

# Options for Homeowners and Land Managers in Managing Resident Canada Geese Damage

USDA APHIS

Wildlife Services



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Wildlife Biologist

# 1. Wildlife Services:

Our Mission: To provide Federal leadership and expertise to resolve wildlife conflicts and create a balance that allows people and wildlife to coexist peacefully.

## We are:

1. Non-regulatory (we don't enforce laws, just warn you about them)
2. Federal
3. A Cooperative, User Fee Agency
4. Develop Wildlife Management Programs

# Research Based Management Decisions

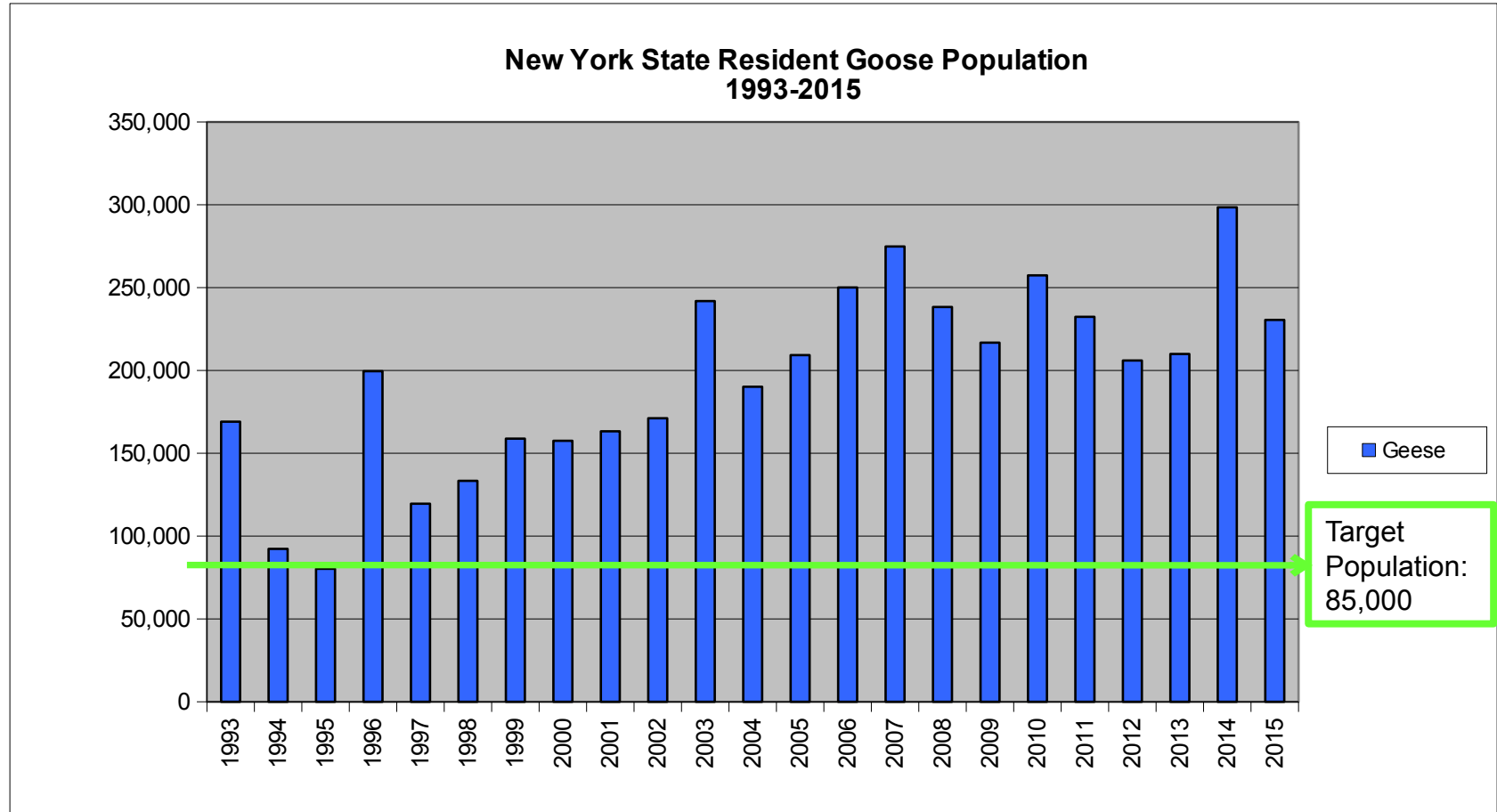
The National Wildlife Research Center is the research arm of USDA Wildlife Services and is the leader in non-lethal wildlife damage solutions

