



All information provided has been reviewed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife and CA Dept. of Fish & Game and is presented in cooperation with the City of Redwood City.

Canada Goose Mitigation: Recommendations for Redwood Shores

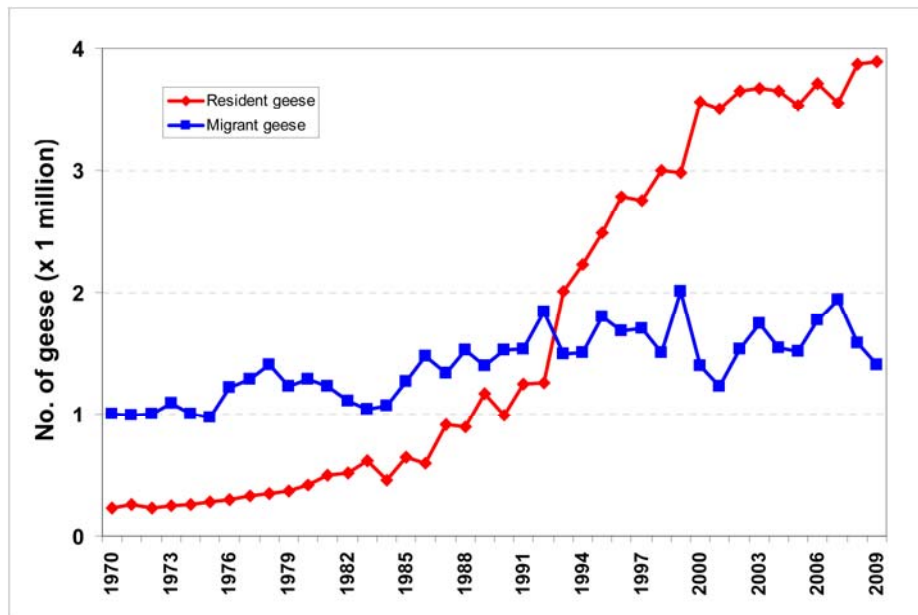
SUMMARY:

Individual homeowners and most commercial tenants will likely not need to take any actions. Most of what is needed will fall to commercial property managers, especially along the Twin Dolphin corridor, Homeowners Associations in the Shores, and Redwood City's Dept. of Parks & Recreation.

BUSINESSES & Shores HOAs: You are encouraged to provide copies of this document to your business tenants & their employees and to your local HOA residents. We want everyone to understand the problem and the actions being suggested to keep the Shores a GREAT place to live and work.

Here is a brief overview:

1. Large numbers of Canada geese have ceased seasonal migration and have become a "resident" species in almost all of the lower 48 states.
2. Current urban & suburban landscaping techniques have created a "preferred habitat" with no natural predators for these geese.
3. Canada geese were a threatened species in the early 1900s, but the population of "resident" geese in the U.S. has quadrupled in just the past 20 years.



(chart & data from Federal Aviation Administration)

4. Resident Canada geese crowd out and compete with native & migrating species for habitat and resources.
5. Resident Canada geese are now designated as a “nuisance” species.
(search “nuisance Canada geese” or “resident Canada geese” on the web for more information)
6. The increasing population of resident Canada geese and the dropping they leave on our sidewalks, parks, and other open spaces here in Redwood Shores is having a negative impact on the quality of life for both Shores residents and businesses.
7. This has also become an economic issue with the costs of constant property clean up for businesses, HOAs, and the City.
8. There is no 100% solution, but there are some simple and humane control methods available to both the City and private property owners — approved by both U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and CA Dept. of Fish & Game —that can:
 - a. help control the location of our resident Canada geese in the Shores;
 - b. help control the movement of resident Canada geese from the waterways onto our lawns, sidewalks, parks, and other open space areas;
 - c. provide methods to begin to reduce the local population.

“Resident” Canada Geese: The PROBLEM

The rapid increase in the numbers of local resident Canada geese and the excrement they leave all over Redwood Shores has created a potential public health hazard in addition to a significant decline in our community's ability to enjoy our parks and walkways. The filth & waste left by these birds has reached the point where our children can't play in our parks without being soiled with goose excrement, and we can't take a walk through many areas of our community without constantly stepping in goose feces. Heavy concentrations of goose droppings contain nitrogen which also result in eutrophication of our waterways, leading to excessive and unnatural water plant and algal growth, further disturbing the habitat for native and migratory species.

