



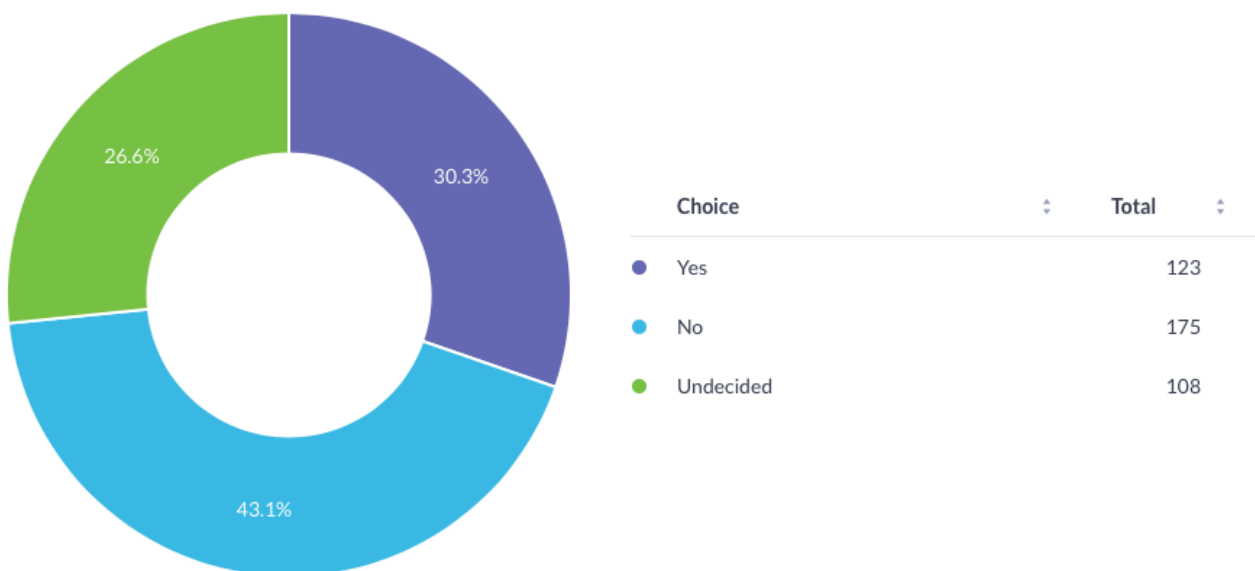
Summary of Snap-shot second survey: Canada Geese in Pavilion Gardens

Survey was open 13 July 2023 - 11 August 2023: 28 days. 409 respondents.

Around 60% of respondents to the initial survey believed that geese numbers in the park should be controlled. The second survey set out to explore responses to a range of potential measures. A cull of adult birds (favoured by some) was ruled out as disruptive and distressing; expensive and short-lived as survivors may breed back quite quickly.

The second survey attracted less respondents than the first survey - around 55%. This could reflect interest being sustained more by people who were interested in exploring options for control. However, the range of responses indicates that a proportion of the respondents were fresh to the discussion.

Q1 I have learned something new about Canada geese from the discussion and information sharing since the initial survey of views.  
Multiple Choice



A large majority of respondents would like to see more information boards about species of birds that may be spotted in the park. (84% yes, 10% no, 6% undecided)

