

Goose Control – Lake Shannon - April 2025

There are at least three techniques that either are used or have been suggested to be used to control the Canada Goose population on Lake Shannon:

Goose Roundup

Goose Egg/Nest Depredation

Chemical Goose Repellents

Goose Roundup

In the past, Lake Shannon has participated in goose roundups, in which the geese, during their flightless phase in spring, are herded onto a lakeside lot, collected either by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or by a contractor licensed by the DNR, and relocated.

Goose roundups had fallen into disfavor by the DNR for at least two reasons:

Relocated geese often return to the lake from their relocation. Canada Geese typically return to the same summer range year after year. Since they migrate thousands of miles, it is not surprising that they could find their way back to their “home” lake from dozens or, perhaps, hundreds of miles.

Although the Avian Flu was originally identified in 1878, by the year 2008, there were a number of outbreaks that caused the death or culling of millions of birds. The DNR felt that rounding up geese in small confines could cause the avian flu to spread more rapidly, and they stopped all goose roundups.

Early this year, the DNR changed their policy. The change was publicized without sufficient detailed information, and several people on Lake Shannon have pushed for us to conduct a goose roundup.

Under the new DNR policy, since relocation does not work well, and the DNR has run out of places to relocate the birds, goose roundups may be held, with the birds euthanized rather than relocated. Because the birds will be euthanized, there is no concern about the spread of avian flu among birds that were about to be killed anyway.

See

<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/managing-resources/wildlife/nuisance-wildlife/nuisance-canada-goose-faqs> for more information and details.

However, Lake Shannon does not qualify for goose roundups for at least two reasons:

1. A site must “have a minimum of 100 geese on their site at time of permit application”. Lake Shannon typically has 50-60 geese during the summer

months. The only time there are large numbers is during the fall migratory season.

2. A site must “provide official documentation of a swimming beach closure last year [2024] due to elevated E. Coli counts and has a large number of geese currently using the area.” Lake Shannon has had no beach closures or elevated E. Coli tests.

Goose Egg/Nest Depredation

Lake Shannon has participated in Goose Egg/Nest Depredation for a number of years. Under this program, in early spring (typically Early April to mid-May) eggs are collected from goose nests around the lake. These eggs are destroyed according to the DNR protocol.

Although geese (who mate for life) typically return to the same breeding area each spring, it is believed that, after some years of being unable to raise a brood, the geese will leave their “home” and seek another breeding area.

In any case, the eggs that are collected do not hatch. In previous years, the goose egg team has collected anywhere from 22 to 66 eggs on the lake.

Chemical Goose Repellents

Some residents have suggested various chemical means of repelling geese, especially from the most used areas: North and South Blarney Islands, Kerry Island, and the Sylvia Cole Swim Park.

Although there are numerous products on the market, the use of such a product by an organization such as the Lake Shannon Association (LSA), has challenges.

Use of these products on one’s private property is the responsibility of the property owner.

Use of these products on Lake Shannon common property requires that more research be done to ensure that it will not be harmful.

Some of the things to look for in a product are:

Is it registered with the EPA?

Is the label use consistent with LSA’s expected use? Many products are labeled for use on areas such as gold courses, but not on park property. To quote an EPA official: “The label is the law”.

Does it contain any substances that may be a concern?

As a result of several suggestions by lake residents and research by the LSA Board and the Goose Control Committee, one candidate has been selected: Avian Migrate™ Goose and Bird Repellent by Avian Enterprises, LLC in Sylvan Lake, MI (aviancontrol.com)

Its EPA registration number is 9787-3

“Avian Migrate® Goose and Bird Repellent is an EPA registered goose and bird repellent that is effective against all types of nuisance birds and is suitable for use around humans, pets and terrestrial animals.”

“Avian Migrate® is non-toxic. Its active ingredient is found in nature and is also used extensively in food designed for human consumption. All Avian Migrate® ingredients are “Generally Regarded As Safe” (GRAS) by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and are “Earth friendly.””

“Avian Migrate® irritates bird’s pain centers, creating an unpleasant sensation. Birds learn to avoid areas that have been treated and seek other locations. Avian Migrate® does not harm grass, shrubs and other vegetation and is not easily rinsed away by rain or sprinklers.”

“Avian Migrate® contains a special colorant, visible only to birds, that lets them know that the area has been treated. This “teaches” unwanted geese and birds to stay away from treated areas in the future.”

Recommended Application

Rather than applying Avian Migrate™ to all areas of concern at the beginning of our summer season, I recommend that following method to demonstrate and quantify the effect of the product:

At the beginning of the summer season, apply the product to one half of North Blarney Island and one half of South Blarney immediately after those islands have been cleaned of any goose droppings.

At approximately one week after application, survey the islands at the time of the next goose droppings cleaning in order to determine:

Was there a reduction in droppings on the treated parts of the islands?

Can that reduction be quantified?

Repeat this exercise weekly for several weeks.

The product is diluted at a rate of 13oz product to 2 gallons of water (plus 1 oz of InvisiDye) and applied to ½ acre of land.

1 Gallon of the product costs \$209

8oz of InvisiDye costs \$90

These quantities would be sufficient to treat a total of 5 acres.

North and South Blarney Islands together are about 3 acres.

These quantities would be sufficient to conduct three weekly test sprayings.