Canada geese are grazers, and lawns near water provide an excellent food source. Current urban & suburban landscaping techniques have provided a “preferred habitat”, which is a large, unobstructed, close-cut lawn area close to open water. These open areas with low-cut grass allow the geese to see potential predators before they can get close enough to be a threat. Golf courses, gardens, beaches, residential lawns, and parks are regularly becoming swamped with geese all across the U.S.

A healthy, full grown Canada goose can produce up to 1.5 lbs of dropping every day, quickly fouling their grazing and surrounding areas.

This problem is NOT caused by seasonal migratory or other native waterfowl, and we want these species protected! The problem is with those Canada geese who settled here only as this community developed.



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Our resident Canada geese no longer migrate, and now compete with native and migratory species for resources. Canada geese have become an “overly successful species” without natural predators here in the Shores. They “crowd out” other native and migratory species by taking their food and causing loss of habitat. Although Canada goose populations were nearly eliminated in the early 1900s, there are now over 4 Million in the lower 48 states of the U.S. This number has quadrupled in just the last 20 years.

A large number of communities – not only in the Bay Area but all across the U.S. – have reached the same conclusion regarding the public nuisance of these now “resident” Canada geese. Federal & almost all state wildlife agencies have recognized and adopted regulations to deal specifically with resident Canada geese in communities like ours. In some areas, such as the New York City area, professional wildlife managers have recommended lethal control to reduce the numbers of resident Canada geese.

There is no proposal or suggestion for anything like the “New York solution” here in the Shores, but we do need to begin to take measures to control & reduce our local population of resident Canada geese.

The Need for a Coordinated Plan

Redwood Shores Community Association (RSCA) has worked closely with Redwood City, the California Department of Fish & Game (DFG), and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (FWS) to develop suggested actions – based on “best practices” – that are designed to first begin to control the location & movement of resident Canada geese within the Shores, and to then take additional steps to humanely reduce the future numbers of Canada geese within the Shores.

Property owners and managers need to be aware of one important impact that has been noted in other communities:

RESIDENT CANADA GEESE REMAINING IN THIS AREA WILL MOVE TO THOSE PROPERTIES AND CONCENTRATE IN AREAS WHERE NO CONTROL MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN.

Part of our increasing problem here may be due to the mitigation efforts of several neighboring communities driving even more of these non-migratory birds into the Shores.

We ask all private property owners in the Shores to do their part in the following recommended mitigation actions. We do not want to simply move the problem from one part of Redwood Shores to another.

* Federal Registration & Reporting REQUIREMENTS *

ONLY if you find on your property and plan to destroy nests or eggs will you need to register & report with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This one is really easy.



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All you must do – BEFORE you take any action on nests or eggs – is register online for a “U.S. Depredation Permit”. You will find the permit specific to Canada goose nest & eggs at <https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/geSI.aspx>.

There is a simple online form to fill out, and you can immediately print out your official “permit”.

Also from this web page there are links on the left for a “User Guide” and “FAQs”.

Page 2 of the FAQ provides specific information about registering for HOAs and non-residential and business properties.

This same link will take you back to the form where, at the end of the season, you must report what actions you took and when. Again, this applies only if you find and decide to deal with Canada goose nests and/or eggs on your property.

REGULATORY NOTE: You can be charged by US FWS for failure to register and report, or for making false or fictitious reports. Such actions might also result in the suspension of this program in the Shores.

(The problem with Canada geese is common enough that many counties in California have been exempted from the burden of double-reporting to both state and federal wildlife agencies. There are NO additional requirements for California DFG permitting/reporting in San Mateo County.)

Recommended Actions on Public and Private Property

None of the following suggested actions may be taken by a private party on any public lands, including City parks and the wildlife preserve areas surrounding Redwood Shores!

The following are actions that can be taken ONLY by owners/managers on their private property, or by the City in its parks or City public property.

RSCA is asking each private property owner or their property manager or agent to help with the following:

1. QUIT FEEDING WILDLIFE in Redwood Shores !

IT'S ILLEGAL! City, state, and federal... it's against the law!

Of all of the options we have discussed with wildlife officials, this was always the #1 suggestion.

There are both local ordinances (RWC Section 25.2.02.1) and state regulations (CA Title 14, Section 251.1) against feeding ANY wildlife. While we would hope for voluntary compliance, this can become a point of enforcement action if necessary.

