



Media Release

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: April 16, 2021

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Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program

The Okanagan Valley Goose Management Program (OVGMP) is conducting its 15th annual egg-addling program this year between Vernon and Osoyoos. In this milestone year, the valley communities continue their commitment to maintain this comprehensive and cooperative approach to finding balance and reducing conflict between people and nesting geese.

Egg addling is an important population management tool. It is the least invasive form of population control and is supported by many animal welfare groups such as the U.S. Humane Society, which provides a protocol to ensure the process is humane and effective. 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. 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.

During this long-term program, close to 19,000 eggs have been addled which equates to an estimated 10,000 - 14,000 geese directly not entering the population. This does not include the thousands of offspring those geese could have produced.

In addition to addling, the OVGMP assists communities through actions such as public education, population monitoring, habitat modification, and working with regulatory agencies to ensure OVGMP management goals align with federal and provincial goals as well.

Kate Hagmeier, who coordinates the program, is careful to remind people that management actions are targeting geese that are not native to the region. These are hybrid offspring of several different subspecies of Canada Geese that were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. Canada geese from elsewhere in Canada and the U.S. were moved here as part of managed introduction programs.

Key to success of the program is finding and accessing 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.**

This year is a challenge in many respects due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to follow all recommendations provided by public health authorities to control the spread of the virus. Where the OVGMP cannot access nests because they are in care residences or hospital environments, apartment patios or other locations that will not allow for physical distancing, program members can still record the location data for future years. Knowing locations will also help to understand where sources of geese come from later in the spring and summer.

The public is asked to keep away from goose nests and not touch the eggs. A federal permit is required to allow crews to addle goose eggs. If a nest is on private land, a permission form to access the nest is available on the program website (www.okanagangooseplan.com). On Council's direction, the City of Vernon has made application to the provincial and federal governments to conduct a cull program in 2021. This is in addition to the egg addling.

Interior Health continues to encourage local governments throughout the Okanagan to reduce the risk of recreational water contamination from sources such as geese. The OVGMP is a partnership between the City of Vernon, Greater Vernon Water, District of Coldstream, District of Lake Country, Central Okanagan Regional District, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, City of Kelowna, District of West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, City of Penticton, Town of Osoyoos, Town of Oliver, District of Peachland, and the District of Summerland.

Information about the program is available at okanagangooseplan.com.

For more information:

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