

Early Goose-Hunting Season starts Tuesday

By PETER LYNCH
INDEPENDENT WRITER

Canada geese each produce a pound or more of poop per day on Nantucket. This large amount of excrement is polluting the waters and mucking up farms and golf courses. The problem is compounded when geese do not migrate for the winter.

Canada geese traditionally migrate from their arctic breeding grounds through Massachusetts and down towards the Chesapeake Bay area.

There are two types of birds: those that migrate and those that do not.

The geese that do not migrate are descendents of captive geese once used by waterfowl hunters. When live decoys were outlawed in the 1930s these birds had no instinct to migrate and stayed.

"We make it more friendly for birds to stay," managing director of the UMass Boston Nantucket Field station Sarah Oktay said. "I personally wouldn't go shoot them, but it could be really helpful."

The geese have stayed on the island because of climate and people feeding the animals. The area is perfect for geese, but they pose a problem. Goose hunting is one option that will help ease the situation.

"Most people who have problems with geese beg you to come hunt," Nantucket Hunting Association member Doug Byer said. "We keep animals from becoming a nuisance."

An early goose-hunting season has been put into effect. The early Canada goose season begins September 2 and ends on September 25 with a bag limit of seven birds a day.

"Data collected from agency goose-banding activities this summer indicate

the early goose-hunting seasons have kept populations stable in the central and western parts of the state and full bag limits are rarely reached," commented MassWildlife's Waterfowl Project Leader H. Heusmann. Steve Holdgate, the president of the Nantucket Hunting Association would like to see more time given to hunters on the island.

While there is an extended early season, there is no extended late season.

Holdgate plans to bring attention to the late season issue in the next couple of years.

"We don't have as many hunting areas," said hunter Doug Smith. "There are more posted areas where we can't hunt now. What we need from the public is increased awareness – people who have posted areas would allow us to hunt."

All migratory birds, including Canada geese, are protected by an international migratory bird treaty.

Hunting is allowed, but timing of the season, its length, the number of birds that can be taken and the hunting methods are strictly regulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On August 28 migratory bird hunting regulations will be set.

When the rules are put into place, biologists and hunters will team up to work out the best option.

There needs to be a balance so that the birds don't become eradicated.

According to Marion Larson, the information and education biologist at the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Canada geese that migrate through Nantucket can easily be confused for the ones that do not. "The're not wearing berets and they don't say eh," she said. ■

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"Sisters & Brothers:

Sibling

Relationships in the Animal World"

by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page
illustrations by Steve Jenkins

The latest offering from the award-winning author/illustrator of "Actual Size," this information picture book explores sibling relationships in the animal world. Featuring Jenkins' colorful cut and torn paper illustrations, "Sisters and Brothers" is packed with interesting facts for young zoologists, including additional animal facts in the back of the book. Recommended for ages 4-10.

Margaret Head
Children's and Young Adult Librarian
Nantucket Atheneum

"The White Mary"

by Kira Salak

I find debut novels intriguing. For someone to take the time, slog through the rejections, and never give up – they must believe in what they have written. The voyeur in me also believes there must be at least a basis in personal experience. "The White Mary" by Kira Salak is one such novel. Salak introduces us to Marika Vecera, a seasoned war reporter on a trek through Papua New Guinea in search of the journalist she most admires and reveres. The problem is, he supposedly killed himself in Malaysia. Salak, in her real life, is the first woman to traverse the island of Papua New Guinea and a writer for *National Geographic*. Hmmmm, seems like a thin line between fiction and reality, don't you think? Marika's story is part travelogue, part cultural documentary, part personal quest - which adds up to a whole lotta book!

Lucretia Voigt
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