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BEST PRACTICES FOR CAPTURING, TRANSPORTING AND CARING FOR RELOCATED CANADA GEESE

**Canada Goose Management
Canadian Wildlife Service**



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You must have a permit from Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service to capture, transport and care for relocated Canada Geese.

In some rare cases, relocating problem geese can offer a temporary solution to conflicts. Relocation is not a recommended long-term solution. For geese, re-locating eggs/nests to another property will not be authorized.

If relocating geese, keep in mind that they should be moved to a location:

1. Where they are not expected to cause similar problems as if they had remained at the original site;
2. And if possible, where there is an increased likelihood that they will be exposed to hunting.

Flocks of moulting adult geese (moult-migrants) in urban areas should be moved a minimum of 100 km from the original location. This will decrease the likelihood that they return immediately to the moulting area when they regain flight.

Family groups (flocks of adults and goslings) should only be relocated if they pose a significant and immediate human health risk (for example near an airport or in a very public place and they are attacking passersby). If they must be moved, they should be relocated the shortest distance possible that will ensure they cannot return immediately to the area where they were captured. This distance should be less than 50 km, in order to not establish new breeding flocks or increase existing ones in other areas.

Before beginning, please read and ensure that you understand all of the information in this Best Practices guide. It is strongly recommended that at least one person involved in the capture of geese has a good understanding of goose behaviour and preferably experience in capture and handling of geese. Care must be exercised to not injure any geese during the roundup and capture. If you have doubts, consult a professional experienced in these techniques or contact the Canadian Wildlife Service for additional advice.

CAPTURING GEESE

Moulting geese, whether flock of adults or family groups can be herded together into a temporary enclosure of netting or construction fencing prior to loading them onto a vehicle. An adequate number of people should be involved to ensure that geese are not scared onto public roads where they could be injured or cause an accident. Once contained, geese may be herded into a vehicle (preferred) or if numbers are small, may be lifted one at a time into the vehicle.

TRANSPORTING GEESE

All vehicles (trucks, trailers) used to transport geese must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Vehicles must be well ventilated (for example, cattle trucks), have an impermeable roof if geese are moved during precipitation events (even light drizzle) and must not allow road splash to reach the geese. An inspection or photograph of the vehicle may be required.
- 2) Vehicles must be in good working order to minimize the risk of breakdowns causing delays in release of the geese.
- 3) Vehicles must provide a minimum of 0.1 m² (approximately 1 sq ft) per goose of floor space and have a thick layer of clean absorbent material such as wood shavings or straw to absorb goose faeces.
- 4) It is strongly recommended to not handle the geese. Loading geese by herding them up a ramp is the preferred method. Birds may be loaded by hand if the number of birds is small or if small goslings are transported using poultry cages. When unloading, a ramp should be used if the height of the vehicle above ground exceeds 0.5 m.
- 5) Geese must be dry when loaded.
- 6) Geese should not be transported for more than 2 hours when ambient air temperature is above 25° C. It is recommended to conduct relocations as early as possible in the day when temperatures are cooler. Under no circumstances should the geese be in the vehicle more than 8 hours.
- 7) It is recommended that no more than 100 adult geese be contained within a single compartment. If more than 100 geese are transported in the same vehicle, dividers should be used to separate geese in order to prevent injuries. If there are goslings, the maximum number per compartment should be 50.
- 8) Regardless of the number of geese being transported, small goslings must be separated from adults using dividers or by placing them in poultry cages.

RELEASE SITES

It is the responsibility of the permit applicant to find an appropriate site where geese can be released. All release sites must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Must have landowner permission in writing (printed name and signature on application form or an accompanying letter).
- 2) Must have adequate supplies of fresh water (pond, lake, river, stream, well with automated pump) and food (short cropped/mowed grass) for the number

of geese to be released and geese must have access to shelter from direct sunlight (shade) at all times of the day. In some cases, food and water may be supplied daily.

A written description, plan and photographs of the release site may be required.

Depending on the location of the release site and surrounding land uses, the site may also be required to meet the following criteria:

- 1) The site must be fully enclosed by a fence at least 1.25 m high that will prevent flightless geese from leaving the site, and also prevent easy access by predators such as foxes and coyotes.
- 2) The site must be approved by the Canadian Wildlife Service in consultation with provincial authorities prior to releasing geese. A site inspection may be required. The site must be prepared and ready for inspection a minimum of 21 days before approval is sought.
- 3) Acceptable sites fall into two categories:
 - a. Sites with adequate natural vegetation and naturally occurring water to support the number of geese present. These are typically very large enclosures measuring several hectares in size. The exact size required depends upon the quantity and quality of food present and the number of geese to be released.
 - b. Sites where some or all of the food and/or fresh water must be provided. Sites where food and water are provided may be much smaller but should provide roughly 10-15 m²/goose.
- 4) **Sites with adequate natural vegetation and water** must be prepared in advance of the geese arriving by keeping all grass mowed to less than 10 cm high. Mowing once just before release of the geese is not sufficient; it must be mowed a minimum of once every two weeks beginning before grass height exceeds 20 cm and maintained at <10 cm until geese are released. An alternative to mowing is to pasture the land with sheep or cattle prior to releasing geese. Once geese are present, they will maintain the grass at the proper height so no further mowing is required. In smaller enclosures, it is recommended to divide the enclosure in two halves and move the geese between halves often to prevent overgrazing. Large sites with natural vegetation and water must be monitored a minimum of twice per week by the permit holder or other designated person to ensure that there is adequate remaining fresh water and food. If supplies of food and water are inadequate, they must be provided daily until all geese have either: i) left the site or ii) completed the moult and regained the ability to fly.
- 5) **Sites where food and water are provided** must be monitored daily by the permit holder or other designated person. Adult geese may survive on a diet of mixed grains however growing goslings require large quantities of protein in their diet so must be provided either **fresh** green vegetation (grass, dandelion greens, lettuce etc.) or a commercial diet specifically prepared for growing birds (e.g. duck grower). Fresh clean water must be provided daily in containers such as children's swimming pools. At least two pools should be

used at all times. Old food that is not consumed may become mouldy; all mouldy food must be removed from the enclosure daily. If the pen is small and shade is limited, water sprinklers can be used to help keep geese cool.

- 6) The entire fence around all release sites must be inspected a minimum of twice each week by the responsible person to ensure that there is no damage that would allow flightless geese to leave or predators to enter the enclosure.
- 7) The site may not be within 500 m of sensitive areas unless written permission is received from neighbouring landowners. Sensitive areas include, but are not limited to airports, golf courses, urban areas with water bodies, crops. The responsible person must provide a map to CWS showing the exact location of the site and identifying any sensitive areas within 2 km of the site.
- 8) If there are sensitive areas within 2 km, great care must be taken to prevent flightless geese from leaving release sites (usually by means of a secure fence). If any number of flightless geese leave the property identified on the permit, it is the responsibility of the permit-holder or their nominee to immediately re-capture them and return them to the property. The permit applicant or their nominee must have a plan and the capacity to deal with escaped birds.

If any geese die during the relocation, this information must be reported and the carcasses must be disposed of following the guide *Killing Birds and Disposing of Carcasses*.

A copy of the permit must be carried at all times whenever capturing or transporting geese.