- **Approx. 75% of funding spent on non-lethal management tools and methods**
- **Only facility like it worldwide**
- **Socially acceptable WDM methods**
- **Headquarters: Fort Collins, CO**
- **8 Field Stations**
- **Product Registration Unit**
- *The reason we know that egg oiling is 95-100% effective if done properly.*



# Why are we all here today?

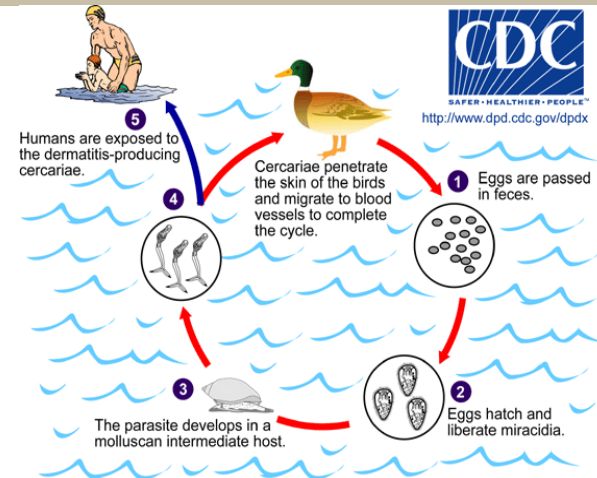
## RESIDENT (NON-MIGRATORY) CANADA GOOSE POPULATION IN NEW YORK 1993-2015

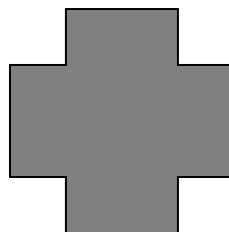
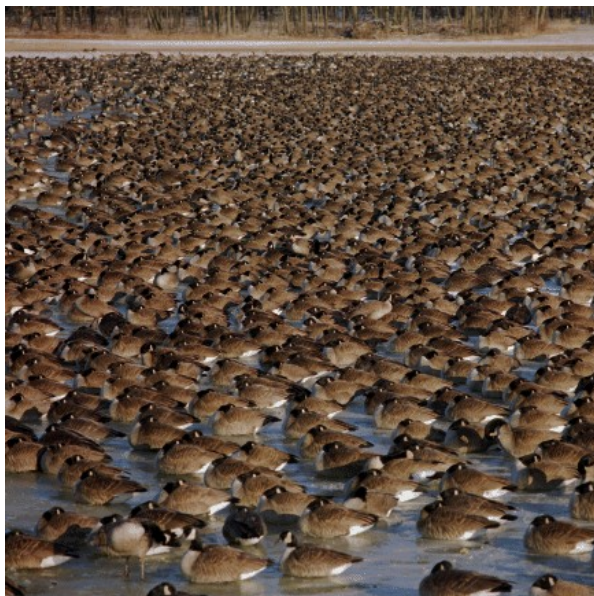




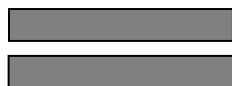
# The Damage caused by Geese:

- Droppings
- Soil Erosion
- Noise
- Aggressive Geese
- Bird Strikes
- Crop Damage
- Water Quality





