

# **Biology, History, and Damage Caused by Resident Canada Geese**



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# **“Resident” Canada Geese**



- **Breeding and nesting range**
  - South of 47° latitude
- **Reside in conterminous U.S.**
  - April through August
- **Many winter in northern states**
  - Open water and food availability



# Establishment of Resident Flocks

- **Early 1900s:**
  - Release of privately owned geese into parks
- **1930s:**
  - Release of captive decoy flocks after federal ban for hunting
- **1950s-1980s:**
  - Purposeful stocking by management agencies



# Migrant vs. Resident Geese

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Migrant Population</u>	<u>Resident Population</u>
Reproduction	Dependent on weather conditions	Weather is not really a factor
Age of 1 <sup>st</sup> breeding	3-4 years	2-3 years
Nesting	Selective on nest sites	Not selective for nest sites/habitat High nest survival (70% hatch)
Fledglings	High predation	High survival of fledglings (70% fledge)
Survival rate (w/ regulated hunting)	70% (20% reach breeding maturity)	80% (50% reach breeding maturity) Less hunting pressure
Food source	Favor high energy grain	Graze on grass People help with habitat and food



# Resident Canada Geese

- Can live more than 20 years
- Begin breeding when 2-3 years old, and can nest every year for the rest of their lives
- 1 Female goose = >50 goslings
- Travel 100's of miles to wintering areas
- Use same nesting and feeding sites year after year





### Pros:

- Valuable natural resource
- Provide enjoyment to bird watchers and the general public
- Recreational opportunity for hunters

### Cons:

- “Resident” population of birds become year round inhabitants
- Nuisance issues for parks, waterways, golf courses, athletic fields, farms, homeowners





# Devaluing of Species



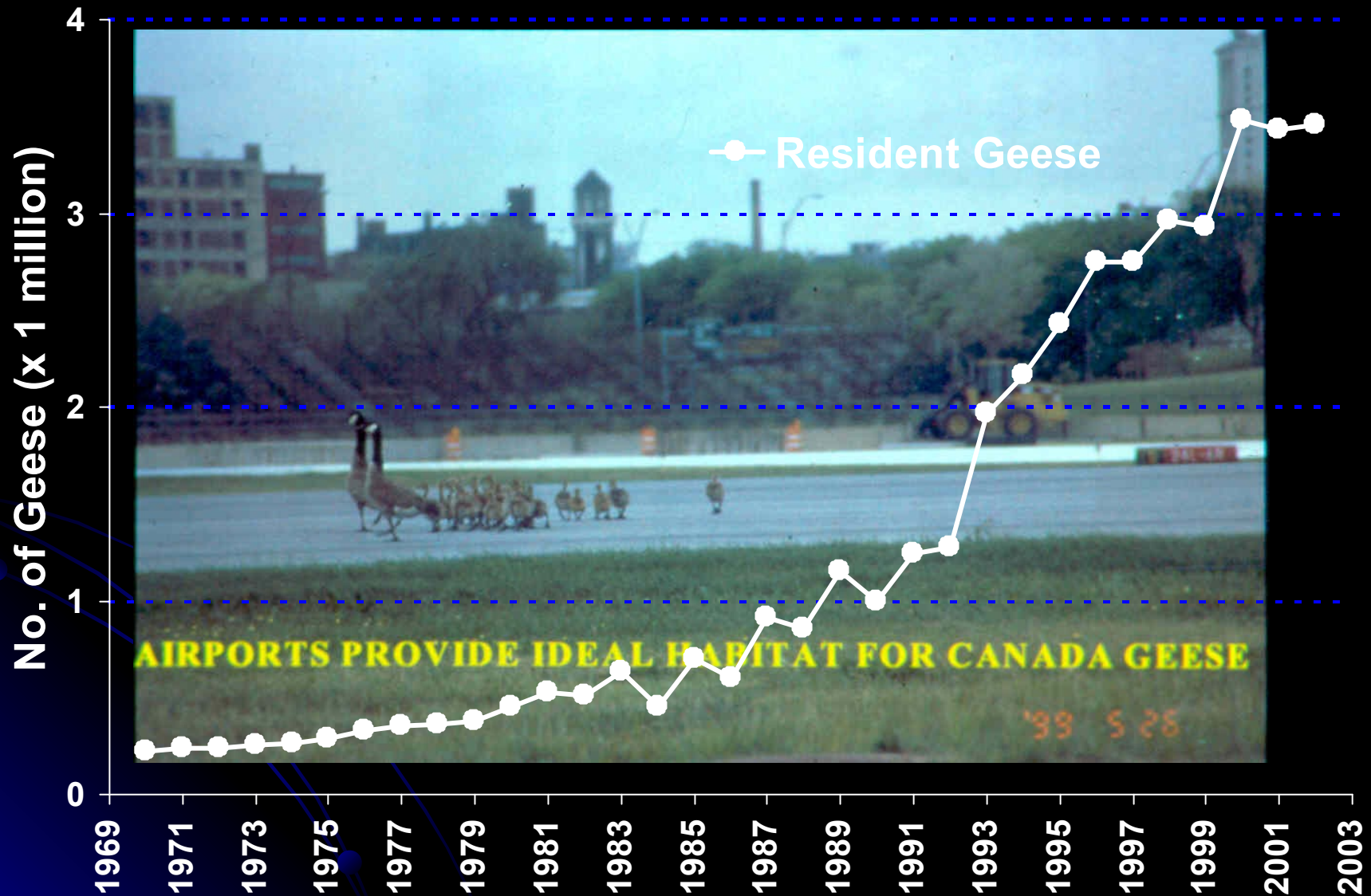
## ON CANADA GEESE....

