



Northern  
Territory  
Government

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

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# What is the impact of Magpie Geese? & what can be done about them?

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# **Pests – the No.1 issue to evoke the ire of farmers!**





2014 the issue raised in small-group meeting in the Darwin area.

Reports from farmers indicating problem building over the last 2-3 seasons.

& the situation (anecdotally) is said to be worsening.



# A few facts

Magpie goose (*Anseranas semipalmata*)

Unique member of the order *Anseriformes*, in a family & genus distinct from all other living waterfowl – i.e. the only one of its type!

Protected species – can only be taken under permit.

Populations vary between 1.2 – 6.0 million birds.

They belong to the Crown/the people.

Therefore a local suggestion for research to be directed to bio-sterilise the population will probably meet with some resistance...





# Cautionary

**Priority is to maintain the industry's  
social licence to operate.**



# Mitigating damage

**Issue is mitigating damage  
NOT  
body count.**



## What's been done so far

**30 July 2014**

### **Harvest Fresh Fruits (aka Oolloo Farms), Berry Springs.**

- Strategy discussed for mitigating immediate & future damage.
- Discussion on ecology of magpie geese & observed changes in behaviour – DLRM.
- Crop damage mitigation permits – NT Parks & Wildlife Commission.
- Lawful use of firearms – NT Police Force.
- Using registered hunting bodies – NT Field & Game Assoc.
- Agri-chemical prohibitions – NT Dept. Primary Industry & Fisheries.





# Being provocative

**Currently no case to do  
anything.**

**No evidence of the degree or extent of  
economic impact of this species on the  
industry.**



# Research is critical

Concurrent research required:

1. Identify geo-spatial distribution, onset, frequency & bio-physical & economic impact of the magpie geese on the Darwin regional mango industry.
2. Identify the potential causes of changes to magpie goose behaviour in orchards.
3. Evaluate a number of novel damage mitigation techniques.



## Specific research activities:

- Field bird count estimates at wetland roosts & on orchards.
- Field crop-damage assessments.
- Field assessments of ancillary damage e.g., irrigation infrastructure.
- In-shed assessments of fruit downgraded due to magpie geese damage.
- Harnessing of 'Judas' geese with GPS-transmitters to monitor spatial movement patterns.
- Wetland and orchard observations of geese behaviour around shooting & harvest seasons.
- Application & testing of a range of 'novel' damage mitigation techniques in damage reduction.



# The proposed strategy

1. Continuation of lawful damage mitigation strategies that can be utilised this season to reduce economic impact.
2. Essential research as discussed with industry co-investment.
3. Medium-term changes to policy & regulations to sustainably manage magpie geese populations from impacting Top End cropping systems.



# **If all else fails we have a Plan B**



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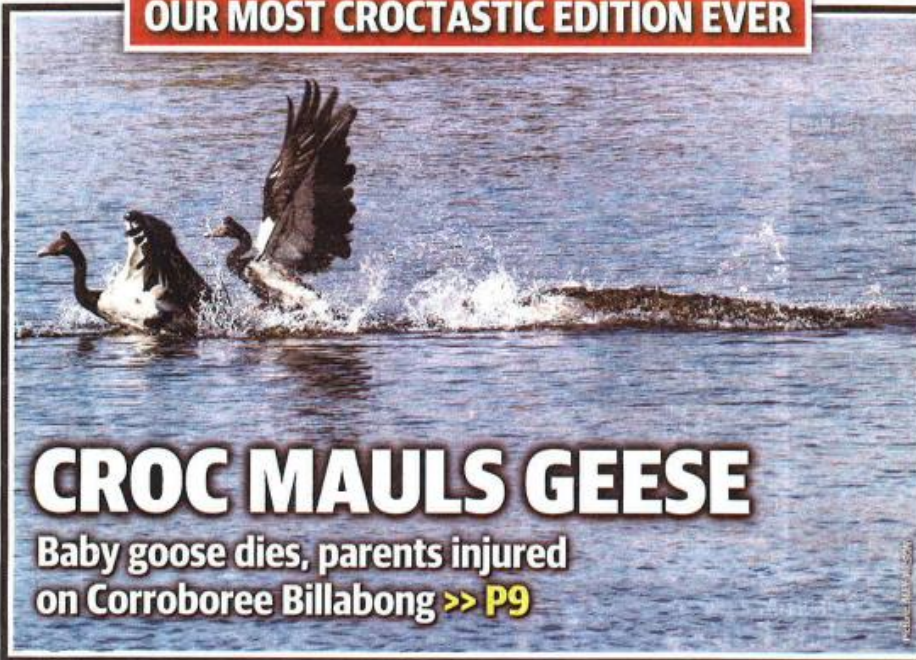


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