UNDER CALIFORNIA LAW, THE PENALTY CAN BE A FINE OF UP TO \$1,000 AND UP TO SIX (6) MONTHS IN JAIL FOR EACH VIOLATION !

Feeding encourages wildlife – including Canada geese – to remain close to the area where they are fed and to grow accustomed to human interaction. Feeding changes natural behavior and



migration patterns. Feeding by humans leads to overcrowding, the potential spread of disease, and pollution of our waterways.

Not only is feeding by humans dangerous to Canada geese, but it can result in more aggressive and harmful behavior by these geese towards humans.

CITY: Redwood City will be posting NEW “no feeding” signs in public parks and identified public “hot spots” around the waterways to discourage feeding. *(For reference, a copy of the City signs is attached at the end of this document.)*

BUSINESSES: Please request your tenants, employees, and guests on your property to stop feeding wildlife in Redwood Shores. Post “no feeding” signs on your property as necessary, and distribute copies of this information sheet (available at <http://RSCA.org>).

HOAs: Post “no feeding” signs as needed, and please take efforts to ensure that your HOA residents and guests are not feeding ANY wildlife on HOA properties.

Once the artwork for the new “no feeding” signs is available, that artwork will be available to any Shores business or HOA on request. In order to maintain a consistent look throughout the Shores, we urge you to use that artwork. The new artwork will provide a space for each business or HOA to insert their own logo. We will also provide you the name of the vendor producing the signs for the City.

Other Owners: Please don't allow your household members or guests to feed ANY wildlife from your property. This is especially important if your home is on one of our waterways in Redwood Shores.

2. Move the Geese off your Property: Hazing & Control of Location

Property owners and their agents are encouraged to use the following methods as often as necessary to actively move resident Canada geese off of your property. It is permissible to haze Canada geese as long as they are not touched or handled by humans or the agent of a human (dogs, for example).

- a) WATER HOSES: You may hose the geese with water as necessary to move the geese off your property.
- b) DOGS: You may use dogs off leash to move the geese off of your private property as long as the dogs remain on your property and under positive control of their owner or handler. If dogs are off leash or on a long lead, it is recommended that the dog be muzzled to prevent any inadvertent harm to the geese. And please be aware:



* If the dog catches and harms or kills any goose, it would constitute an illegal take of the goose. The owner may be charged by the CA DFG or U.S. FWS.

The best time to use dogs is during the spring to reduce nesting and late summer after the geese have regained flight. Again, especially during their flightless summer molt, dogs should be on leads to prevent the dogs from capturing any geese, and use of muzzle is strongly recommended!

- c) "SCREACHERS": These are electronic noisemakers that imitate natural predators of the Canada goose (eagle & hawk calls) or goose distress calls. These can be effective in larger open areas like parking lots where the first two methods may not be practical.

The "noises" from these devices are generally at a low enough level that most humans will barely perceive them or will hear them only as background "natural" sounds.

However: We do urge CAUTION be used to choose noisemakers that will not disturb those nearby. This is especially important for businesses that may be located near residential areas.

If you search the web you will find many, many other suggested methods. Most have proven not to be effective in the long term. The first two methods above seem to be the best at moving geese off of property without harming them. The third may also keep "new" geese from taking up residence in your areas.

3. Keep the Geese off your Property: Goose Fences & Control of Movement

"Goose fences" are short, ~15-18" high fences that are designed to keep the geese from "walking" from one area to another.

Why don't Canada geese simply fly over the fence? During a few months each summer they shed feathers and lose their ability to fly. The rest of the time, they simply prefer not to fly if they don't have to.

The goal is to "fence off" and block the routes used by geese to move from waterways to their feeding areas, particularly during their flightless summer molt and while herding their goslings.

These fences do not need to be especially sturdy or substantial to deter the movement of Canada geese. Sometimes a single strand of wire or filament 15-16" off ground is sufficient. However, the less substantial the fencing the more likely it will be damaged or broken by other animals or inadvertently by humans.

Property owners — especially for commercial properties — adjacent to the waterways should install fencing at the edge of their property and , if possible, between the waterway and any sidewalk or lawn areas. Also be sure to check with your insurance carrier for any additional markings or requirements to keep the goose fences from becoming a hazard to human activity.

Again, the recommendation is to create a barrier sufficient to keep the geese from "walking" from the waterways onto sidewalks and lawn areas.



