

Division of Wildlife

BIOLOGICAL CONTROLS



DOGS CAN BE MAN'S BEST FRIEND IN MANAGING GEESE

Almost any obedient breed of dog, when trained, can be used to discourage Canada geese; however, border collies seem to be the breed of choice. Humans have enlisted the assistance of border collies for centuries. Most commonly noted for their ability to herd livestock, they have also been known to assist the physically challenged, to serve as sled dogs, participate in competitive sports and simply serve as human companions. A border collie's natural herding instinct, along with some command training, make it particularly useful for discouraging Canada geese from areas with ponds including golf courses, apartment complexes, and industrial parks.

In herding, border collies circle and stalk the object of interest. Border collies work to discourage geese by simply keeping the birds on the run and/or in the water until they become frustrated and leave the area. It is best to use dogs to discourage geese *before and/or after the nesting season* (before March 15th or after eggs have hatched). Once geese are actively nesting almost nothing will work to drive them off your property.

Border collies are widely available on both the sheepdog and pet market. Some border collies are not suited for the rigors of field trials. These dogs make good goose dogs, as well as a good pet for someone who wants to own and care for the dog. There are organizations set up to place these border collies into situations where they can be useful.



Biological Controls

PROPER USE OF BORDER COLLIES

Several golf courses and public parks have used border collies quite successfully. Below are a couple of tips which have been found to be most successful: 1.) Start working with dogs very early in the spring before goose pairs have arrived (Feb. & Mar.). Go out four to five times per day to chase the geese away, and also go out at dusk when some geese may try to return to roost. 2.) Most geese leave after three or four weeks of harassment; however, if geese start nesting, almost nothing will drive them away. 3.) It is important to chase new goose arrivals frequently and persistently at least once a day. 4.) The dogs can clear a golf course of geese while golfers are there, since it requires less than 60 seconds of interference. Usually, the geese see the dog and start honking – signaling others to fly. 5.) Dogs are trained to commands and will respond to more than one person, although they tend to be one-person dogs. 6.) Border collies need to work. If left alone, the collies become hyperactive and may dig in the lawn and chew flowers. Therefore, we do not recommend you purchase one of these dogs unless you are able to properly care for them. Some rental services are available.

MUTE SWANS - NOT A GOOD IDEA

Mute swans are sometimes used to repel Canada geese; however, the Division of Wildlife strongly advises AGAINST this technique for the following reasons: 1.) Mute swans are an exotic/non-native species that will cause conflicts with our native trumpeter swans. Mute swans do escape, turn feral, and drive out native ducks and geese from their natural habitat. Therefore, mute swans should never be used as goose deterrents. 2.) Swans, when actively nesting, are extremely aggressive towards humans, more so than Canada geese. In fact, the only two instances of human fatalities attributed to waterfowl in the United States were caused by mute swans. 3.) Swans seem to be very aggressive towards ducks, however swans are not always effective against larger species like Canada geese. 4.) Mute swans must be pinioned to prevent their escape; therefore, the excess food not eaten by the swans and an aerated pond in the winter makes your property even more attractive to geese.



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