



WATERFOWL- GEESE AND SWANS

KEY FACTS:

Waterfowl are found on or near water. They have long necks and webbed feet. Swans are bigger than geese with longer necks.

Waterfowl lay large clutches of eggs and their young are born covered with down.

Here are a few common waterfowl that you will likely encounter:

Mute swans are monogamous, very territorial, and aggressive and return to their nesting site every year. Mute swans are white with black feet and orange beaks with black at the base. This is an invasive species from Europe and Asia.

Canada geese also return to their nesting area yearly, are monogamous and have strong family ties. Both males and females have the same coloring- black heads, darker brown backs, with a white chin strap and black bills, legs, and feet.

Predators:

Egg predators include raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, dogs, and gulls. Young goslings may be preyed upon by snapping turtles, gulls, owls, and coyotes.



NESTS

Nests are usually on the ground near water. Nests are built in March and April.

Swans:

- Females lay 5-7 eggs. The eggs incubate for 36-38 days.
 - Mute swan cygnets are usually white but can be greyish brown in color.
 - Cygnets usually fledge in early fall but will stay with the parents till late fall.
- Male swans and geese usually help the females.

Canada Geese-

The female lays between 4-7 eggs. Incubation lasts about 28 days.

Hatching occurs from April through June, with the peak occurring the first week of May.

IF YOUNG BIRDS ARE FOUND WANDERING AROUND ON THEIR OWN:

Look around for the parents. Cygnets, and goslings are unlikely to be on their own and are usually close to their parents. If there are no signs of the family, call a rehabilitator.

- Never put a lost cygnet or gosling back in the water without their family. They will not survive on their own.
- If rescue is necessary, waterfowl should not be kept in water or have water in their container. They should be kept warm, dry, and quiet.
- If goslings are orphaned, it is possible to introduce them to another goose family who has babies of the same size. Parents typically will adopt goslings of the same size readily. Be prepared to watch the introduction, intervene if needed, and recheck the area later to ensure the adoption was successful. If you find gosling alone again, call a wildlife rehabilitator.

Who to call in MA with a permit for Waterfowl:

Northeast: Jodi Swenson: 978-325-250, Cape Ann Wildlife

Southeast: Sue Cowan: Cell 508-317-7140. Home 508-866-3981, Cowan Critters

West of Worcester: Ceacy Henderson: 413-768-8928, Colrain Center for Conservation and Wildlife

