



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at
<http://tourism.oregonstate.edu/>

Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program
<https://www.GORPguide.org>

For more information about the GORP training program see:
<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/canada-goose-branta-canadensis/

By colliiek2

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It is hard to imagine the familiar Canada goose population in danger. But, in the past, Canada geese were almost wiped out in North America.

The population has rebounded to the point where Canada geese are Oregon's most familiar bird. For some, they have become Oregon's most familiar nuisance.



Canada Goose with goslings,
courtesy ODFW.

Not All the Same

There are 11 subspecies of Canada goose that vary in size and color. All have the same long, black neck and white chinstrap. Five of those species are available for harvest (See Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for permit information.)

Territory & Habitat

Like other swans, ducks and geese, Canada's are found on every continent and are common to Oregon. They congregate near water, such as reservoirs, lakes, ponds, large rivers, and native wetlands. They have overrun most Eastern native wetlands, including the National Wildlife Refuges created to protect the migratory populations and diversity.

In the past, most Canada Geese migrated to central and southern North America. Now more are resident and live in or near humans year around. The US FWS report that resident birds cause the most problems. Resident and migratory populations have separate breeding ranges and do not typically interbreed.

Diet

Canada Geese are one of the few bird species that can digest grass and primarily eat green vegetation. They also eat aquatic plants and grains, and fish and insects and will pick food

off of the street and out of garbage cans.

They have become a serious pest parks, golf courses, farm fields, and airports. Not only can they damage crops but also foul pastures with waste. In addition to farm damage they provoke public nuisance complaints which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) says are increasing every year.

Raising Young

Goslings (or baby geese) are raised near water. Parents lead goslings to water shortly after being born (great photo opportunities!). After just one day the goslings can dive up to 40 feet under water for food. Goslings can dive or swim away to escape predators.

Canada Geese have oily feathers making them well adapted to swimming, floating, and diving.

Adults aggressively protect their young and will attack anything, including humans, that they perceive as a threat. These are large birds that can be up to 20 pounds, stand 30 to 45 inches, and have a wingspan up to 75 inches). Aggressive behavior can include vocalization, hissing, biting, chasing, and more.

When goslings have learned to fly and the parents have finished molting, the whole family will leave the nesting grounds and find more productive feeding areas. This usually occurs in the late summer before massive southward migrations begin.

Conflicts & Solutions

Sometimes these inappropriate feeding areas are near airports. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) estimates there are 240 goose-aircraft collisions annually nationwide. Remember the 2009 US Airways flight 1549 that went down in the Hudson River? It was also traced to migratory birds.

Canada Geese are a protected species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. A variety of management techniques may help deter the geese. Preventing public feeding, altering habitat, hazing, and other techniques have helped. Evidently, floating a silhouette of a nesting swan will deter the geese from an area.

Want more? See any of the excellent resources below.

REFERENCES:

- Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (<https://myodfw.com/wildlife-viewing/species/swans-ducks-and-geese> and <https://myodfw.com/game-bird-hunting/species/geese>)
- All About Birds (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/canada-goose-resident-vs-migratory/>)

- American Expedition! (<https://forum.americanexpedition.us/canada-goose-information-facts-photos-and-artwork>)
- Why do migrating Canada Geese sometimes fly in the “wrong” direction?
(<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/i-thought-geese-migrated-south-in-the-winter-and-north-in-the-summer-why-did-i-just-see-a-flock-of-canada-geese-flying-in-the-wrong-direction/>)
- Wikipedia, Canada Goose (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canada_goose)