



**Subject: Canadian Geese Population Controls**

**Report Number: RCP 23-37**

Department: Recreation, Culture and Parks Department

Submitted by: Matt Johnson

Meeting Type: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, October 23, 2023

**RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT report titled RCP 23-37 be received as information; and
- B. THAT Parks Staff action a plan including decoys and shoreline naturalization in the Spring of 2024 to deter nesting of Canada Geese and decrease the population along Lake Lisgar; and
- C. THAT the costing be incorporated in the 2024 Parks Operating budget.

**BACKGROUND**

Canadian geese, known for their striking appearance and distinctive honking calls, can have significant effects on a lake ecosystem. Their presence often leads to both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, these waterfowl contribute to nutrient cycling as they feed on aquatic plants and algae, helping to maintain water quality. Furthermore, their activities can create small clearings in dense vegetation, which can benefit other waterfowl and aquatic species by providing open spaces for feeding and nesting. However, the large populations of Canadian geese can also result in negative impacts, such as increased nutrient loading from their droppings, leading to water quality issues and the overgrowth of certain plants. Additionally, their extensive grazing can erode lakefront vegetation, affecting the integrity of shorelines. Canadian geese can have mixed effects on private property as well. While their presence can be visually appealing and offer opportunities for birdwatching, their droppings and feeding habits may cause damage to lawns, gardens, and landscaping, requiring property owners to implement measures for mitigation and maintenance. Balancing the presence of Canadian geese in a lake ecosystem requires careful management to ensure the overall health and sustainability of the environment.

## **DISCUSSION**

Managing or repelling Canadian geese from a lake can be a challenging but necessary endeavor, particularly when their presence leads to environmental and property concerns. Several strategies can be employed for effective management. These may include habitat modification, such as altering shoreline vegetation to deter nesting, as well as implementing scare tactics like decoys, noisemakers, or visual deterrents like reflective tape or flags. Creating physical barriers, such as fences or netting, can also deter geese from accessing specific areas. In some cases, wildlife professionals can resort to more active measures, such as egg spraying or nest destruction. It's important to note that such actions should be carried out within legal and ethical boundaries, respecting wildlife conservation regulations. Ongoing efforts, combined with community awareness and cooperation, are crucial for maintaining a balanced and sustainable coexistence between Canadian geese and Lake Lisgar's environment.

To effectively remove Canadian geese from an area, it's imperative to prioritize humane and environmentally responsible methods. Staff recommend implementing habitat modification to discourage nesting and feeding as well as using decoys as deterrents. This can be accomplished through vegetative controls along the shoreline so that it isn't so inviting and more difficult to feed. Secondly, employ non-lethal deterrents like decoys, or visual deterrents to discourage geese from the area. Town staff will consult with wildlife experts at the Long Point Regional Conservation Authority and other local authorities to explore the possibility of implementing sprays on shorelines that repel geese and minimize feeding. Many deterrent strategies have been implemented at beaches and marinas with limited to no success.

## **CONSULTATION**

Director of Recreation, Culture and Parks, Supervisor of Parks and Cemeteries, Manager of Parks and Facilities, Sandboy Marina (Long Point), Port Colborne Marina, Fin and Feather Marina (St. Williams).

## FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

The costs associated with the plans to deter the Canada Geese population around Lake Lisgar in the spring of next year will be minimal (\$500 - \$1000) and absorbed in the 2024 Parks Operating Budget (Beautification – Supplies).

## CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

**Goal** – Within the community, Tillsonburg will strive to offer residents the amenities, services and attractions they require to enjoy balanced lifestyles

**Strategic Direction** – Preserve and naturalize Lake Lisgar and its surroundings as a community attraction.

**Priority Project** – n/a