

COVID-19 Related Response



Activity of the Week : Week 1 Bald Eagle Silhouette Sentry Experiment

Background

Canada Goose in Spring time

The Canada Goose is likely the one of the state's most resilient waterfowl. The Canada Goose makes it home in the broken prairie, farmlands, and the most civilized of neighborhoods in North Dakota. In the early 19th century, the Giant Canada Goose suffered from habitat loss and was hunted to near extinction. In 1964, North Dakota discovered a nesting pair and a plan for their recovery began. The Canada Goose is a great success story with robust populations on the North American Continent today.



In rural North Dakota, the mature Canada Geese pairs arrive in the spring as soon as the snow cover diminishes. They stake claim to desired nesting areas often facing competition from other pairs. The eggs are laid in early April often requiring the pair to protect the eggs from spring snow storms. The nesting pair prefer a variety of nesting platforms by water including muskrat huts, beaver lodges or a farmer's abandoned haybales. The young are called goslings. The goslings must grow rapidly to be ready to migrate during the fall season. They require high protein diet and feed in shallow wetlands and graze emerging crops and other plants. The grazing of soybeans is a common problem in farm country and often requires farmers to protect their crops. A pair of adults and goslings are a family group and they will stay together until the next spring's migration.

In the city, geese can be year around residents even in a cold winter climate. If they have open water and a supply of food such as a grain field, they will stay the winter. In spring, they are free to nest undisturbed in town without predators and with human support. The geese frequent city parks, river banks, lagoons, and airports providing human residents a sampling of watchable wildlife. The family groups will stay where comfort and food meet the demands of the goslings. The presence of too many geese can lead to a conflict in public park areas by leaving droppings, eating garden plants, being aggressive and causing airplane or vehicle strikes.

In spring, flocks of migrating juvenile geese arrive weeks after the mature adults. These geese are one year old and are not mature to nest. Flocks of juvenile geese graze emerging agriculture crops and can cause significant damage in a short time.

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Bald Eagle Solution

A hunting season is a traditional way of managing the population of geese on the North American continent. Despite hunting, the goose population has rebounded to become a nuisance in some situations. Conflicts with humans cause them to be subjects of damage removal. In some situations, the geese can be deterred or delayed in their use of the areas which reduces or removes the conflict. This project will utilize the Bald Eagle as a natural goose predator to influence their use of the area in conflict to lessen the need for damage removal.



First, get permission to test your sentry if you have not received a request from a farmer or park. Trail cameras can be used to monitor the area if one suspects but does not know if geese are using the location. Personal observations can be completed and recorded. This can also be used to compare the before and after results in your experiment.

Bald Eagle Silhouette Sentry Experiment

Materials and Equipment Needed:

A piece of foam core or thin plywood 20 inches by 30 inches is needed for every decoy.

Spray Paint in black, white, and yellow

A ½ inch pole 6 feet long of wood, conduit, or PVC for every decoy to be used to staked out.

A one-foot length of 7/16 inch wooden dowel that will fit inside the pole for every decoy. (Optional)

A piece of 3/8 inch board 4 inches by 4 inches for every decoy to make the round stop. (Optional)

Epoxy

3/8 cordless drill

1 ½ inch circle saw

A strip of black cloth, 2 inches wide and 20 inches long for every decoy.

X-ACTO knife or carpenter knife

Pencil

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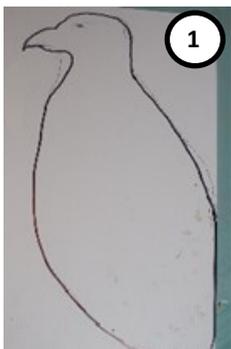
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Project: Garden Sentry

To start the project, locate a farm or park with a Canada Goose concern. Next, visit the location to determine how many decoys it will take to effectively protect the area. It will depend on the situation and number of geese present. A sentry every 50 yards or more is recommended.

Once the number of sentries is known, construction can begin. The foam core or a plywood sheet is laid on the table for drawing the eagle silhouette. Eagles are large and can be over 30 inches long. The sentry should be large and easily seen from a distance.

1. The silhouette can be drawn freehand remembering to get the features of the head profile right to be most effective.
2. The foam board is laid on a surface that will protect the table from the knife such as plywood or cutting board. The sentry is cut on the silhouette lines using a sharp carpenter or X-acto knife. Plywood will require a jigsaw to cut the silhouette.
3. Once the sentry is cut out, both sides of the head are painted. A flat white will remove some of the reflection from the foam core material. A template of the white head to black body feathers transition is cut from the waste foam board material to add some realism to the body. The piece of foam board is large enough to go across the neck area of the eagle. It is large enough to lay down and prevent over spray of the black on to the white. The template is made by cutting a zig-zag on one side. It can be flipped between the white and black painting to do the neck. The beak can be painted yellow or similar color.
4. Once painted, the sentry is ready for use as is. A plywood sentry can be screwed to a one inch by two inch stake and driven into the ground. One should be sure to drive the stake in before fastening the sentry. The foam core can be stapled to same stake.
5. **(Optional)** A more realistic sentry can be made to shift with wind direction. A slot is made in one end of the one-foot long dowel using a saw. The slot should be large enough to get a one-foot length of stiff wire into it. (a coat hanger works) The slot can be cut with a hand saw and the dowel clamped in a vise. The slot should be 1 ½ inches deep and care is needed to not split the dowel.



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6. **(Optional)** Next, a 1 ½ inch circle saw is used to cut a circular piece of wood stop from the piece of 4 inches by 4 inches board. This is a stop that goes on the dowel. A 7/16 inch hole is drilled in the center of the stop. The stop is sanded on the flat sides and in the hole so it smooth enough to rotate on the stand. The stop should fit snugly on the dowel.
7. **(Optional)** The wire will be bent in half to look like a V. The V of the wire is placed into the slot and the stop will be slid up the dowel until it holds the mounting wire in place. One should put epoxy or a permanent type glue into the slot so everything will be held secure. The top of the wire V, will be placed up the channel of the foam board with epoxy added.
8. **(Optional)** The dowel and the sentry can be placed in the stand when epoxy is dry. The dowel should be loose enough to allow the sentry to swivel. The stop also serves to protect the sentry from damage and allows it to turn in the wind.
9. **(Optional)** To finish, both sides of the body of the sentry are painted flat black. Two strips of eight inches in length black material are stapled or fastened on each side of the body of the sentry to allow the wind to flutter the strips to give the illusion of movement of the wings or body. The sentry is ready for service.
10. The sentry can be staked by putting approximately 30 inches of 3/8 inch size rebar into the ground and placing the PVC or conduit over the rebar. The sentry dowel is placed into the top and one will need to test the movement of the sentry so that it turns freely.



References: Alderfer Jonathan, Baughman Mel, Dunn Jonathan, Quady David E, and Fitzpatrick John, *Field Guide to the Birds of North America: 4th Edition*, 2002, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C. 480pg.

More about 4-H at: [www.http.ndsu.edu/4h/](http://www.ndsu.edu/4h/)

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