

Many geese in Hampton Roads do not migrate as they once did, making them easy to spot in the Elizabeth River all year long!



A pair of geese utilized the wetlands aboard the Elizabeth River Project's Dominion Energy Learning Barge.

Canada Goose

Branta canadensis

Common Names: Goose, Geese

Size: Weighing up to 24 lbs with a wingspan of up to 5.5 ft. **Lifespan:** 10-24 years

Habitat: Found all throughout the Elizabeth River, Canadian Geese enjoy open, grassy habitats like ponds, lakes, rivers, and wetlands. They can also be found in man-made habitats like retention ponds, golf courses, and back yards.

Range: Found all over the United States, Canada, and Mexico

Diet: Geese are almost entirely plant eaters and they prefer grass. You can also find them in and along the Elizabeth River eating insects, small fish, and aquatic invertebrates (animals like crabs and insect larvae.)

Appearance: Canada geese have a dark brown back with lighter streaks, a light gray to white colored throat and bottom. They have a black neck and head with a white chin strap.

Predators: Eggs and young are eaten by other birds and small to medium-sized mammals (like raccoons and foxes). The adults are so large they generally have few predators, but are eaten by foxes, coyotes, birds of prey, bears and even hunted for meat by humans.

Flight: Geese are migratory birds and fly very long distances, but they are not gliders because they have heavy bodies. Instead they fly in a characteristic "v" pattern to reduce the amount of air resistance for the following geese and will switch out the lead every so often to prevent fatigue.

Voice: A loud honking sound is their normal call to communicate with each other. When they feel threatened or are defending their nests they will hiss.

What can you do?: Do not feed geese you see in your yard or around the river. Pick up and properly dispose of trash to keep it out of the environment.

On-Line Resources

[https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Branta
_canadensis/](https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Branta_canadensis/)

<https://www.britannica.com/animal/Canada-goose>

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/canada_goose



www.elizabethriver.org