**CLA Position on Geese Population Remediation Program**

**What is it?** A federally funded program to reduce Canada Geese population on Cassadaga Lakes.

**Why is it needed?** To reduce the adverse effects that an overpopulation can cause such as:

* Health and safety concerns of residents (especially children and pets). Goose excrement contains harmful bacteria that can cause illness or death. “Hosting a population of 20 birds would be the same as having someone spread 20-30lbs of bacteria contaminated biohazard on your lawn EVERY DAY.” (NY Post , Dec. 15, 2017). Geese feces usually contain the parasites cryptosporidium, giardia, coliform and campylobacter. Cryptosporidium poses the most serious health hazard since it causes cryptosporidiosis, an illness with the following symptoms: watery diarrhea, dehydration.
* HEALTH OF OUR LAKES. Each adult goose produces 1 - 2 lbs of excrement per day. If you have 500 birds, that’s ¼ -½ ton of feces per day potentially leaches in to our lakes. Goose excrement is NITROGEN. Nitrogen is a fertilizer and is contributing to our seaweed growth which has been at record highs the past few years. Excess nitrogen also causes algae blooms. Low oxygen levels occur. Lack of oxygen affects aquatic life. Harmful algae blooms release toxins that can cause illnesses.
* Beach closures (due to unacceptable e-coli readings - done by the health department)
* Expenses to tax payers (Geese control measures at beaches – fencing, coyote silhouettes, aerator other repellent strategies. Increased lifeguard wages – lifeguards are paid to remove goose excrement every morning from docks.)

**Why is our goose population increasing?**

* Long lives (10 – 25 years)
* 5 – 10 eggs annually. A female goose may produce more than 50 young in her lifetime.
* Always come back to where they were hatched.
* Few natural predators
* Geese have evolved and do not migrate as they used to

**How many geese do we have?**

* It is near impossible to do a census BUT we do know that the DEC does their banding program on Cassadaga Lakes because they can get their entire quota of 250 in one spot very quickly. We have many more than that.
* It has been estimated that the number of geese has more than doubled in NY State since population surveys began in 1989.

**Who provides this program and how do they do it?**

* U.S. Department of Agriculture. Justin Gansowski, Wildlife Biologist, USDA, is our contact and has given us much of the information above.
* Geese “round ups” at end of June. Any adult that cannot fly (due to molting and age) will be rounded up, penned and taken to a NYS Certified Processor. (Same method as chickens.) The meat is distributed to food banks.
* “Round ups” will happen only on properties where they have been given permission.
* This is an annual program and biggest round ups are in the first 3 – 5 years. We can stop when we feel our goose population is no longer a threat to the health and safety of our residents and to the lakes. However, the goose population will never level out. It constantly increases.

*Please note that goose droppings are not the only source for a lake’s pollution. Septics, storm runoff, imbedded phosphorus, etc. also contribute to the lakes’ pollution.*

NY DEC Geese Management Goals

DEC continues to advocate for a reduction in the number of Canada geese in New York State to 85,000 birds (from what has since grown to 364,000 birds in spring 2019). We believe that a much smaller resident goose population would best serve diverse public interests.

Unfortunately, we are farther from the goal now than we were in 1999, so we continue to seek practical and effective ways to reduce the population. Foremost among these is goose hunting, which results in estimated harvests of some 50,000-100,000 resident geese annually across New York State. DEC will continue to expand goose hunting opportunities wherever possible to help control or reduce resident goose populations. However, this is not an option in many urban and suburban areas, so capture and removal programs have become necessary.