

SUMMARY OF CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT ACTIVITIES FOR MANAGING CANADA GOOSE POPULATIONS ON CRD LANDS June 2019

Staff at several Capital Regional District (CRD) departments and divisions are involved in activities to manage Canada goose populations on CRD lands and support efforts to implement the Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy. A brief summary of departmental activities is provided below.

Parks & Environmental Services Goose Management Activities

Regional Parks

- Led the development of the Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy in 2012
- In 2015, CRD Regional Parks participated with other stakeholders in a successful pilot project to capture and cull geese on agricultural lands on the Saanich Peninsula. Key participants and agency representatives determined the project goals were met and that the method of capture and dispatch was humane and met the requirements of federal and provincial guidelines and procedures.
- Participates in the informal working group.
- Canada geese are a particular problem at Elk/Beaver Lakes and staff resources are required for:
 - an active egg addling program occurred regularly prior to 2016
 - each summer, a contractor is hired to regularly scare geese off the beaches (approximately \$8,000/year) to reduce human-goose conflicts
 - to protect the health and safety of recreational users, Parks staff rake Beaver Beach, Ski Beach, Hamsterley Beach and Eagle Beach at Elk/Beaver Lake every two days to remove goose droppings

Environmental Protection

- Members of the Gorge Waterway Initiative and the Esquimalt Lagoon Initiative reported concerns over the increasing populations of non-migratory Canada geese and the observed impacts to eelgrass beds in local estuaries.
- The issue of goose management was raised for discussion at the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) meeting. Staff from Canadian Wildlife Service presented and participated in the discussion around improved coordination for managing non-migratory populations of Canada geese.
- Municipal partners were unclear who leads the informal Canada geese working group, how to get involved or where to send tracking data. Canadian Wildlife Service staff suggested looking at the model in the Okanagan where they use grants to hire a coordinator to manage over abundant geese populations.

Planning & Protective Services Department

- In support of the agricultural strategy, continue to consider approaches to effectively address existing and emerging regional wildlife and invasive species issues.
- Staff attend the informal working group.
- Engage farmers, collect information on damage, coordinate action with farmers, liaise on education opportunities.

Integrated Water Services Department

- The presence of Canada geese in the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area (GVWSA) poses a potential risk to water quality. Canada geese produce large amounts of fecal material containing coliform bacteria. If the number of fecal coliform bacteria in water samples exceeds water quality standards, it can trigger a health advisory and boil water order. Canada geese can also carry other bacterial species and the parasitic protozoa *Giardia* and *Cryptosporidium* that pose a threat to drinking water quality.
- To reduce the threat geese pose to water quality, staff have actively managed this species in the GVWSA and adjacent Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park (SHWRP) since 2001.

There are three components to management:

1. Monitoring the number and distribution of Canada geese in the GVWSA and SHWRP.
2. Scaring Canada geese away from the areas around water supply intakes in the water supply reservoirs using noisemakers and boats, if required.
3. Preventing Canada geese from successfully reproducing in the GVWSA and adjacent regional park by addling eggs (shaking to prevent the embryo from developing).
 - Scaring and egg addling are done under a Controlled Waste permit. At the end of 2018, 434 nest sites were detected in the GVWSA and SHWRP and 1,893 eggs were addled. Watershed Protection produces an annual report on Canada geese management activities in the GVWSA and SHWRP.