Photos: Visual Media Services, Fermilab

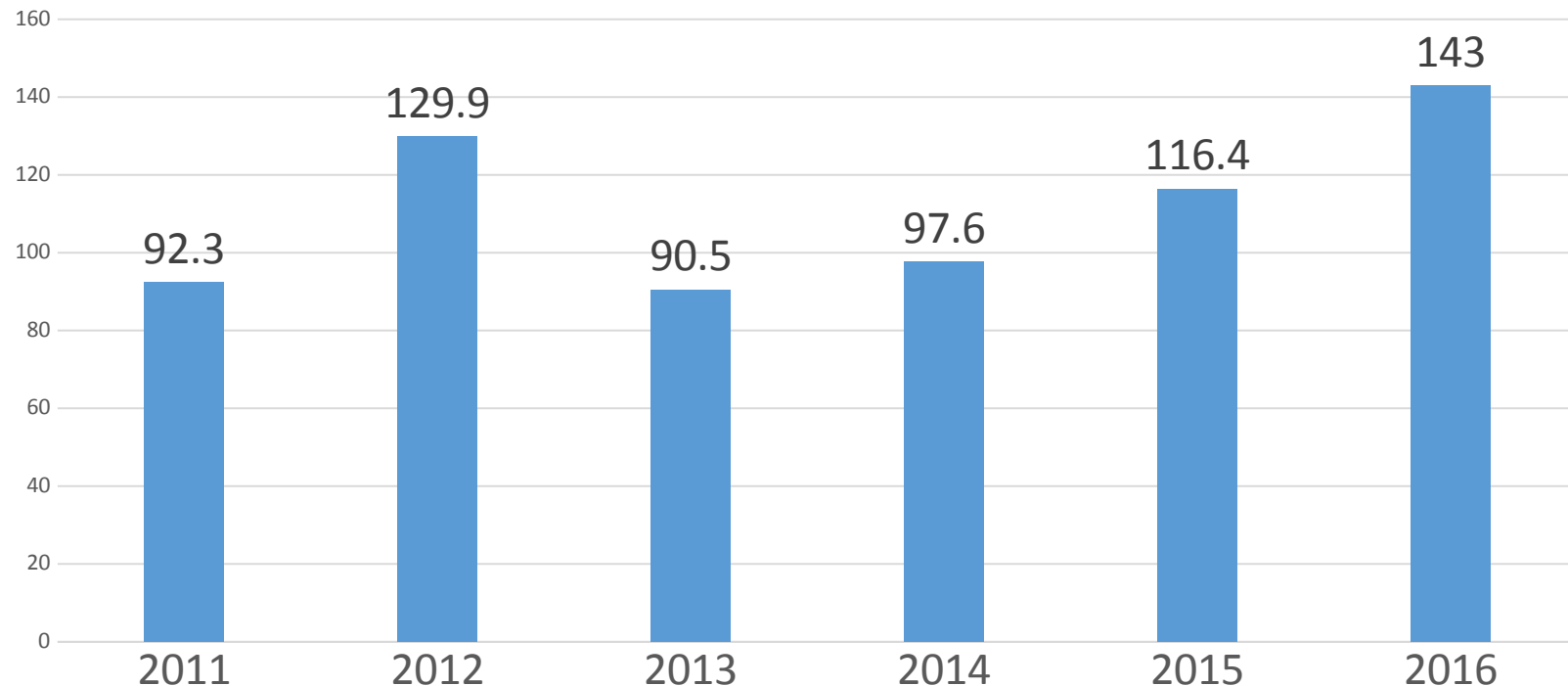


A goose puts out at least 1.5 to almost 2 pounds of manure a day.

(Kear, Janet. 1963. The agricultural importance of wild goose droppings. Wildlife Trust Annual Report 14:72 - 77)

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: Improving Water Quality within the Watersheds

Reduction of Goose Fecal Material in NY Great Lakes  
Watersheds (Tons per year)





# Goose Fecal Contamination of Water Supply and Swimming Beaches

- Goose feces can contain:
- Salmonella
  - E. Coli
  - Campylobacter
  - Cryptosporidium





# What doesn't work:



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# Remove Domestic Waterfowl

## Do Not Release Mute Swans



**Management Options:** Needs to be “community based”  
*AND* accepted by all involved.

**1: Educate and involve community**

**2: No action**

**3: Nest Treatment (Population Stabilization)**

**4: Nest Treatment & Pop. Reduction**

**5: Nest Treatment, Pop. Reduction, & Harassment**



## Public Education:

- Educate about proper goose nutrition (no bread or popcorn)
- Encourage wildlife to remain wild
- Feeding creates dependence on human handouts
- Feeding increases local populations

## Eliminate Supplemental Feeding:

- Creates wrong types of fat
- Increases local populations





# What Works?





# Eliminate supplemental feeding.





# Hazing Techniques

- Pyrotechnics
- Dog Chase
- R/C Boat Chase
- Boat Chase
- Laser (night)





# Pyrotechnics:

## Advantages:

- Loud – startles birds
- Affordable
- Easy to use

## Disadvantages:

- Scares people too!
- Can be dangerous if improperly used
- Potential fire hazard



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## Nest Treatment Options

- DIY: Do It Yourself
- Apply for a free online permit that allows you to oil/puncture/shake eggs on privately owned property.
- <https://www.epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/>

OR

- Hire an outside agency or company to do the work.





## Where do geese nest??

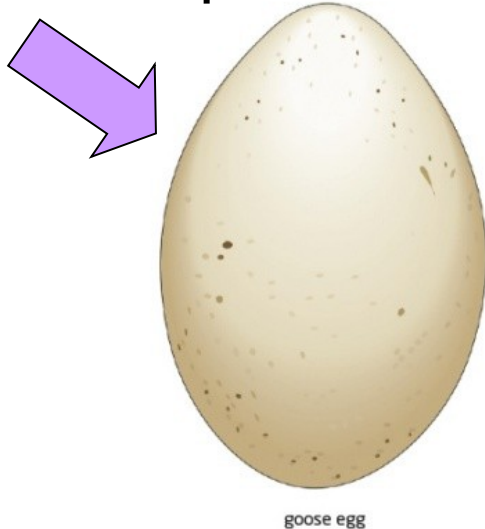
- On the Ground
- Islands
- Peninsulas
- Shoreline
- Rooftops
- Up to 2 miles from water.



