

Friends of Animals' Position Statement on Egg Addling

Just as the world-renowned ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson opposed Mute Swan egg addling, Friends of Animals also opposes addling of Canada Goose eggs. Addling – destroying eggs by shaking, piercing, or coating the eggs with oil – is invasive and traumatic for these famously protective nesters.

Indeed, Canada Goose parents are so protective of each other, of their nests, and of their young, that some have been known to challenge approaching vehicles. When agitated, these birds can knock human intruders off their feet, so addlers tend to approach in groups of two to four people, normally carrying some sort of fending tools – often brooms, bats or paddles. Geese can easily break umbrellas. The Conservation Commission of Missouri even recommends using dogs to deal with defensive geese.¹

Thus, merely getting to the nest requires tangling with frantic parents, an unknown percentage of whom are injured or killed in the process. And incorrectly piercing or shaking an egg can leave an embryo alive but deformed.

The destruction of eggs or nests may be combined with other means of ejecting geese from a given locality. Biologists who collar and track geese have found that a percentage of the “resident” or non-migrating geese, mostly juveniles, actually do understate a northward summer migration, sometimes into Canada, to molt.² Maryland’s Department of Natural Resources suggests that such “molt migrations” could be induced by the destruction of nests, thereby pressing birds northward in the summer and exposing them to hunters’ fire during their autumn return flight; this technique could conceivably be used as a “population control tool.”³ Along the same line of reasoning, an official with Connecticut’s migratory gamebird program has suggested that inducing migrations might reduce the goose population by making birds more vulnerable to hunters.⁴ On the other hand, little is written into the government plans about the most obvious matter: the importance of simply cleaning up after birds.

Believing that there are constructive steps we can take to empower communities to live in harmony with birds in our midst, Friends of Animals discourages egg addling, AND all other forms of harassment. Rather than subjecting geese and other waterfowl to harm, we suggest beneficial ideas that numerous communities have successfully put to the test. We look forward to working with you and helping to replace short-term reactions with safe, sensible, and lasting responses.

1 Conservation Commission of Missouri, “How to Addle and Oil Eggs” (document ID: PLS 051; content revision 1 Aug. 2002; electronic file updated 1 Jan. 2004).

2 See Min T. Huang, “Keeping Track of Collared Geese,” *Connecticut Wildlife* (Sept.-Oct., 2004); see also Larry Hindman and Bill Harvey, “Maryland Game Program Annual Report: Migratory Game Birds” (2003-2004), published by the Wildlife and Heritage Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

3 Hindman & Harvey, “Maryland Game Program Annual Report: Migratory Game Birds” (see note 2 above).

4 Min T. Huang, “Keeping Track of Collared Geese,” (see note 2 above).