



FORT GEORGE G. MEADE NEWS RELEASE

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Goose population growth is a problem

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md– At the recommendation of the Fort Meade Environmental division as well as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services, the installation will begin humane measures to remove resident Canada Geese from Post.

The resident Canada goose population on Fort Meade continues to grow unabated at rates that are a problem for employees, residents and the service members who use green spaces for recreation and physical training.

“Canada geese are a migratory species, however the resident geese on Fort Meade behave differently and remain here throughout the year,” said John Houchins, Fort Meade DPW Environmental Natural Resources Program Manager. “The habitat is attractive to them and the overpopulation is negatively impacting the community. Without removal, the gaggle will simply continue to multiply.”

The number of resident geese in the U.S. has increased 14-fold between 1970 and 2010, primarily due to nests in urban and suburban areas where few predators exist and

hunting isn't feasible. Specifically Fort Meade had only eight to 10 geese in the 1970s. That population increased to about 150 in the 90s and today, our resident Canada goose population is over 300.

Fort Meade is an attractive home for the birds with our multiple water sources. In addition, since geese graze on grass our large green spaces which are mowed often leave an attractive and ready source for food.

Complaints from service members, families and civilians about goose droppings have steadily increased as the population increases. Canada Geese deposit one half to a full pound of feces per bird each day. The impact this has on the areas in which service members train, children engage in sports and families recreate is a valid concern to our community.

To compare, the average dog will drop half a pound of feces which owners then remove.

Direct links between contact with goose feces and human illness are difficult to make, but goose feces is known to contain human pathogens. KACC Preventative Medicine has identified the consumption of water that has come in contact with goose feces as the only credible health concern. The goose overpopulation also adds unnecessary nutrients to our lake and streams that feed into the Chesapeake Bay. Lastly, geese can also be aggressive during nesting season.

"We are using multiple methods to reduce the impact of the geese," said John Houchins, Fort Meade DPW Environmental Natural Resources Program Manager.

Fort Meade staff will use non-lethal harassment methods like pyrotechnics/noisemakers or a propane cannon to shift the goose population away from PT areas and the parade field as much as possible between reveille and retreat.

In addition, Fort Meade staff has been treating goose eggs with corn oil, to prevent them from hatching to help curb population increases.

During the molting season, Canada Geese do not fly. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services will herd approximately 300 resident geese and remove them from the installation in a humane manner. The removal is scheduled to be conducted from June 18 to 21.

BACKGROUND

Fort George G. Meade was established in 1917 and is the largest employer in the state of Maryland with more than 55,000 employees. We are the second largest Army installation in the continental United States in terms of personnel. We are the home to all branches of military service; Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast Guard and serve as the home for 119 partner organizations including U. S. Cyber Command, the National Security Agency, the Defense Information Systems Agency, the Defense Information School as well as federal agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Science Center.

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For more about Fort Meade, visit our Web site www.ftmeade.army.mil and look for Fort George G. Meade on Facebook and Twitter.