# Population Stabilization – Nest Treatment

## Egg oiling

- The oil seals microscopic pores in the eggshell, preventing gas exchange, and further development.



**Goose remains on nest**

Fewer nest predators

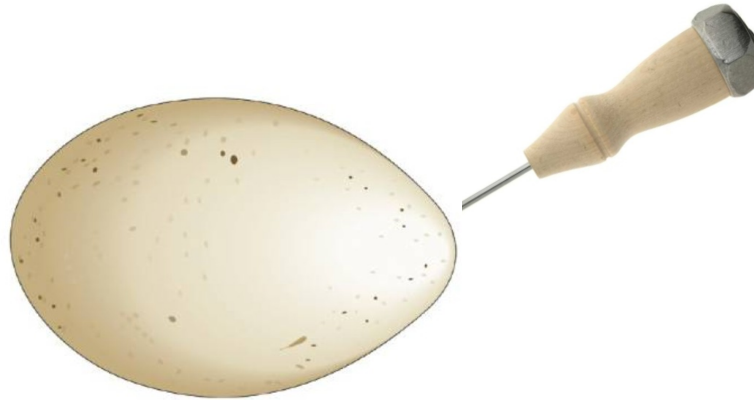
Has to be repeated

\* Method also endorsed  
by the HSUS and PETA



# Population Stabilization

## Puncturing Eggs



- “Scrambles” embryo
- One time application (if timed right)
- May entice nest predators
- More difficult to do correctly





# Safely Interacting with Geese



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# Chemical Deterrents:

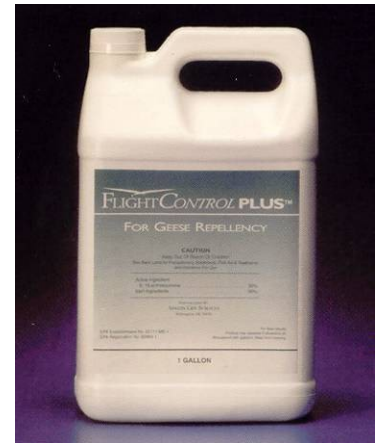
## REJEX-IT Migrate

- **General use pesticide: Private property owners and businesses do not need to be certified pesticide applicators.**
- **Methyl Anthranilate (Taste Aversion)**
- **Cost per acre (1 treatment) = \$130 (2.5 gallons)**
- **Application may last 2-3 weeks**



# SEPRO Flight Control Plus (Geese)

- Restricted use pesticide
- 3A (Turf) or 3B certification
- Anti-feeding (digestive irritation) & visual warning
- Cost per acre = Appx. \$200 (1 gallon)
- Application may last a few weeks





# Legal Harvest

- Liberal hunting seasons have been in place since 1990 for resident Canada geese in NY.
- 8/15 goose per day limit in September

## Licenses needed:

- Small game
- Waterfowl Stamp
- HIP number



# Using the Depredation Permit to Reinforce Non-lethal techniques

- Migratory Bird Depredation Permit
- \$50 and up to 2-3 month process
- Safety First!
- Must be 500 ft away from houses and clear beyond target.





# Habitat Management:

- Tall Grass Management
- Fencing around pond
- Grid wires
- Planting trees



## Disadvantages:

- Incompatible land use
- Geese may make paths
- Fencing unattractive
- Grid wires need adjusting





# Exclusion

Placement of a barrier between Canada geese and the resource needing protection.

Temporary or permanent  
Works during molt.



# Population Reduction:



## Capture and Removals

- Geese are captured during the “molt” when they are flightless in June/July.
- Geese are crated and transported to a licensed poultry processor.
- Processed goose meat is then donated to a local food bank.



