Branta canadensis

Taxon	Family / Order / Class / Phylum
Branta canadensis (Linnaeus, 1758)	Anatidae / Anseriformes / Aves / Chordata

COMMON NAMES (English only)
Canada Goose

SYNONYMS
Anas canadensis Linnaeus, 1758

SHORT DESCRIPTION
A large grey-brown goose inhabiting terrestrial and freshwater habitats. Omnivorous, feeding mostly on plant materials, rhizomes, stems, leaves, seeds and fruit. Distinguished by a black head, neck and tail with a large white chin strap.

Branta canadensis **is an omnivorous large grey-brown goose.**

Photo: Stephan Gollasch

BIOLOGY/ECOLOGY

Dispersal mechanisms
North American populations are migratory and winter in the southern U.S.A.; many European populations are sedentary though some northern populations move south to central Europe

Reproduction
Breeds March-June, semi-colonial, Produces 2-6 eggs (mean 6, max. 11), normally single brood, incubation takes 28-30 days and fledging 40-48 days.

Known predators/herbivores
Mute Swan (Cygnus olor) may kill young. Widely hunted.

Resistant stages (seeds, spores etc.)
None

HABITAT

Native (EUNIS code)
B: Coastal habitats, C: Inland surface water habitats, E: Grassland and tall forb habitats, F: Heathland, scrub and tundra habitats, I: Regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats.

Habitat occupied in invaded range (EUNIS code)
The same as in the native range

Habitat requirements
Avoids large, deep lakes with oligotrophic waters and rocky banks; also avoids rivers.

DISTRIBUTION

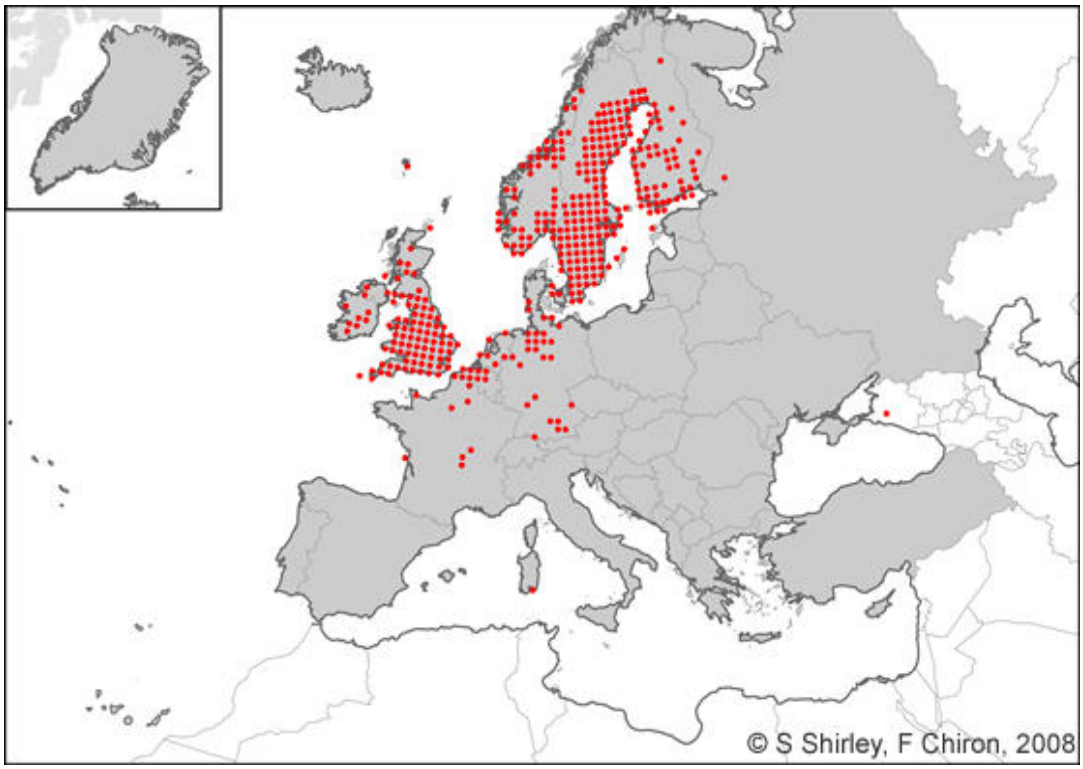
Native Range
Nearctic of Northern America including Aleutian Islands, western Alaska, east across Arctic mainland to Newfoundland and south to northern United States.

Known Introduced Range
Established in eleven countries in northern Europe, and across north-central Europe from Belgium east to Russia. Also introduced, but not yet established, in an additional seven central and southern Europe countries such as Austria, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic and Switzerland.

Trend

Increasing in several northern, central, and western European countries where trends known; no information for several other central and eastern European countries, but expected to become established as a breeding bird across lower central Europe.

MAP (European distribution)



Legend

	Known in country		Known in CGRS square		Known in sea

INTRODUCTION PATHWAY

It has escaped from aviaries, has been released for hunting and naturally spread to neighbouring European countries

IMPACT

Ecosystem Impact

Hybridizes with 16 Anatidae species in captivity. There is concern for the potential for hybridization with other goose species such as Anser anser (Greylag Goose), particularly in introduced areas. Competition with Greylag Goose documented. Very aggressive to small waterfowl such as Gallinula chloropus and Fulica atra, displacing territory and killing young and adults. Some benefit to dabbling ducks, which steal floating vegetation from submergent vegetation dislodged by Canada Geese during feeding.

Health and Social Impact

Some concern about human health hazard from soil and water contamination caused by excess droppings. Some threat to air safety from collisions with aircraft have been noted.

Economic Impact

It is a pest species causing habitat modification such as trampling and algal blooms from eutrophication caused by nutrients from roosting geese. It is also a minor feeder on crops.

MANAGEMENT

Prevention

Major steps are to establish baseline information and monitor existing wild and captive populations, improve legislation to prevent deliberate introductions and to limit or remove populations, and institute measures such as licensing to prevent escapes from captive collections.

Mechanical

Despite growing awareness of negative impacts and large populations, to date there has been no organized international effort to control populations. Unregulated introductions continue to support hunting in several northern, central and eastern European countries.

Chemical

None.

Biological

None.

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