*"A symbol of the great outdoors and crisp fall days...has become a gluttonous, bad -tempered, loose-boweled trespasser"*  
-Doug Stewart

**"The Geese Make Me Sad"**  
Drawn by a 4th Grade Student,  
Neptune, NJ



# Resident Canada Goose Population in North America Increased from 0.3 Million in 1980 to 3.5 - 4.5 Million by 2010



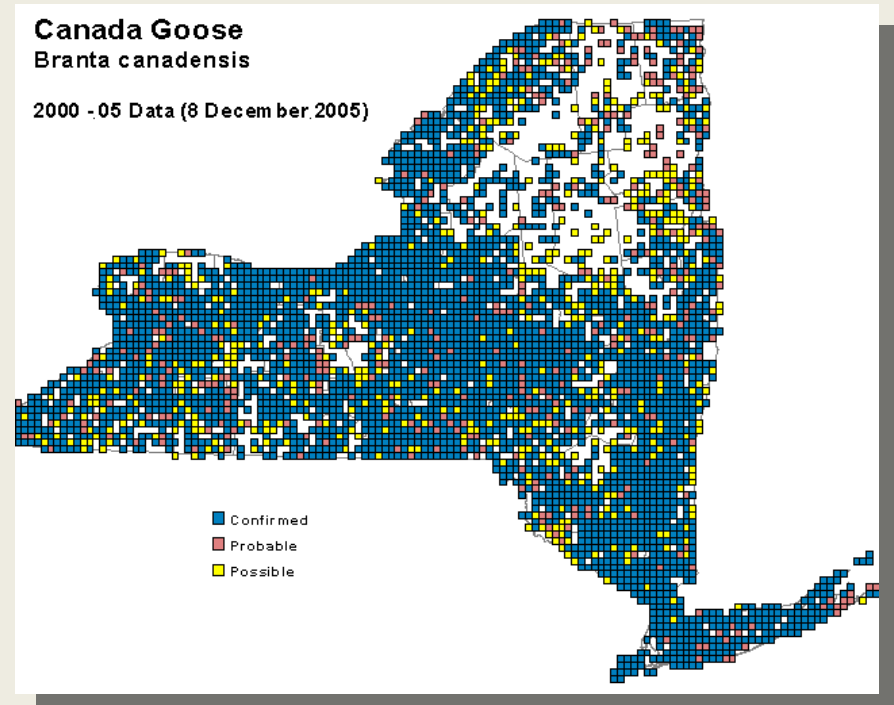
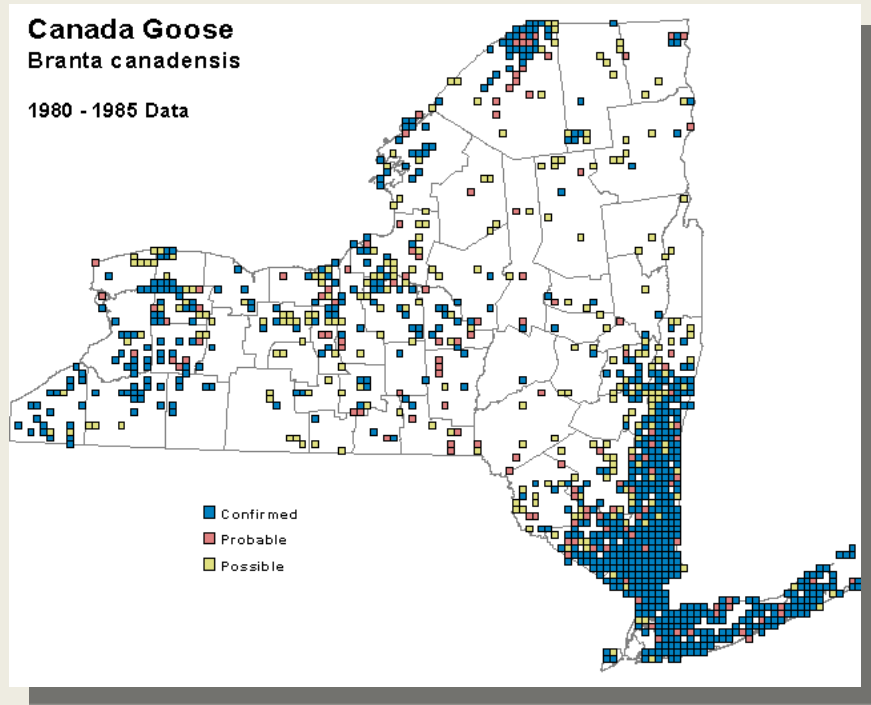


# Canada Goose Nesting

New York Breeding Bird Atlas data for:

**1980-1985**

**2000-2005**



# Why Such Population Growth?



- Humans created goose habitat in urban landscapes

- Very few natural predators and high survival rates



# Molt Migration



- Occurs in late May or early June
- Can include short or long distance movements
- Geese with young look for local molting ponds
- Non-parental geese may migrate to Canada



# Molt Migration



- Reproductive failure encourages geese to fly northward
- Sub-adult, non-breeding birds also leave
- Reduces goose abundance and conflicts during summer months
- Geese will return with migrants in the fall

# Potential Problems

- Fecal deposits
- Turf damage
- Traffic hazards
- Noise
- Feathers during molt
- Aggression
- Disease transmission









**WARNING  
GEESE  
MAY  
ATTACK**

# Feeding

- People love to feed wildlife!
- Even with local ordinances, feeding still occurs



