



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 5, 2017

Egg addling program continues to control goose population

Geese follow their own clock, so despite the long winter weather, this week marks the beginning of the annual Canada goose egg addling program—an important part of the Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program. The addling program is in its 11th year and continues to prevent explosive growth of the non-migratory resident goose population. Although some may argue that too many geese still live in the valley, what has not happened, thanks to addling, is uncontrolled growth that would see over 10,000 geese and generations of offspring, if addling were not in place.

The nesting population, which is approximately 2500 birds, remains in the valley throughout the year. Trained contractors have already been searching for pairs and nesting sites and are hoping to complete the addling program by mid-May.

“Like so many communities in southern BC, communities along the Okanagan Valley struggle with management of non-migratory Canada Geese,” said Kate Hagmeier, Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program Coordinator. “It is important to stress that the nesting birds targeted in this program are not native to the region. These are hybrid offspring of several different subspecies of Canada Geese that were introduced

in the 1960's and '70's. Canada geese from elsewhere in Canada and the US were translocated here as part of managed introduction programs. Young geese and eggs were brought here to encourage the creation of an Okanagan goose population."

What was not foreseen was the inability of these geese to migrate because they had no parents or natural triggers to guide them, and their ability to adapt and thrive in the mild Okanagan climate. The consequences have been a steadily growing population with few natural controls and a need to manage this population.

Egg addling involves shaking eggs or coating them with non-toxic biodegradable food-grade corn oil within 14 days of incubation to make them non-viable. The U.S. Humane Society supports this egg addling technique.

Once addled, eggs are returned to the nest. Geese continue to incubate until they realize the eggs will not hatch. By then it is generally too late in the year to produce more eggs. Adults are not harmed and will continue with their regular life cycle.

Key to the success of the program is finding new nests. The public is asked to report lone geese, pairs of geese, or nest locations on private or public land by emailing coordinator@okanagangooseplan.com or calling 1-877-943-3209.

The public is asked to keep away from goose nests and to avoid touching the eggs. A federal permit is required to allow crews to addle goose eggs on public and private lands with owners' permission. In the case of private lands, an authorization form is available on the program website.

In addition to egg addling and population surveys, many geese have been marked with leg-bands. Bird-banding is the practice of applying unique markers (bands) to legs of birds. When a marked bird is observed by a birdwatcher or recovered by a hunter, data on age, survival, habitat use and migratory patterns can be retrieved and analyzed.

"The data collected from leg-bands allows us to improve our understanding of how the population is formed and where to target management strategies," said Hagmeier.

The Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program is a partnership between the City of Kelowna, Central Okanagan Regional District, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, District of West Kelowna, City of Vernon, City of Penticton, District of Lake Country, Town of Osoyoos, Town of Oliver, District of Peachland, District of Summerland, Westbank First Nation, Glenmore Ellison Irrigation District and Western Canada Turfgrass Association

Information about the program is available at okanagangooseplan.com.

Background

During the past 10 seasons, more than 13,000 eggs have been prevented from hatching through this minimally invasive approach. Taking into account natural mortality of young through predation or nest failure, that is equivalent to, an estimated 10,000 fewer geese in the valley and their potential young. The program also entails a nest locating component and goose population surveys.

For more information, contact:

Kate Hagmeier

Project Coordinator

1-877-943-3209

coordinator@okanagangooseplan.com