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All goose fencing should be checked regularly and repaired immediately if damaged.

NOTE: Redwood City has chosen to use the “Goose D-Fence System” in the parks and around other public areas. You can follow this link to find more information about this particular “single-strand” goose fencing:

http://www.lakerestoration.com/c-4-goose-control.aspx?clid=CNbsoauJt60CFQVvhwod_0WqlA

Examples of more substantial “chain link” style fencing can be seen in these examples from around the waterways in neighboring Foster City:



Unlike the examples pictured above, we are suggesting that businesses and HOAs should install goose fencing around the waterways as close to the water as possible, especially where sidewalks are also close to the waterways.

4. Reducing Attractiveness of Lawn Areas ?

Canada geese are attracted to landscaped lawns since the lack of high grass provides easy feeding and gives them clear sight lines while they graze to keep their eyes out for predators. Canada geese are specifically attracted to the smell of a fresh cut.

There are some suggestions that planting a taller fescue type grass that lays down and has both low water and maintenance requirements might be less attractive to the geese. Apparently, the geese don't eat longer fescues, and you only have to mow it two to three times a year.

5. EGGS & NESTS: Reducing the Population by Control of Reproduction

Neither RSCA nor the City are aware of any significant finds of Canada goose nests inside the Shores. They appear to be nesting primarily in the wildlife preserve area surrounding the Shores.

However, we do see goslings on the inland waterways during the spring and early summer, and we do not believe the hens are walking their young from the outlying preserve areas to the inland waterways. We suspect that there are nests hidden in areas around the inland waterways.

Property managers are strongly encouraged to check carefully for nests under large bushes or other growth that might provide cover, especially growth that may be up against buildings providing more shelter from the elements.

If you do find nests on your property, this is where we can begin to take steps to reduce the numbers of the resident geese who have already decided to settle here.

Again, though:

THERE ARE REGISTRATION & REPORTING REQUIREMENT FOR ANY ACTIONS TAKEN ON CANADA GOOSE NESTS & EGGS! Please see again the earlier section and REGISTER BEFORE you take any of the following actions!

a) NESTS with NO eggs

Registered property owners and/or their agents are encouraged to **disturb, destroy, or remove any nests** found that do not have any eggs in them. After removing any nest, follow up in 7-10 days to see if they rebuild, and scan the area for nest building in a nearby area of the property.

b) NESTS WITH EGGS

If there are eggs in the nest, the nest can NOT be disturbed, destroyed, or removed!

You may not take eggs from the nest for consumption or personal use! Doing so is a violation of Federal law. Removing the eggs also encourages the hen to lay another clutch to replace the missing eggs.

However, eggs in the nest can be prevented from hatching (*reducing the future population*) by any of the following means.



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i) OILING (first preference):

Eggs in the nest can be taken by hand, marked with a grease pencil or permanent marker, covered with a coat of food grade 100% corn oil, then replaced in the nest. Only 100% food grade corn oil may be used to treat eggs. The coat of oil will prevent the eggs from hatching, and you leave the eggs in the nest so that the hen continues to incubate the eggs in a futile attempt to hatch the eggs.

ii) PUNCTURING (second preference):

Eggs in the nest can be taken by hand, punctured with a large pin or other instrument to create a small hole, marked with a grease pencil or permanent marker, then replaced in the nest. You may also rotate the pin inside the egg to disrupt the embryo. This will prevent the eggs from hatching, and leaving the eggs in the nest may prevent the hens from laying more.

iii) SHAKING (“Addling” – least desirable):

Eggs in the nest can be taken by hand, shaken vigorously until sloshing is heard (*this may take 5+ minutes*), marked with a grease pencil or permanent marker, then replaced in the nest. Vigorous shaking disrupts the yolk and prevent the eggs from hatching.

CAUTION: eggs that have been oiled or addled should not be picked up or handled in subsequent visits to the nest. Gas buildup from decay of the interior of the egg may cause the eggs to burst when touched!

c) NESTS with eggs: FOLLOW UP RECOMMENDED!

Nests where the eggs have been oiled, punctured, or addled should be checked again 7–10 days later to see if new eggs have been laid. This is why eggs should be marked during treatment. Any new eggs should be marked and treated as done with the first eggs.

d) MARKING the nests:

You should mark the location of the treated nests on a map so that you can locate the nests for follow up visits.

