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# CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT AT THE MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL AND DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL AIRPORTS

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## **CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT AT THE MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL AND DOWNTOWN ST. PAUL AIRPORTS**

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The Metropolitan Airports Commission initiated a Canada goose control program at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) in 1984, and the Downtown St. Paul Airport (DTSP) in 1994. Flightless geese within 16 km of these airports were trapped, neck-banded, and observed and counted weekly from September to December (MSP) and February (DTSP). Efficacy was measured by observing fall goose flights through the operations airspace in 1984-87, 1998-1999 (MSP) and 1994-1999 (DTSP). A total of 2,587 geese were removed from 36 MSP sites and 2,163 from 12 DTSP sites. From 1990 to 1999, 535 nests containing 2,637 eggs were destroyed and 418 breeding geese shot on 7 MSP wetlands. MSP populations declined significantly ( $P < 0.01$ ) from 1989 to 1997, then increased in 1998 and 1999. MSP airspace geese declined ( $P < 0.01$ ) from 25 (1984) to 4 birds/hr (1987), then rose to 21 (1998) and 16 (1999). A negative correlation ( $P < 0.5$ ) was found between geese within 2 km and airspace flights, thus, flight frequency is strongly influenced by behavior. DTSP populations declined ( $P < 0.01$ ) between 1994 (46) and 1995 (23), averaging 24 during 1996-1999. DTSP geese airspace averaged 126 from 1994-1997 and then declined ( $P < 0.05$ ) to 40 (1998) and 70 (1999). Like MSP, the geese within 2 km of DTSP peaked in late-November, but many DTSP birds overwintered in two nearby spring-fed wetlands and fed on grain spills. Clearly the goose population reduction lowered the strike probability.