



Understanding the City of Kitchener's Goose Management Program

Facts about the Goose Management Program:

1. The goose management program is not in place to eliminate **all** Canada geese from Victoria Park. The goal of the program is to reduce the local population of Canada geese in the park to a manageable level that allows a safe environment for park patrons and park wildlife, including the geese that remain.
2. Young geese and adult geese removed from the park are not killed. They are relocated to an environment inspected and approved by the federal Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, where they are able to rest and feed before migrating onward.
3. Eggs removed from the park are taken before they are incubated – there are no baby goslings in the eggs that are removed.
4. The goose management program has been in place since 2007, and is administered by a licensed agency whose plan is reviewed and approved by the federal Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change on an annual basis.

Frequently Asked Questions: Goose Management at Victoria Park

Why do you have a goose management program?

This program has been in place since 2007, implemented in to concerns about goose droppings, aggressive birds and conflicts with park users. Geese are a hyperabundant species. The intent of the program is not to kill or remove all of the birds in the park. Rather, we are attempting to reduce the local population to a manageable level for the park.

Our approach helps reduce local problems of damage and danger caused by Canada geese. Even though the program aims to reduce the number and severity of conflicts, the goose population will remain at healthy levels into the future. When the program was introduced, up to 300 geese were located in the park. Since that time, the number of geese in the park has been reduced to approximately 150 – making a safer environment for both park patrons and the geese.

The program does not remove all geese; many do continue to frequent and nest in the park, which is consistent with our objective to reduce the over-abundance to a level that is manageable and supports human plus wildlife use of the park.



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What does the goose management program involve?

The program attempts to reduce the local geese population in Victoria Park to a manageable level for the park. To achieve this, the City of Kitchener works with a licensed contractor and the Canadian Wildlife Services to develop a plan that includes egg removal, nest removal, and bird relocation.

The *Migratory Birds Convention Act* recognizes that birds may sometimes cause damage and danger, and provides management tools to reduce those conflicts. No migratory birds, their eggs, or nests may be removed without a permit, so city staff works with our licensed contractor to apply for and obtain a permit from Environment and Climate Change Canada and Canadian Wildlife Services to manage the geese population in Victoria Park. Our plan is reviewed and approved by a population biologist, who recommends our protocol and methods and considers them the least intrusive of all options. Environment Canada also reviews and approves our release site, where the birds that are gathered are relocated after their removal from Victoria Park.

Are there other ways to control the population that doesn't include relocation?

Yes. We have been working to naturalize the park shoreline and lake edge with rocks, more shrubs and vegetation, which helps make it a less desirable nesting place overall. Over time, we hope this will naturally reduce the population without need to intervene.

How is this program considered ethical or legal?

The federal Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change considers geese to be a hyperabundant species, meaning they can become easily overpopulated in a park or urban area.

The *Migratory Birds Convention* recognizes that birds may sometimes cause damage and danger, and provides management tools to reduce those conflicts. No migratory birds, their eggs, or nests may be harmed without a permit. The City of Kitchener works with a professional agency to apply for and obtain a permit from Environment and Climate Change Canada and Canadian Wildlife Services to manage the geese population in Victoria Park.

You can learn more about this issue on the Government of Canada's website here: [Ministry of Environment and Climate Change - FAQ - Canada Geese](#)

The geese in the park don't bother me. What harm are they doing?

There will always be geese in the park. When geese overpopulate an urban area, like Victoria Park, their large populations can create conflicts with people and pets, and reduce enjoyment of public spaces. This has been a concern at Victoria Park, generating complaints from citizens who use the park.



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Nesting Canada geese will actively defend their nest sites, and aggressive pairs can sometimes cause injuries, especially to small children or pets. Large flocks of Canada Geese can also denude grassy areas and other landscaped areas where the grass is kept short and where there are ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water nearby.

The geese removal program helps to reduce the numbers of geese in the park to a more manageable level, thereby reducing many of the conflicts and barriers to enjoying this public space, such as geese chasing or attacking people, messing on pathways or being hit on the road.

What happens to the eggs?

Geese lay eggs over a series of 12-15 days. The eggs are not incubated until after all the eggs are laid. Prior to incubation, a licensed contractor is hired by the city and approved by Environment Canada and Canadian Wildlife Services to undertake removal and disposal of the eggs.

Once the eggs are removed from the nest; the female is unlikely to lay more eggs during this breeding season and most often moves on to another area.

Are there baby geese in the eggs?

No. We are not killing baby geese. They would be no different than a chicken egg at the stage when we remove the eggs. The eggs are not incubated (incubation is the process that initiates development) until after all the eggs are laid, usually 15 days after the first one is laid. The eggs in Victoria Park are removed prior to incubation.

What would happen if we didn't remove the eggs?

There would be several hundred geese frequenting Victoria Park every year. The high number of animals in the relatively small space further increases the risk of conflict with people, pets and vehicles passing through the park.

The program keeps the population at a manageable level, making the park safer both for patrons and other wildlife in the park, including the geese that remain.

Why not relocate the eggs instead of removing them?

We are not permitted to locate the eggs to a different location. We remove and temporarily relocate the young and adult geese to an approved, alternate location.



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What happens to the eggs that do hatch or the geese that move into the park from elsewhere?

Some geese will remain in the park. Those that are relocated (adults and young) are corralled into a cooled trailer with a pen and safely transported to a suitable release site which has been inspected and approved by the federal biologists from Environment Canada and acknowledged by the landowner.

Where are the geese released when they are taken from the park?

The geese are released to a private property that has been inspected and approved by federal biologists from Environment Canada.

Why choose this method of population control?

Our approach is meant to reduce conflicts, not remove every bird we encounter. This is a small reduction in a local population supported by the federal government responsible for population management overall. A population biologist has reviewed our approach, which is considered the least intrusive of all options in attempting to control an abundant population.

Our practices (egg removal, nest removal and bird round-up) are approved through a permit from Canadian Wildlife Services, who also review and approve our release site, where the birds from the park are relocated so that they can feed and rest before migrating onwards. While we appreciate the practices can be difficult to understand, they are employed in many municipalities in Southern Ontario where similar conflicts occur.

The program does not remove all geese from the park. Rather, it ensures that a manageable population remains and it ensures that those that do stay in the park are able to nest and will benefit from the suitable and available habitat and less competition. Geese that are released to a property that is approved by federal biologists, where they are able to enjoy a habitat similar to the one they are removed from (e.g. cut grass) for the duration of summer, before fall migration.

Why not fine people who feed the geese?

There are signs posted throughout Victoria Park requesting park-goers not feed the geese or ducks. The city's bylaw division issues fines to people who are caught feeding the birds. The fine for feeding birds in parks or naturalized areas is \$65.