Remember, you MUST REGISTER before taking any action on nests or eggs, and you must file a one-time report on any actions taken on nests or eggs at the end of the season! All of these recommended actions apply ONLY to owners & managers on private properties.

**NO ACTIONS MAY BE TAKEN BY ANY PRIVATE PARTY IN THE CITY PUBLIC PARKS
OR ON THE PUBLIC WETLANDS SURROUNDING THE SHORES!**



Redwood City's Plan In & Around Parks & Public Property

The City will be taking the following actions in and around City parks and public properties:

1. NO FEEDING Signs:

The "no feeding" sign language has been strengthened (*see the last pages of this document*), and signs will be placed more prominently in parks.

As noted earlier, the artwork for the new "no feeding" signs will be made available to any Shores business or HOA on request. The new artwork will provide a space for each business or HOA to insert their own logo. We will also provide you the name of the vendor producing the signs for the City.

2. Goose Fencing:

The City will be installing goose fencing between the waterways and lawn areas of the parks and other public areas. (*See Section 3 on Page 6 for a web link to see fencing the City will be using.*)

3. Nests & Eggs:

The reports from the City's maintenance personnel are that they have NOT found nest or eggs in the Shores parks. If you find or become aware of Canada goose nests in the City parks or other public areas, please contact Valerie Matonis by email, vmatonis@redwoodcity.org.

Geese in the Roadways: Caution Advised to Motorists

Motorists should always use caution when geese are in the roadway. But also please try to avoid any sudden braking or change of direction to evade geese in the roadways!

Don't cause an accident or create a danger to other vehicles, bicycles in adjacent lanes, or pedestrians in an attempt to avoid striking geese in the roadways.

Hopefully some of these recommended actions will help to control the movement of Canada geese, reduce the numbers trying to cross our main roadways, and reduce this hazard.



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Links to additional information

The following are just a few of the commercial and government links with relevant information:

<http://absolutebirdcontrol.com/canadian-geese?qclid=CMK68s-Jt60CFasaQgodhmhtmlA>

NEST/EGG Registration website

<https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/geSI.aspx>

Resident Canada Goose NEST & EGG DEPREDATION ORDER

<https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/DOC/eRcgrFaq.pdf>

Management Of Canada Goose NESTING

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/downloads/canada_goose.pdf

Dealing with Nuisance, Dangerous or Injured Wildlife, from California Dept. of Fish & Game

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/LivingWithWildlife/>

State Wildlife Agency Contacts and Information on Resident Canada Goose Nest & Egg Destruction

<https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/DOC/eRcgrSCL.pdf>

(See Note 4 at the end specifically exempting San Mateo Co. from CA DFG reporting requirements)

You can find a great deal of additional information simply by searching “**nuisance Canada geese**” or “**resident Canada geese**” on the web.



When the language is finalized, we will update this document with a copy of new signs Redwood City will be posting in City parks and public areas. Similar language can also be used on private properties.

Size to be __ inches by __ inches ?



For use on PRIVATE properties, artwork but without the City logo will provided on request. We want a consistent look for all these signs in the Shores. We will also refer you to the vendor producing these signs for City. Each business or HOA may use their logo in the space used by the City logo if they so desire.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

RSCA wants to thank Redwood City, the California Department of Fish & Game, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for their help and support in preparing this document. We have made every effort to ensure that actions suggested here are in full compliance with all City, State, and Federal laws and regulations.

Chris Beth has been City's primary liaison on the project, and we want to thank him personally for his patience on this project. Thanks also to City Council, City Manager, and City Staff for their encouragement and support.

We particularly recognize the careful review by the Office of the City Attorney of Redwood City. This review led to an amendment to a City Ordinance needed to avoid a conflict between City law and CA & US regulations.

We especially appreciate the cooperation and advice of CA DFG and US FWS in suggesting "best practices" based on their experiences in other areas and in eliminating from consideration many methods that have proven to be either temporary or marginal in effectiveness.

There will be no 100% solution to this problem in the Shores, we are unlikely to see results overnight, and the end results may not prove to be fully satisfactory to everyone.

However, we believe that the actions suggested here are our best opportunity at present to address the issue of the Canada goose over-population in the Shores and the negative impact or their droppings on our parks and walkways.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

There will be additional questions, and we will keep a separate document on the web that can be updated as those questions arise.

