

Regional Canada Goose Management Program

2025 Program Accomplishments



Capital Regional District | Environmental Protection

A summary of the Regional Canada Goose Management Program's collaborative efforts and program accomplishments for 2025 is below. Key priorities included the population surveys, expanded addling efforts across agricultural, public and private lands, two humane goose harvests with First Nations communities, and a strong outreach program to engage farmers and First Nations partners. The strategy recommends the use of management tools such as preventing feeding, habitat modifications, water management, hazing, egg addling, hunting, harvests, and public outreach. The goal identified in the Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy (RCGMS) is to reduce impacts from geese by achieving a sustainable target population of around 1,000 individuals.

Collaboration & Capacity Building

- **Coordinated the Regional Canada Goose Working Group (RCGWG):** The Regional Canada Goose Working Group, made up of representatives from local governments and First Nations, provincial and federal partners, the Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission, and other key stakeholders, met quarterly to share information, coordinate efforts across the region and to advise the program. Membership in this group is increasing with more municipalities and First Nations attending and includes 29 representatives from government agencies and First Nations with interest in, or management responsibilities for Canada geese within the capital region and four landowner groups involved in goose management on their properties (Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission, North Saanich Agricultural and Food Security Advisory Committee, Metchosin Agricultural Advisory Select Committee and the Victoria Airport Authority).
- **Hosted training workshops for RCGWG members** on Canada geese, egg addling techniques, finding nests, winter and summer population surveys.
- **Engaged interested First Nations participation** in the program (harvests, population surveys) and developed contracts to outline their participation.
- **Engaged with Agricultural Communities:** part-time coordinator strengthened relationships and established key partnerships with the Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission, First Nations, local and senior levels of government, farmers, non-profit groups, and public and private landowners to implement the RCGMS.
- **Strengthened and developed new relationships with partners in the region** such as stewardship groups and conservancies, Environment Canada and Climate Change Canadian Wildlife Service (ECC-CWS) and Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Outreach Program:** staff began to implement a campaign to increase public awareness of the regional impacts of the growing Canada Goose (CAGO) population and to engage with landowners and rightsholders experiencing impacts. This included an invitation to First Nations and has resulted in four First Nations participating in various aspects of the program.

Region-wide Population Surveys:

- The 2025 population survey summary report is included in Appendix C.
- **Winter Survey (Feb 3-5, 2025):** First-ever region-wide winter survey completed with 208+ locations surveyed, including 1,645 hectares of farmland using drones. A total of 9,166 resident and migrating geese were recorded representing a 35% increase from the 2024 moult survey (6,669 geese); some areas lacked data so the actual winter numbers may be higher. Critically high concentrations of geese (>1,000) were found on farmland in Saanich,

Central Saanich, North Saanich & Metchosin. Smaller concentrations (200–500) of geese were found on Pender and Galiano Islands. 1,800 migratory Dusky geese (*Branta canadensis occidentalis*) were counted at Elk Lake in Saanich.

- **Summer Moult Survey (June 23–27, 2025):** Annual survey covered 380 locations and 600 km of shoreline. High winds prevented surveys on Sidney, James, and Darcy Islands. Survey showed large numbers of CAGO in key estuary areas suffering damage and estimates the current regional resident CAGO population at 5,950 individuals, which is an 11% decline from the 2024 summer moult survey. The largest concentrations of geese were found in or near estuaries, lakes and ponds in Saanich, Sooke, Oak Bay, and Gulf Islands. In Colwood, the population dropped from 598 (2024) to 130 (2025) due to a nearby First Nation harvest.

Population Mitigation

Population mitigation, which includes nest surveys, egg addling and goose harvests, is a core aspect of the Regional Canada Goose Management Service.

- **Property Access & Expanded Addling Program:** Private property access increased by 30% over 2024 in Saanich, Central Saanich, Victoria, and the Gulf Islands. Over 90 property owners granted CRD staff access for nest surveys and egg addling. CRD staff continue to build capacity and extend egg addling into new areas. Nests on 37 additional properties were addled by groups including DND, Parks Canada, Guardians of our Salish Estuaries and private landowners.
- **Regional Permit:** Obtained a regional damage or danger permit from ECC-CWS, allowing landowners to authorize CRD staff access with a simple waiver. Improved efficiency and reduced administrative burden for staff and property owners.
- **Nest Surveys & Egg Addling Program:** Conducted from March–May on public and private lands, additional nest and gosling surveys completed in May and June. A total of 401 nests were found and 1,876 eggs addled by CRD staff (190 nests with 907 eggs treated) and partner groups (211 nests with 969 eggs treated). About 72% of nests were located on agricultural lands, 17% in public parks and 11% on recreational, residential and industrial properties. The detailed Canada Goose Egg Addling Report is attached as Appendix D.
- **Canada Goose Harvest:** The CRD engaged an external contractor who worked with First Nations partners to conduct two humane goose harvests from key hotspots along the Oak Bay/Victoria and Central Saanich shorelines. A total of 738 geese were harvested: 525 from Oak Bay & 213 from Central Saanich. All usable meat was processed, delivered to a commercial butcher, and distributed to participating First Nations (Tsawout, Malahat and Songhees Nations). All goose carcasses were collected and transported to a private farm for composting. Compost will be used to propagate *Carex spp.* for use in restoring estuaries damaged by Canada geese.

Since 2022, coordinated egg addling programs have prevented approximately 7,300 CAGO eggs from hatching. Considering an estimated 59% gosling survival rate, this means 4,300 CAGO were prevented from joining the breeding population through egg addling alone.

Another 1,200 adult CAGO were removed through three harvests with First Nations partners in 2024 and 2025. Despite removing nearly 6,000 geese through population mitigation, a comparison of 2024 and 2025 summer moult survey data showed only an 11% decline in the resident population. This data suggest that egg addling efforts are effectively stabilizing growth of the CAGO population, but harvests are needed to achieve a substantial population reduction over the short term. Dual harvests and continued expansion of egg addling program are planned for 2026.