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Faux coyotes making NKU goose-free

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HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Northern Kentucky University has a plan that probably wouldn't fool the Roadrunner, but might be good enough to outsmart Canadian geese.

NKU has recruited four fake coyotes to stand guard around the campus' Loch Norse to scare away an infestation of the geese.

At times, dozens of geese wander the lawn around the pond.

"The most obvious problem is the waste they deposit on the sidewalks and lawn areas around the lake," said Larry Blake, NKU's assistant vice president for facilities.

"It reached a point that you had to carefully navigate the sidewalks around the lake to avoid the droppings. Secondly, if the geese were blocking the sidewalks or were approached unknowingly by people, they would react in a threatening way. We had no actual physical contacts but they did make you uncomfortable."

Blake said they think they have the solution with the faux coyotes.

"Our maintenance department found the fake coyotes in a grounds maintenance catalog," said Blake. "They knew that the geese scattered when dogs were around so they felt this was a viable method or at least worth a try."

The geese also congregated on the campus's baseball field.

"The first trial was on the baseball field and the geese stopped frequenting the field as soon as the decoy was placed. So they purchased more and placed them around the lake area."

On Wednesday, the additional coyotes were placed by Loch Norse and the geese immediately left.

"In fact, none were cited throughout the day on Wednesday," said Blake. "We saw a few in the water with the ducks yesterday but those did not seem anxious to wander onto the lawn or sidewalk area. For all practical purposes the coyote decoys have been 100 percent effective."

Blake said the cost was less than \$100.

"We were spending at least that much every two or three days in labor to clean the sidewalks prior to placing the coyotes," he said.

The coyotes are very realistic looking so the administration announced their placement via e-mail to the campus stating: "The decoys look very realistic. They are made of plastic and cardboard, and some are 3-D. However, they will not harm the geese in any way. The decoys are intended simply to frighten the geese sufficiently to discourage them from congregating around the lake. Do not move, handle or otherwise harass the decoys."