# Goose Research

- Drive-trap
- Aluminum leg bands
- Radio transmitters





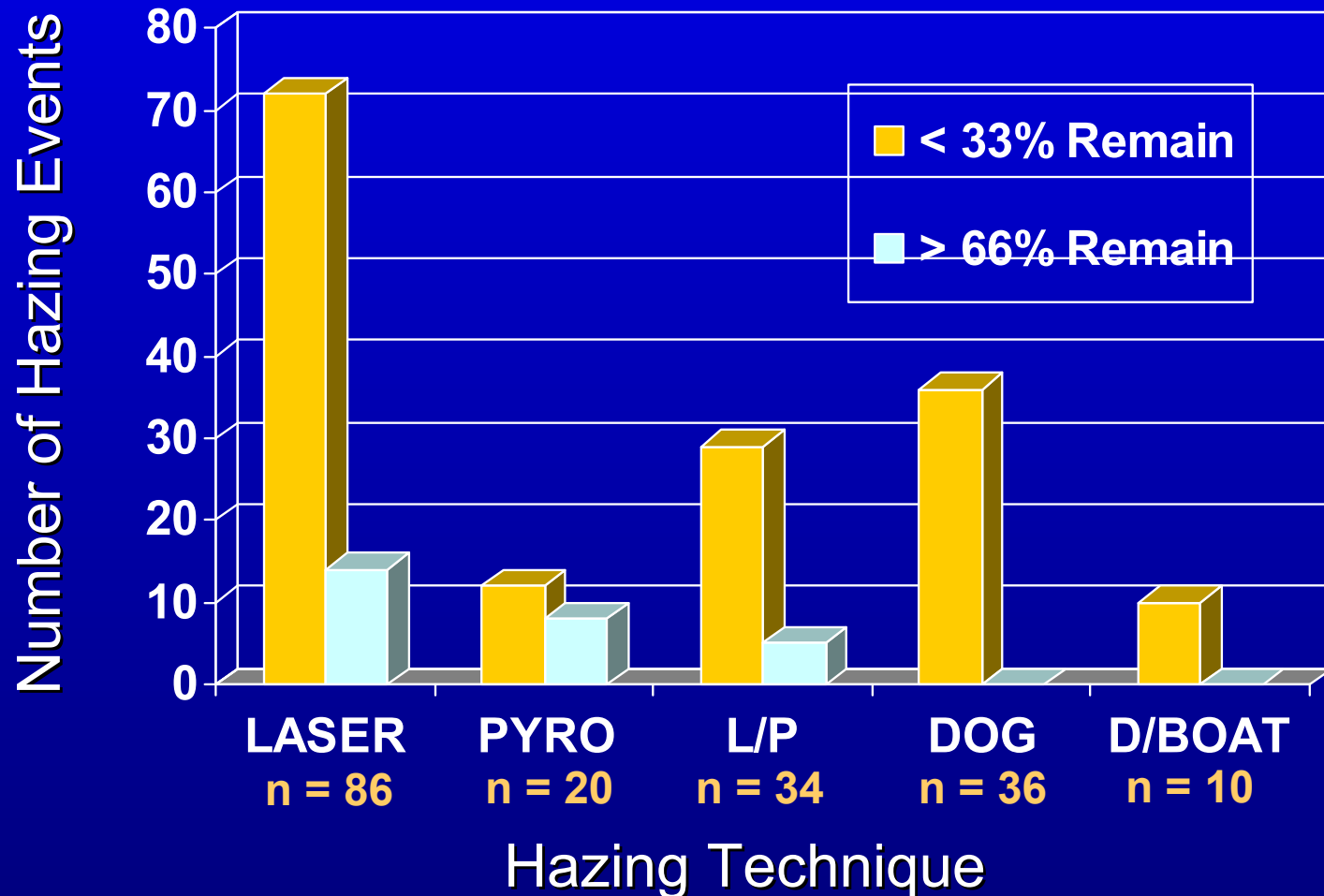
# Techniques

- Border collie
- Pyrotechnics
- High-powered laser
- Remote-controlled boat
- Strobe light
- Distress call device