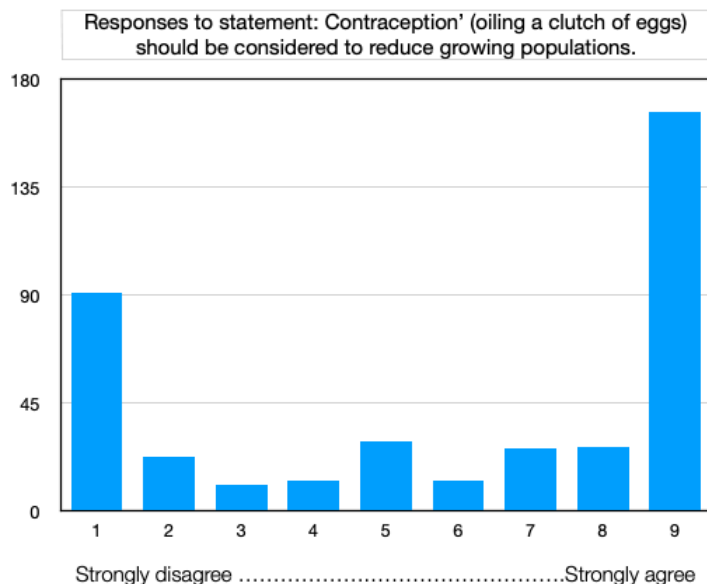
A sizeable, but slightly smaller majority think it would be a good idea to display notices discouraging feeding of bread, leftovers and big bags of seed. (73% yes, 15% no, 12% undecided)

A majority think that designating bird feeding stations on paved sections of the waterside would be worth trying. (65% yes, 23% no, 12% undecided)

A similar majority think that establishing a picnic area within low fencing would be useful (62% yes, 25% no, 13% undecided). One respondent commented that this wouldn't work as geese can fly. True, but on land they waddle and don't jump. They need a stretch of water for take-off and landing.

Respondents gave an average rating of 7 on a scale from 1-9 to the suggestion that sections of waterside bank should be protected against geese grazing.

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Opinion was evenly split - an average of 5 on a scale of 1-9 - on the idea of making small bags of seed available. One respondent pointed out that 50p paper bags of seed are now stocked in the kiosk: the service supported by Friends of Pavilion Gardens pre-lockdown has been restored and is popular with families. Other respondents oppose the idea as it seems counter-intuitive when feeding is discouraged. However, a little discretion may strengthen an overall reduction in feeding.

Oiling eggs was rated an average 6 on a scale of 1-9: an evident majority in favour. The average rating though masks a striking divergence of views strongly held at either end of the scale.

Recommendations

Within existing budgets for park improvement and maintenance, HPBC Officers will lead on action to:

- install an additional information board on the park's waterfowl. (One is already mounted on the kiosk external wall. The Council has the original artwork so costs may be minimised;
- produce and display notices discouraging feeding in most areas of the park;
- designating one or two 'feeding stations';
- establish a picnic area with low fencing and/or a wildflower border (which may be more economic);
- conduct trial planting of two sections of waterside banks and water margins to discourage geese grazing;
- consider suitable locations for replica raptors (ravens or peregrine falcons) as suggested by some respondents.

In addition, Friends of Pavilion Gardens are reviewing their delivery of bags of seed for sale at the kiosk. (Some members favour stopping this to maintain a consistent approach to discouraging feeding but a decision has not yet been agreed.)

Egg oiling should be considered only as a last resort in future if less invasive measures adopted prove ineffective.

In the course of the consultation, we were made aware of excellent data on goose numbers collated and held by Lindsey Wakefield of the BCA Biodiversity group. Regular counts for the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) led by the British Trust for Ornithology have been conducted and recorded since November 2019. (In line with public perception, numbers have doubled since then.) Lindsey has offered to share the data on a public online platform. Continued counts will establish the impact on proposed control measures.

As noted in the initial survey report, whatever is done needs everyone to be prepared to give it a go. 17% of respondents indicated willingness to chip in for trials. We are talking that as a token of commitment rather than a pledge. HPBC - with support from Parkwood and AES - will undertake the work and cover costs, seeking to keep them low. 36% of respondents offered to help with wild flower planting. Again, a great token of commitment and one which Buxton's Biodiversity group will no doubt wish to capitalise on.

Thanks to environmental specialists for their expert advice. Thank you to all respondents to the surveys and to people who've sent additional comments in by email and on Facebook.

Madeline Hall
HPBC Cllr for Corba

22 August 2023