Management: Draft EIS Public Meetings 2002



U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service

“Working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

In cooperation with

U.S. Department of Agriculture APHIS Wildlife Services

“Providing leadership in wildlife damage management in the protection of America’s agricultural, industrial and natural resources, and safeguarding public health and safety”

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Migratory Bird Management



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The reason we're here:

To explain the DEIS and its proposed action
and to listen to your comments



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National Environmental Policy Act:

- NEPA requires the completion of an EIS to analyze environmental and socioeconomic impacts associated with “significant” actions
- NEPA requires public involvement, including a scoping period before the DEIS and a comment period after the DEIS



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Scoping and Public Involvement

- Public scoping began in August 1999 and ended in March 2000
- Over 3,000 written comments were received and over 1,250 people attended 9 public meetings



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Public scoping found that...

- Top issues of concern were:
 - Property damage and conflicts
 - Methods of conflict abatement
 - Sport hunting opportunities
 - Economic impacts
 - Human health and safety concerns
 - Impacts to Canada geese



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NEPA outlines a specific format for an EIS:

- PURPOSE AND NEED
- ALTERNATIVES
- AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT
- ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES



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PURPOSE AND NEED

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Purpose:

- 1) to evaluate alternative strategies to reduce, manage, and control resident Canada goose populations in the U.S.
- 2) to provide a regulatory mechanism that would allow State and local agencies, other Federal agencies, and groups and individuals to respond to damage complaints or damages
- 3) to guide and direct resident Canada goose population management activities in the U.S.



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Need:

Increasing resident Canada goose populations
+
growing conflicts, damages, and socioeconomic impacts
=
a reexamination of the Service's resident Canada goose
management



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ALTERNATIVES

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The DEIS examines seven management alternatives:

- Alternative A – No Action
- Alternative B – Non-lethal Control and Management (Non-permitted activities)
- Alternative C – Nonlethal Control and Management (including Permitted activities)
- Alternative D – Expanded Hunting Methods and Opportunities
- Alternative E – Integrated Depredation Order Management
- Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)
- Alternative G – General Depredation Order



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Alternative A – No Action

Continue current resident Canada goose management practices (status quo)

- No additional regulatory methods
- Continued issuance of depredation permits
- Special and regular hunting seasons
- Special Canada goose permits



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Alternative B – Non-lethal Management (Non-permitted activities)

Cease all lethal control of resident Canada geese and their eggs

- Only non-lethal harassment techniques allowed
- No permits issued
- Special hunting seasons discontinued



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Alternative C – Non-lethal Management (including Permitted activities)

Cease all permitted lethal control of resident Canada geese

- Promotion of non-lethal harassment techniques
- No depredation or Special Canada goose permits issued
- Egg addling allowed with permit
- Special hunting seasons continued



Alternative D – Expanded Hunting Methods and Opportunities

Provides new regulatory options to increase the harvest of resident Canada geese

- Authorizes additional hunting methods such as electronic calls, unplugged guns, and expanded shooting hours
- Operational during Sept. 1-15 seasons
- Experimental during Sept 16-31 seasons
- Must be conducted outside of other open seasons



Alternative E – Integrated Depredation Order Management

- Consists of Airport Depredation Order, Nest and Egg Depredation Order, Agricultural Depredation Order, and Public Health Depredation Order
- Implementation up to the State wildlife agency
- Special hunting seasons continued
- Issuance of depredation permits and Special Canada goose permits continued



Alternative E – Integrated Depredation Order Management

Airport Depredation Order

- Authorizes airports to establish and implement a program including indirect and/or direct population control strategies
- Intent of program is to significantly reduce goose populations at airports
- Management actions must occur on premises



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Alternative E – Integrated Depredation Order Management

Nest and Egg Depredation Order

- Allows the destruction of resident Canada goose nests and eggs without a permit
- Intent of program is to stabilize breeding populations



Alternative E – Integrated Depredation Order Management

Agricultural Depredation Order

- Authorizes landowners, operators, and tenants actively engaged in commercial agriculture to conduct indirect and/or direct control strategies on geese depredating agricultural crops
- Management actions must occur on premises



Alternative E – Integrated Depredation Order Management

Public Health Depredation Order

- Authorizes State, County, municipal, or local public health officials to conduct indirect and/or direct control strategies on geese when recommended by health officials that there is a public health threat
- Management actions must occur on premises



