



# Waterfowl Management



**THREATS ADDRESSED**

- Excess Nutrients
- Pollutant Inputs
- Algal Blooms
- Erosion
- Invasive/Nuisance Species

**STRATEGY GOALS**

- Protect
- Manage
- Rehabilitate

**STRATEGY CO-BENEFITS**

- Habitat  Neutral
- Aesthetics  Improve
- Recreation  Improve



- Permittable in Massachusetts**  
Local review through the Conservation Commission may be required. List of potential permits available [here](#).
- Implemented on Cape Cod**  
See examples of pond projects implemented on Cape Cod [here](#).
- Listed in 208 Plan Technologies Matrix**  
Learn more about the nutrient management strategies in the Tech Matrix [here](#).
- Can be Performed at Homeowner Scale**  
Local review and permitting may be required.
- Nature-based Solution**

**DURATION OF BENEFITS**

- Less than one month
- One season or year
- Multiple seasons or years

**MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS**

- Monthly
- Annually
- Infrequent

## DESCRIPTION

Waterfowl include birds such as ducks, geese, and swans that can naturally be found in and around water. Waterfowl in excess numbers are often attracted to residential, commercial, and municipal lakes and ponds due to a lack of vegetation and predators in these areas. Waterfowl can damage ponds through causing erosion and sediment accumulation, damaging aquatic plants, and polluting beaches and ponds with their fecal matter. Waterfowl management involves the control of waterfowl through various mechanisms including: ensuring no one is feeding them; maintaining a natural, tall, thick vegetated pond shore buffer around the pond; installing physical barriers like fencing or flagging to control waterfowl; human habitat modification such as avoiding areas with concentrations of waterfowl; using noisemakers, pyrotechnics, or trained dogs to deter waterfowl; and destroying eggs or adults. The duration of benefits and maintenance requirements will vary depending on method(s) used, and adaptive management approach is advised as waterfowl are intelligent and adaptive. The objective of waterfowl management is to reduce nutrients and pathogens from bird droppings from getting on pond beaches or entering ponds where they may contribute to elevated bacteria levels.

## ADVANTAGES

- Can be inexpensive depending on which mechanism used
- If combined with native pond shore buffer plantings, can enhance habitat and aesthetics

## CONSTRAINTS





- Can be controversial, especially if lethal control is attempted
- Requires adaptive management as waterfowl are intelligent and will adapt to control methods over time



## IMPLEMENTATION

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### POTENTIAL ACTORS

-  **Towns:** Towns may propose waterfowl management at town-managed beaches
-  **Pond Groups:** May propose waterfowl management on public or private beaches and provide a supportive role through education
-  **Private Landowners:** May propose waterfowl management on private beaches
-  **Land Trusts:** Land trusts may provide a supportive role through education

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### SITING REQUIREMENTS

- All ponds where waterfowl (e.g., geese, ducks) are a problem

### INFORMATION NEEDS

- Waterfowl survey
- Waterfowl integrated pest management plan



### IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE

[Wequaquett Estates Beach Association](#) uses a "Goose-Line" (a rope stretched across the beach at the water's edge) to keep geese and their droppings off the beach. Association members rope off the beach each evening and take the rope down in the mornings.

### RESOURCES

- The Northeastern Integrated Pest Management Center's ["Canada Geese: The Bird Control Challenge of the Decade"](#) has useful information on how to manage Canada Geese.
- The Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation's [Lakes and Ponds Program](#) provides related resources.

### COST ESTIMATE

# Variable

Varies depending on scale of problem and mechanism used



### ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS





**Assessment:** Planning, design, and permitting, including bird survey

**Implementation:** Equipment and supplies

**Maintenance:** Monitoring and maintenance



### POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

-  Community Preservation Act
-  Capital Budget
-  Grants
-  Private Funding

Additional information regarding potential funding sources is available [here](#).