

CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis maxima

Objectives

Waikato Regional Council provides advice and information on Canada geese.

Why are they a pest?

The Canada goose, native to Arctic and temperate areas of North America, was introduced to New Zealand in 1905 and 1920 but did not become established in the North Island until it was re-released in the 1970s. The introductions were from uncertain sources, and probably of mixed stock, but comparisons with North American birds indicate the New Zealand stock is mainly the *Branta canadensis maxima* species.

These geese are widely distributed throughout the Waikato, with flocks reported most frequently on coastal farms from Kāwhia Harbour to Port Waikato and wetland areas in the Waikato and Hauraki districts. They have also been reported by landowners at some sites on the Coromandel Peninsula.

In the water, these geese feed from bottom sediments and also directly on aquatic plants. However, defecation from large numbers of geese is the greater threat to aquatic values. When these geese concentrate at specific sites, their droppings introduce bacteria and nutrients into waterways. The Canada goose also competes with other waterfowl for wetland resources.

Their impact on farm production is largely unquantified, but it is known that five geese may consume the same amount of grass as one sheep and they impact on production by fouling paddocks.

Responsibility for control

Occupiers in the Waikato region, who wish to, may control Canada geese on their property at any time.

- There is no regulatory management programme for Canada goose in the Waikato region.
- In June 2011, the Canada goose was moved from schedule 1 of the Wildlife Act 1953 to schedule 5. This means this species is no longer recognised as a game bird, and that the Fish & Game council no longer have any legal responsibility for its management.
- All occupiers in the Waikato region, who wish to, may control Canada geese on their properties. Control can be done at any time, by any humane means, although there are no poisons registered for goose control.

Control methods

Control of Canada geese can be achieved by shooting as part of an organised control programme, for example moult or aerial culls. However, shooting is not always possible in urban, lifestyle and semi-rural areas. In those areas egg addling, pricking or oiling may be appropriate.

Our animal pest staff are available to provide advice and information on controlling Canada geese on freephone 0800 800 401.

What do they look like?

Canada geese are large, light brown birds with a black neck and head and distinctive 'chin strap' of white feathers.



- Body length ranges between 75cm and 110cm.
- Wingspan ranges between 127cm and 183cm.
- Black head, neck, bill, legs and feet.
- Face has distinctive white patch, sometimes referred to as a 'chin strap'.
- Brown and grey plumage.
- Males weigh up to 6.5kg and females 5.5kg.
- An average nest contains five eggs.

More information

Advice

- For advice and additional information on control methods, call our pest animal staff on freephone 0800 800 401.

Web

- *Waikato Regional Pest Management Plan 2022-2032* – waikatoregion.govt.nz/RPMP
- *Waikato Biosecurity Strategy 2022-2032* – waikatoregion.govt.nz/biosecurity-strategy