

# Canada Geese

*Branta canadensis*

Canada Geese were first introduced to New Zealand in 1876; initially to the South Island, and did not become established in the North Island until the 1970s. Canada Geese were classed as a game bird under the Wildlife Act 1953 and were managed by Fish & Game NZ. Their status as a game bird ended in 2011.

## Why are they a pest?

In 2011, Canada Geese were moved from schedule 1 to schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act 1953. This change in status from a game bird removed Fish & Game NZ's legal responsibility to manage the birds.

Canada Geese cause substantial damage to waterways and agricultural pastures. They consume large amounts of pasture and crops when foraging, with five geese able to consume the same amount of grass as one sheep. Their acidic droppings are harmful to waterways and pastoral land.

Large amounts of defecation from the birds greatly reduce water quality, introducing harmful bacteria into waterways.

## What do they look like?

Large, light brown birds with a black neck and head and a distinctive white 'chin strap'



### Identification:

**Body length**  
85-95cm

**Weight**  
4.5-5.5kg

**Wingspan**  
127-183cm

## Where do they live?

Canada Geese like to live near waterways. This includes coastal areas, lakes, ponds, or pastoral land adjacent to waterways.

If their nests are threatened, they move to safer, harder to reach nesting spots.



## Control methods

Canada Geese are no longer a game bird, and are now classed as unprotected. Canada Geese are not classified as a pest in Horizons Pest Management Plan, but are viewed as a nuisance.

It is strongly recommended that Canada Geese are controlled, which can be done by landowners.

Canada Geese can be hunted at any time, using any method, other than poisoning.

The birds can be controlled through shooting on your private land, or through an organized cull. Organized culls are often planned for during the moult, when the birds cannot fly. The moult is from January to February.



## What can you do?

If you see Canada Geese you can report sightings to freephone Horizons on 0508 800 800. Reporting sightings allows us to see how many are in the region, and what areas they are nesting in.

Landowners are encouraged to control the geese on their property.

Canada Geese are becoming a problem in the Horizons Region and across the country. They are reaching high numbers and causing major damage to pastoral land and waterways. The bird population has increased since they were no longer classified as game birds.



For more information visit [www.horizons.govt.nz](http://www.horizons.govt.nz) or freephone Horizons on 0508 800 800