

## **Alberta Conservation Association 2010/11 Project Summary Report**

**Project Name:** *Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program*

**Wildlife Program Manager:** Doug Manzer

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**Primary ACA staff on project:**

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### **Partnerships**

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development  
Environment Canada

### **Key Findings**

- In total, 47 scare cannon distribution centres provided 275 scare cannons to 126 landowners.
- 34% of landowners who borrowed scare cannons allowed their contact information to be provided to waterfowl hunters.
- Our waterfowl web page was viewed 357 times and had 269 unique visits between August 25 – December 25.
- Eight waterfowl hunters requested contact information for producers with waterfowl related crop damage problems.

### **Introduction**

The Waterfowl Crop Damage Prevention Program (WCDPP) assists agricultural producers in reducing damage to crops caused by waterfowl during fall migration. Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (ASRD) collaboratively plan the program; ACA delivers the program while program funding has been traditionally cost-shared between ACA and Environment Canada.

In 2010/11, Environment Canada was unable to commit to cost-sharing the program prior to implementation of activities. Consequently, we delivered a modified program that focused on the distribution of self-operated scare cannons to producers, but did not operate any waterfowl feeding stations. This allowed us to deliver a modified program within our budget allocation. In addition, we updated our web page weekly with locations of waterfowl control activity throughout the harvest period.

## **Methods**

We operated the program in much of the White Zone of Alberta and distributed scare cannons using local distribution centres. Local community storefront business operations commonly served as distribution centres, and received compensation for storing and distributing scare cannons.

We provided scare cannons free-of-charge to producers. For each cannon, the distribution centre collected a damage deposit, information on the type of damage, and whether or not the borrower would permit their contact information to be provided to waterfowl hunters. We collected this information weekly during the fall to update our waterfowl web page. The web page contained a downloadable fact sheet on waterfowl crop damage prevention strategies, and a link to a provincial map that displayed the number of requests for scare cannons. The number of scare cannon requests were then available for hunters to identify waterfowl concentrations. We also provided contact information to hunters where we gained the necessary permission.

## **Results**

We engaged 47 distribution centres to distribute cannons. A total of 126 landowners borrowed 275 scare cannons for use on at least 236 different quarter sections of cropland (Figure 1). Of these landowners, 34% indicated they would allow their contact information to be provided to waterfowl hunters.

Figure 1. Number of cannons distributed at distribution centres in 2010.

We received only one comment from the public regarding the cessation of feeding station operations. We updated the waterfowl recreation web page weekly from late August to October 31. Our waterfowl web page was viewed 357 times and had 269 unique visits between August 25 – December 25.

## **Conclusions**

The number of producers requesting scare cannons to address waterfowl crop damage in 2010 was considerably higher than in 2009 (45). Cool, wet weather during spring, August and September delayed harvest activities until mid to late October, leaving crops more vulnerable to waterfowl depredation in southern and central Alberta. However, drought conditions in the northwest portion of the province resulted in low scare cannon use (Figure 1).

## **Communications**

- Informed ASRD, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Bow River Irrigation District and Raymond Irrigation District of 2010/11 program activity.
- Waterfowl web page and WCDPP fact sheet available on our website.