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Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)

- Would establish a new regulation authorizing State wildlife agencies (or authorized agents) to conduct (or allow) management activities on resident goose populations
- Intent is to allow State wildlife management agencies sufficient flexibility to deal with problems caused by resident geese within their respective State



Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)

- Would authorize indirect and/or direct population control strategies such as aggressive harassment, nest and egg destruction, gosling and adult trapping and culling programs
- Would allow implementation of any of the specific depredation orders in Alternative E



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Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)

- During existing special hunting seasons, would expand methods of take to increase hunter harvest (Alternative D)
 - Authorizes additional hunting methods such as electronic calls, unplugged guns, and expanded shooting hours
 - Operational during Sept. 1-15 seasons
 - Experimental during Sept 16-31 seasons
 - Must be conducted outside of other open seasons



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Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)

- Conservation Order would provide special expanded harvest opportunities during a portion of the Treaty closed period (August 1-31) and open period (Sept. 1-15)
 - Authorizes additional hunting methods such as electronic calls, unplugged guns, expanded shooting hours, and liberalized bag limits
 - Must be conducted outside of other open seasons



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Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)

- Service would annually assess impact and effectiveness of program
- Provision for possible suspension of regulations (Conservation Order and/or regular season changes) when threat no longer present



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Alternative F – State Empowerment (Proposed Action)

- Continue all special and regular hunting seasons
- Continue issuance of depredation and Special Canada goose permits
- State requirements
 - Annually monitor spring breeding population
 - Annually report take under authorized activities



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Alternative G – General Depredation Order

- Would allow any authorized person to conduct management activities on resident geese either posing a threat to health and human safety or causing damage
- Available between April 1 and August 31
- Provides expanded hunting opportunities (Alternative D)
- Continued use of special and regular hunting seasons and the issuance of depredation and special Canada goose permits
- Authorization for all management activities comes directly from the Service



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AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

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Biological Environment

- Resident Canada Goose populations
- Water quality and wetlands
- Vegetation and soils
- Wildlife habitat
- Federally-listed threatened and endangered species



Socioeconomic Environment

- Migratory bird program management
 - Sport hunting program
 - Migratory bird permit program
- Social values and considerations
- Economic considerations
 - Property damages
 - Agricultural crops
- Human health and safety
- Program Costs



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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

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- Forms the scientific and analytic basis for comparison of alternatives
- Analyzes the environmental impacts of each alternatives in relation to the resource categories
- “No Action” alternative provides a baseline for the analysis



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Under “No Action” we expect:

- Populations to continue growth
 - Atlantic Flyway 1.6 million in 10 years
 - Mississippi Flyway 2.0 million in 10 years
 - Central Flyway 1.3 million in 10 years
 - Pacific Flyway 450,000 in 10 years
- Continued and expanded goose distribution problems and conflicts
- Increased workloads
- Continued impacts to property, safety, and health



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Under “State Empowerment” we expect:

- Reduction in populations, especially in problem areas
- Increased hunting opportunities
- Significant reductions in conflicts
- Decreased impacts to property, safety, and health
- Initial workload increases, long-term workload decreases
- Maintains viable resident Canada goose populations



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Recent modeling suggests that to reduce four Flyways' populations from 3.5 million to 2.1 million would require for 10 years:

- Harvest of additional 480,000 geese annually
- Take of additional 852,000 goslings annually
- Nest removal of 528,000 nests annually
- Combination of additional harvest of 240,000 geese annually and take of 320,000 goslings annually



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We believe the only way to possibly attain these numbers:

- Give States the flexibility to address problems within their respective State
- Address population reductions on a wide number of available fronts
- Since States are the most informed and knowledgeable local authorities on wildlife conflicts, primary responsibilities and decisions of the program should be placed with them



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What Comes Next...

- Development of new regulation to carry out proposed action
- Public comment period on DEIS ends May 30, 2002
- Publication of Final EIS and Record of Decision anticipated for Fall 2002



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Written comments can
be sent to:

- USFWS, Division of
Migratory Bird
Management, 4401 N.
Fairfax Drive, Room 634,
Arlington, VA 22203
- canada_goose_eis@fws.gov





Questions or Comments ?