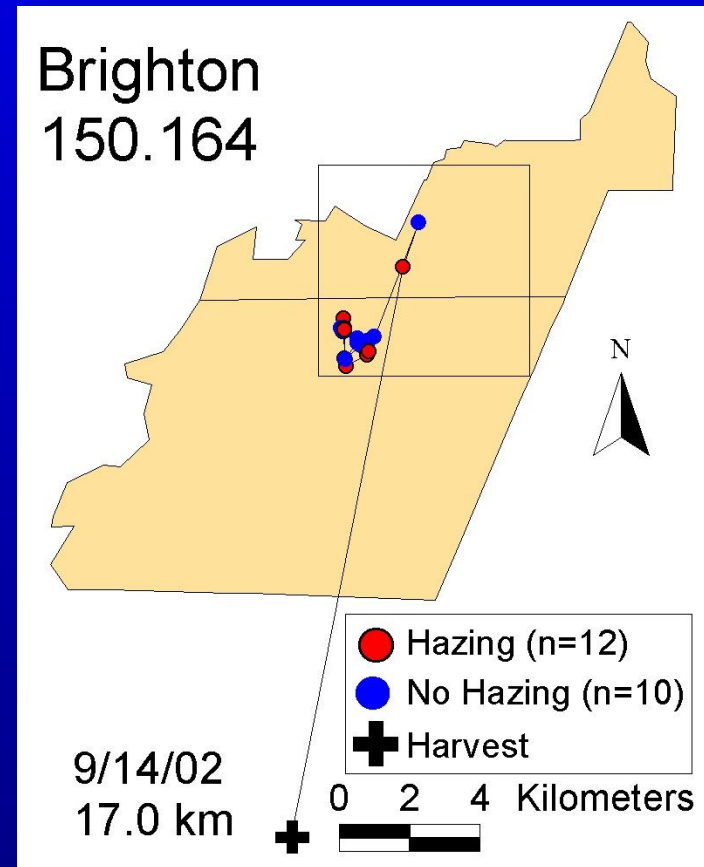
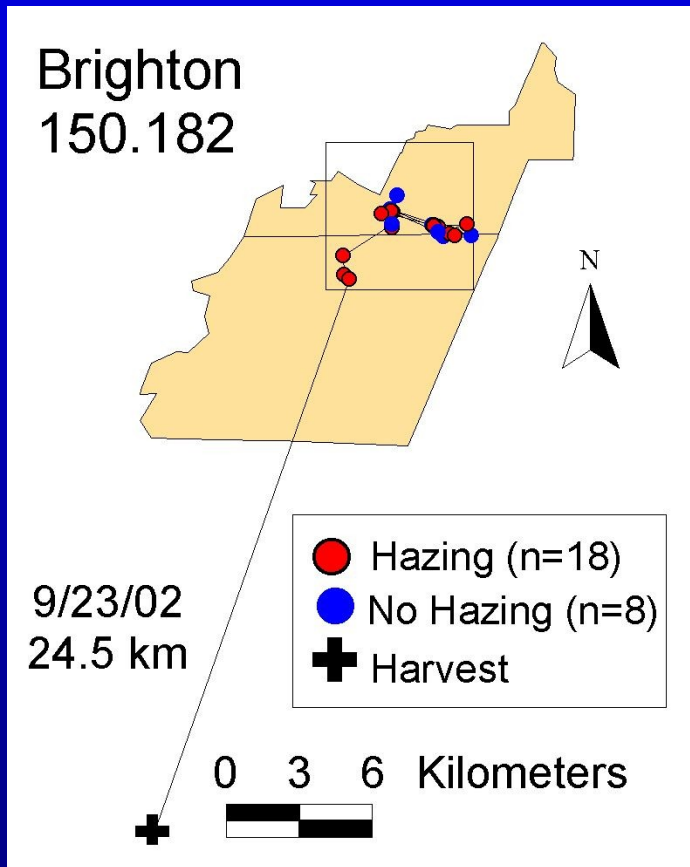


# Effectiveness of Hazing Techniques

Proportion of Geese Remaining After Each Hazing Event



# Movement Results - Brighton





# Take Home Messages

- It is nearly impossible to break site fidelity of goose flocks with hazing alone
- Successful hazing requires continued daily harassment
- Dogs most successful during the day, and lasers were best at night
- Even “urban” geese leave town and forage with migrants occasionally
- Most effective to manage geese at the community scale rather than on an individual property

# Managing Canada Geese in Urban Environments

## A Technical Guide

Arthur E. Smith, Scott R. Craven, and Paul D. Curtis

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The Wildlife Society, Wildlife Damage Management Working Group

<http://wp.wildlifecontrol.info/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Managing-Canada-Geese.pdf>

