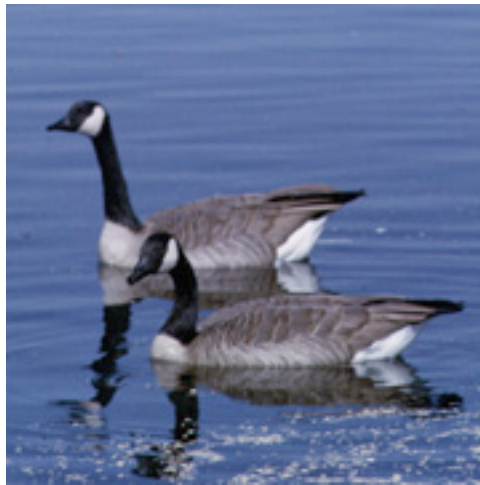




## Canada Goose



### General Description

A well-known and easily distinguished bird, the Canada Goose has a mottled gray-brown body, black legs, tail, neck, head, and face, with a white rump, sides, and chin-strap. There are a number of recognized subspecies that vary considerably in size. Some of the smaller subspecies have a white ring at the base of the neck.

### Habitat

Always found near water, Canada Geese inhabit lakes, ponds, bays, marshes, yards, and fields. Urban populations are not shy around people and often live in city parks and suburban ponds.

### Behavior

Canada Geese graze while walking on land, and feed on submergent aquatic vegetation by reaching under the water with their long necks. Males defend territories from other geese and humans by hissing.

### Diet

Aquatic plant material and waste grain left in plowed fields make up the majority of the Canada Goose's diet. Insects, mollusks, crustaceans, and occasionally small fish are also eaten.

## **Nesting**

Canada Geese form long-term pair bonds. The female chooses the nest-site on a slightly elevated spot near water with good visibility. She then builds the nest, a shallow bowl with a slight depression, made of sticks, grass, and weeds, and lined with down. She lays and incubates 4 to 7 eggs, while the male stands guard nearby. One or two days after the young hatch, they swim and feed themselves, although the parents still tend them and help them find food. The young first fly at 6 to 9 weeks depending on the race.

## **Migration Status**

Historically, each population of Canada Goose followed a rigid migratory corridor with traditional stopovers and wintering areas, like most other North American geese. Today, however, many urban populations are year-round residents, and other populations have changed migratory routes.

## **Conservation Status**

Conservation of Canada Geese is complex since some of the seven subspecies are so abundant that they are controlled as nuisances and other subspecies are considered endangered. One subspecies of Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis moffitti*) breeds in Washington. This subspecies is common year round in developed areas, especially grassy waterfront lawns. These geese were uncommon here before 1900, but as habitat has been altered by humans, stricter hunting laws enforced, and natural predators eliminated, their population has grown. In the Seattle area, many people consider Canada Geese a nuisance. Within the past few years, control measures have included egg shaking and oiling, relocating, and even killing large numbers of geese. These stopgap measures, however, only temporarily reduce the urban populations, which rebound as long as they have abundant habitat and food.

## **When and Where to Find in Washington**

Resident Canada Geese can be found throughout Washington's lowlands in wetlands and waterways, especially in city parks and agricultural areas. As residents they seem to be absent from the Olympic Peninsula and the outer coast north of Grays Harbor and east of Cape Flattery to Port Angeles. West of the Cascades they are common year round. East of the Cascades they are common from October to mid-April and uncommon the rest of the year. Aleutian Canada Geese can be found stopping over at Willapa National Wildlife Refuge and on fields near Willapa Bay during migration, from September to the end of November. Northward migrants also stop in this area between February and March, but not generally in such large numbers. The entire population of the Dusky Canada Goose, another subspecies, winters along the Columbia River Valley and the adjacent Willamette River Valley at the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge (Clark County), where up to seven different races can be seen.

**Call Eagle Pest Eliminators Inc. to eliminate your nuisance bird problems!**

**(425) 398-7365 Or visit: [www.eaglepesteliminators.com](http://www.eaglepesteliminators.com)**

**WE GUARANTEE TO BEAT ANY QUOTE!**