

In the News

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Goose roundup called inhumane

During the early summer, goose problems affect cities across the United States. Summer is also the time to round up many of these geese for relocation or for euthanization. In Oregon, nuisance Canada geese are being used to feed the hungry. According to the *Montreal Gazette* (July 4, 2010), >100 geese that were euthanized after a roundup in Drake Park in Bend, Oregon, were donated to local food banks. The roundup came after visitors to the park complained about the abundance of goose feces. Several other methods of control had been tried unsuccessfully by park officials, including trapping and relocating the geese, harassing them, and discouraging visitors from feeding them.

A similar goose-removal project was carried out at Saddle River County Park, New Jersey (NorthJersey.com, July 4, 2010.) The geese were removed by rounding them up during their flightless period and then euthanizing them with carbon dioxide gas, a method approved as humane by the American Veterinary Medical Association's guidelines on euthanasia. More than 45 residents complained to Bergen County officials that the Canada goose removal project was inhumane and unfair because the roundup occurs when the geese are molting and do not have flight feathers. Residents suggest that other methods be used to reduce the goose problem, such as egg addling and oiling, sterilization, relocation, and harassment with dogs.

National Park Service spares geese around JFK airport

The Associated Press (July 1, 2010) reported that geese are being rounded up in many parts of New York City, except for the area around John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK). Hundreds of birds live on the U.S. Park Service's (NPS) Gateway National Recreation Area near JFK. However, the NPS will not reduce or remove the birds. After US Airways

Flight 1549 crash landed in the Hudson River in January 2009, New York officials contracted with Wildlife Services to reduce the Canada goose population within a 5-mile radius of Kennedy and LaGuardia airports. However, because Gateway National Recreation Area is managed by the NPS, it is not covered under that agreement. Other federal and local agencies have requested that the NPS reduce the goose population in the Recreation Area, but the NPS was reluctant to take the necessary action, stating that protection of wildlife is its primary mission.

Looking for wildlife at the Great Falls, Montana, airport

Similar to many airports across the country, the airport at Great Falls, Montana, is working on its wildlife hazard plan, which is mandated by the Federal Aviation Administration, to reduce wildlife–aircraft strikes. According to KRTV (June 14, 2010), the airport has had problems with near-miss collisions between planes and birds. Each week several aircraft have had to alter their course to avoid striking birds. Recently, an F-15 had to go vertical to avoid a flock of geese. Wildlife Services is conducting the survey to determine the extent of the problem and to recommend solutions.

White-nose syndrome continues to spread among bats

The Wildlife Society's newsletter *Interactions* (2010) reported on the progression of white-nose syndrome (WNS) in the eastern United States. WNS is a disease that has killed large numbers of bats in the Northeast. The disease was named for the characteristic white fungus (*Geomyces destructans*) that appears on muzzle, ears, or wing membranes of affected bats (Figure 1). The first case of WNS was identified in February 2006, in Howe Caverns, located approximately 50 miles west of Albany, New York. The disease has now spread southward



Figure 1. The fungus known as white-nose syndrome (*Geomyces destructans*) is spreading among North American bat populations. (Photo courtesy Ryan von Linden, New York Department of Environmental Conservation)

through much of the Appalachian Mountains and westward into Missouri. Since the winter of 2006–2007, bat declines of >5% have been observed in several hibernacula. Several hundred thousand bats, primarily little brown bats (*Myotis lucifugus*), have died of WNS. Little brown bats are also one of the primary species that causes nuisance problems when they inhabit houses, farm structures, and commercial buildings.

Wildlife managers recommend a high level of biosecurity for those who routinely work with bats, such as researchers, wildlife rehabilitators, and wildlife damage management professionals. Equipment should be disinfected between projects. While there are no guidelines specific to wildlife damage management practices, general disinfection guidelines for researchers can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/mammals/BatDisinfectionProtocol.html>. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offers current information on WNS (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/wnsabout.html>). The National Wildlife Health Center also provides information on its website (http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/disease_information/white-nose_syndrome/index.jsp).

Mountain lion sighting confirmed in Indiana

On May 7, 2010, the Greene County (Indiana) *Daily World* reported that a mountain lion (*Puma concolor*; Figure 2) sighting had been

confirmed in central Indiana. Mountain lions are occasionally reported in Indiana; however, this was the first sighting that has been confirmed by a state official. The mountain lion's presence was verified by Scott Johnson, Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) nongame mammal biologist. The determination was made from photographs taken by motion-sensitive game cameras (see figure below). The camera was set in the area after a preliminary investigation found evidence consistent with mountain lion behavior, including an eviscerated deer carcass buried under a pile of leaves. Without additional



Figure 2. This photograph of a mountain lion was taken by a Department of Natural Resources motion-sensitive camera in Greene County, Indiana, on May 1, 2010. (Photo courtesy Indiana Department of Natural Resources)

evidence, it is impossible to say if the mountain lion photographed in Greene County is wild or is a formerly captive cat.

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