

REDUCING NUISANCE CANADA GOOSE PROBLEMS THROUGH HABITAT MANIPULATION

MICHAEL R. CONOVER, Wildlife Damage Management Program, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife Management, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5210

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Urban populations of Canada geese (*Branta canadensis*) cause considerable problems when large numbers congregate in parks, playing fields, or backyards. In most cases, geese are drawn to these sites to feed on lawns. I tested whether geese have feeding preferences for different species of grass. Captive Canada geese preferred Kentucky bluegrass and disliked tall fescue more than colonial bentgrass, perennial ryegrass, and red fescue. They did not eat other ground covers such as pachysandra and English ivy. These results suggest that goose

numbers at problem sites could be reduced by changing the ground cover. I also compared the characteristics of foraging sites used by geese to potential foraging sites that geese avoided. Occupied sites were more open, allowing geese clearer fields of vision and greater ease in taking off and landing. This suggests that goose numbers at problem sites may be reduced by planting tall trees to make it more difficult for geese to fly, and bushes or hedges to obstruct their vision.