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# Population Reduction:



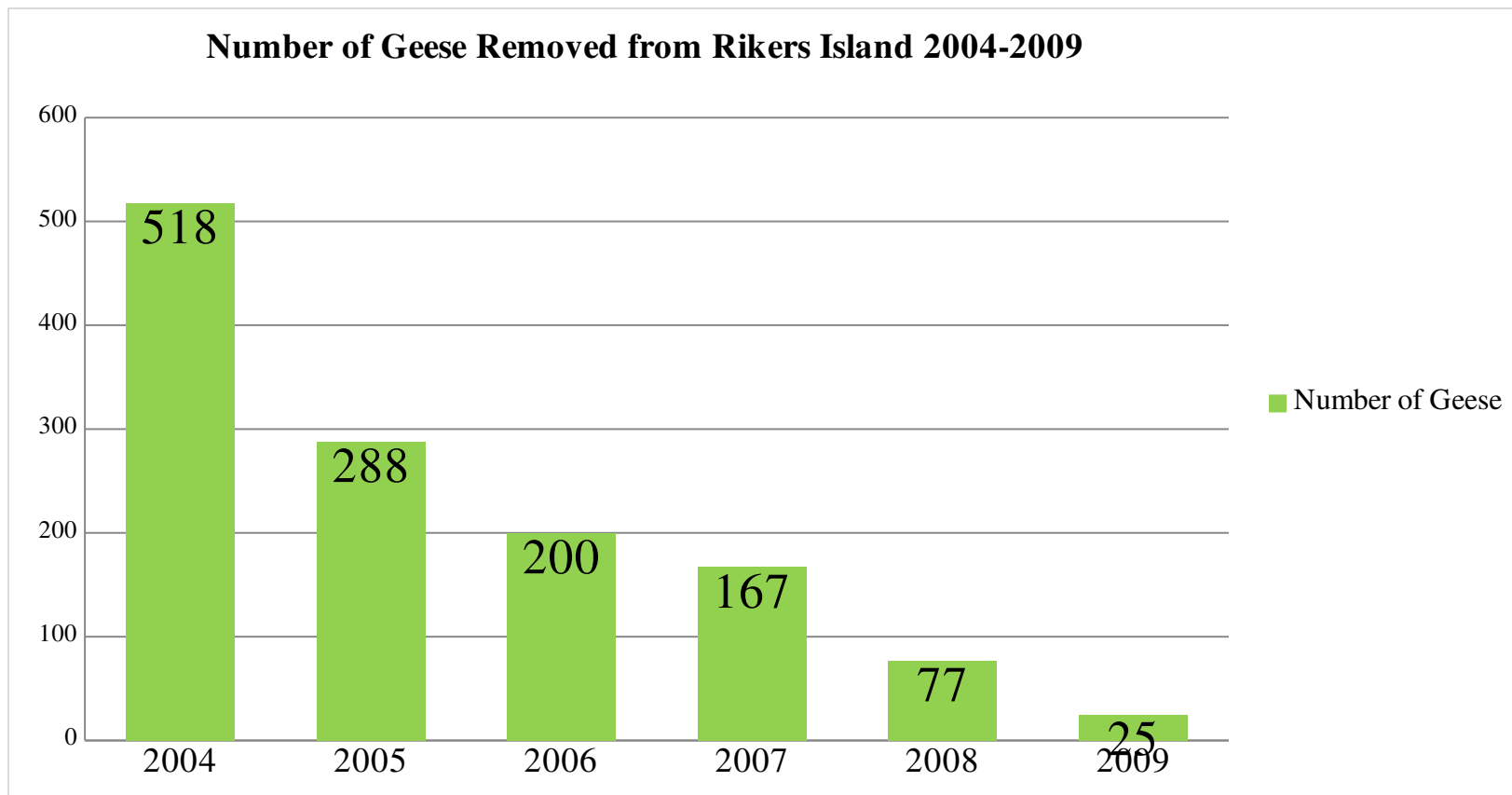
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# Removals over time reduce numbers significantly





# The Need for Community Involvement

David C. Webb Memorial Park at Taft Bay.



© 2016 Google

Imagery Date: 5/28/2015 43°14'43.42" N 75°56'55.81" W ele

# The Big Picture:

- There is an estimated 78,872 breeding pairs of Canada geese in New York alone. Which could equate to roughly 60,000 nests this spring.
- In New York, if there was a 5 egg/nest average, just to stabilize the population, combined we would have to oil 300,000 eggs this spring.
- Capture and removal of geese is estimated to cost 67% less than egg removal or destruction (Cooper and Keefe 1997).
- Egg oiling works in localized areas over time, but has very little effect on the overall population of geese, while removing breeding age adults can lower populations dramatically.



# What The USDA can do for you:

- Provide “Technical Assistance”: Either over the phone or as a site visit to advise how to manage your situation.
- Provide direct management where we would form an agreement and conduct:
  - Nest Management Program
  - Hazing Program
  - Population Reduction (Capture and Removal)

## Contact Information:

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# Questions??



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