



## Local

When something honks in the neighborhood, who ya gonna call?

William C. Flook, The Examiner

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### WASHINGTON -

Of the many potential solutions to [Fairfax County](#)'s nagging goose problem, county staff has apparently reached a favorite: Goosebuster, a system of loudspeakers that mimic quacks of warning and send the birds into a panicked retreat.

[Fairfax County Executive Anthony Griffin](#) recommended in a memo this month the county put in place Goosebuster, or a similar product, in some of the most problematic parts of the county. It would be part of a larger strategy to curb nonmigratory geese that have found a permanent home in [Fairfax](#) and are fouling local streams with their droppings.

"Wildlife biologists estimate that the [Canada](#) goose population is increasing at about 15 percent annually," said a recent report from the Fairfax County [Environmental Quality](#) Advisory Council. "Which indicates that problems associated with resident goose populations soon will increase to critical levels unless remedial action is taken."

A brochure on Goosebuster from maker Bird-X explains that a single unit can cover as many as 7 acres and can deter not only Canada geese, but also mallards and other sorts of ducks. It works by delivering a recorded goose "alarm" call that signals potential or imminent danger.

"Reacting to either, they evacuate instantly, without waiting to identify the source," the brochure said.

While combating an army of shiftless geese may not seem like a top Fairfax priority, the proliferation of the animals ranks as one of the most pressing wildlife issues facing the county. The birds are responsible for almost a quarter of the fecal coliform in Accotink Creek, a [Potomac River](#) tributary, according to the environmental report. The [Environmental Protection Agency](#) recently recommended the pollutant be cut to 2 percent of its current levels in the stream.

Fairfax County has weighed a handful of other methods to combat the goose problem, including herding them with dogs, egg addling or oiling, prohibitions on feeding, and unfriendly landscaping.

### A growing threat

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