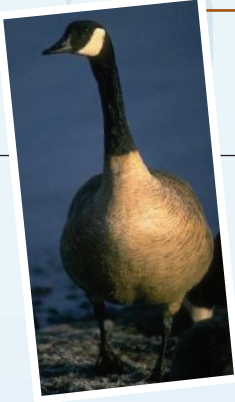


# RESIDENT CANADA GOOSE



“Who, me?”

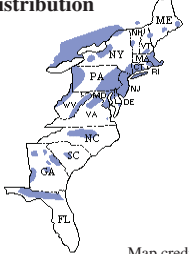
Photo Credit: New Hampshire Public Television  
[www.nhptv.org/natureworks](http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks)

## CHARACTERISTICS

The Canada goose has the most widespread distribution, and is the most abundant of all North American species of geese. But unlike its migratory cousin, the resident Canada goose has become a permanent and problematic resident in suburban and urban communities. Weighing up to 8 kg (18 lbs.), giant geese gain extra fat reserves which help them tolerate cold winter temperatures in the northeastern United States. Resident geese typically breed between April and August and each nesting pair produces about 5-6 eggs per year. Scientists estimate that there are about 1 million resident geese in the Atlantic flyway population.

## INVASION HISTORY

### Resident Goose Distribution



Map credit:  
US Geological Survey  
[www.npwrc.usgs.gov](http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov)

By the early 1900s, Canada geese were nearly hunted to extinction. In fact, Pennsylvania had no reports of nesting pairs prior to 1935. However, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act created protection for existing geese, and intensive relocation programs helped repopulate historic habitats. When farmers switched their crops from vegetables to corn and wheat, geese were given an abundant food source. Changing patterns of land use, i.e. sprawl, also provided predator-free nesting areas. The restoration program has been so effective that breeding pairs of resident geese have been recorded from every county in the state. Resident goose populations must now be managed to minimize conflicts within our human environment.

## WHY IS IT SUCH A NUISANCE?



Bird damage to plane engine, Jan. 2001  
Photo Credit: Federal Aviation Association

### *Economic impacts*

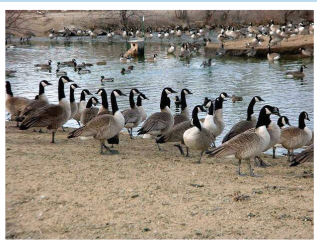
- Resident geese are a particular concern in the agriculture industry. Grasses and grains like soybeans, corn, and wheat are favorite foods of resident geese.
- Geese and airports don't mix! Between 1990 and 2000, Canada geese were implicated in 505 strikes causing damage to civil aircraft. Each year, bird strikes cause \$350 million in damages.

### *Health risks*

- Bacteria in goose droppings may harm water quality in ponds, lakes, and reservoirs.
- Resident geese have tested positive for the West Nile Virus, a mosquito-born pathogen that causes flu-like symptoms in humans.

### *Property damage*

- Goose droppings are rich in phosphorous and nitrogen. Not only may a large flock of geese over-fertilize lawns, they can also increase nutrient runoff and algae growth in ponds and lakes.
- Parks, manmade wetlands, and golf courses provide favorable habitat for resident geese, but large gaggles graze heavily on grass and aquatic plants, uprooting vegetation which increases maintenance costs.



“Ready for a swim?”

Photo credit: [www.riversidezoo.org](http://www.riversidezoo.org)