

DRAFT

NUISANCE WILD ANIMAL CONTROL POLICY

of the

Crooked Lake Association, Inc. Whitley and Noble Counties

January 19, 2026

Association Membership Opportunity to give Input on Draft Policy

Notice of this draft policy shall be given to Lake Association Members by placement of the policy onto the official lake web site. Announcements on Facebook and by mass email will direct members and residents to the policy when it is available on the website.

Lake Association Members can give input on the draft policy by the following: written comments, objections, or suggested alternatives on the official web site at -- [The Crooked Lake Noble Whitley Co. Indiana](#) - or written comments to the President of the Crooked Lake Association.

*The draft policy will be presented for discussion at the February 19 CLA Board Meeting. The board of directors will consider all written input from lake association members and recommend changes before the policy is considered for adoption. All proposed changes will be read into the record and voted on separately by the board. A vote on the resulting policy will be taken and must be approved by a vote of 51% of the CLA board members present at the meeting in person or by phone. If there is significant uncertainty about the draft policy, it will be returned to the appropriate committee for redrafting and resubmission to the board at a later date.

General Purpose and Scope of the Nuisance Wild Animal Control (NWAC) Policy

The purpose of this policy is to guide the Crooked Lake Association in its efforts to manage wild animals which are or have the potential to become a nuisance on Crooked Lake. This policy will direct identification, monitoring and implementation of control procedures for wild animals on Crooked Lake that threaten damage to water quality, habitat, and native plant life, or that create health or safety risks to lake residents and native wildlife.

This policy applies only to the actions of the Crooked Lake Association, Inc. It does not govern the activities of any lake resident or private individual in managing wild animals on their property.

This policy will be implemented in compliance with Federal Law, Indiana statutory and administrative laws, and applicable authority and guidance of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (Indiana DNR) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Crooked Lake Association, Inc., does not control and is not responsible for the actions of the Indiana DNR or the USDA regarding nuisance wild animals but will seek to give notification to the association membership of the acts of these governmental units when they affect Crooked Lake.

Nuisance Wild Animal Control Committee

The purpose of the Nuisance Wild Animal Control (NWAC) committee is to follow and enforce the policy as adopted. The committee will help to identify and monitor nuisance wild animals and make recommendations about their management and control. The committee, with explicit prior approval of the CLA Board of Directors, will direct animal control actions only when warranted under this policy.

The CLA Board of Directors will recruit both directors and lake association members to serve on the committee.

The tasks of the NWAC committee will be as follows:

- Conduct ongoing research on methods of control and implementation with Indiana DNR and USDA.
- Communicate with the lake associations of the surrounding lakes and The Watershed Foundation (TWF) to collect data and coordinate efforts.
- Undertake reasonable monitoring and data collection, report findings and make recommendations to the board of directions and association membership.
- Facilitate notice of control activities to the association membership as required by this policy.
- Complete or arrange for control actions only as allowed by this policy and approved by the board of directors.

Definitions

- “Control” means to limit the population of Nuisance Wild Animals as necessary to reduce the threat of damage to water quality, habitat, and native plant life, or to reduce health or safety risks to lake residents and native wildlife. There are various methods of control that may be implemented under this policy.
- “Lake Association” means the Crooked Lake Association, Inc that serves the two basins of the Crooked Lake located in both Whitley and Noble Counties of Indiana.
- “Indiana DNR” means the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. This may include the Division of Fish and Wildlife, wildlife biologists, enforcement agents, and any other applicable departments or divisions or specialists of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.
- “USDA” means the United States Department of Agriculture which may have legal authority over a variety of wild animals, including Mute Swans

- “NWA” means a Nuisance Wild Animal as defined by Indiana Law.
- “NWAC Permit” means a permit to control the actions of specified wild animals within the meaning of this policy, which is primarily directed to Mute Swans.

Policy Specific to Control of Mute Swans

History

In 2025, members of the CLA Board of Directors witnessed aggression by mute swans. A mating pair of mute swans built a nest, eggs were laid, and juveniles born.

In 2025, the Lake Association was awarded a NWAC Permit for the control of mute swans. The permit allowed the Lake Association in person or by an approved assistant to destroy nests and oil eggs. The permit authorized the shooting of mute swans under gun safety rules and respect for the animals. The permit did not limit the number of lethal actions. The Lake Association authorized a volunteer and experienced shooter to cull the swan population in September 2025 by shooting the adult nesting pair, 2 juveniles and 4 additional adult mute swans.

Justification

The CLA Board of Directors accepts the accuracy of the publications of the Indiana DNR and the USDA, that mute swans are a threat to cause damage to water quality and ecosystems and pose a health or safety risk. The board also accepts the findings of the publications of the Indiana DNR and USDA that nesting pairs of mute swans present a risk to permanent population increase.

- The Indiana DNR categorizes Mute Swans as invasive animals.
- Mute Swans are not protected by federal law.
- Mute swans uproot and destroy native aquatic plants that are needed to preserve water quality and stabilize shorelines.

- Mute swans reduce the food source available to native wildlife and can destroy native habitats of fish and wildlife.
- The large amount of fecal material from mute swans may endanger human health by contaminating the water and add nutrients harmful to water quality.
- Aggressive behavior of mute swans toward humans and native wildlife, particularly during mating season, may endanger recreational use of the lake and reduce the native wildlife population.

Scope of the Policy as it relates to Mute Swan Control

Application, use and Limits of NWAC Permit

Lake associations may apply for a NWAC Permit from the Indiana DNR by affirming in writing that mute swans on the lake are (a)causing or threatening to cause damage, or (b) posing a health or safety threat. The permit application does not require specification of damages. The permit requires lake associations to report to the Indiana DNR in writing all actions taken under the permit.

The USDA can implement population control on a public lake if it determines the control is necessary, and the Indiana NWAC Permit application allows USDA involvement.

At the beginning of each year the Crooked Lake Association should apply for and renew a NWAC Permit for Mute Swans. Holding a current permit ensures that the Lake Association can act promptly when control is necessary.

The permit shall only be applied in compliance with this policy, with the least invasive control methods utilized when consistent with human safety and the extent of threat or damage.

Any use of the NWAC Permit shall require notice to the association membership and action by the board of directors in compliance with this policy.

Responsibilities of the CLA Board of Directors and the NWAC Committee Specific to Mute Swans

The Board of Directors will:

- Review the NWAC Permit and this NWAC policy for compliance.
- Ensure that a motion (including a discussion) be made and seconded for consideration at an advertised board of directors meeting for any mute swan control measure anticipated (lethal or non-lethal). Discussion of the recommended control measure, a motion for the specific control measure and a vote on the motion must be reflected in the official board meeting minutes.

The NWAC Committee will:

- Monitor, collect and record data on habitat destruction, number of nests, eggs, nesting pairs and juveniles and perceived mute swan population.
- Record episodes of aggression or lake recreation interference by mute swans.
- Seek input from Indiana DNR or the USDA on evaluating the data collected to support reasonable recommendations for mute swan control.
- Present recommendations on mute swan control to the board of directors based on the data collected.
- Notify the CLA Executive Committee that the committee is considering specific mute swan control measures.
- Facilitate notification of association membership of anticipated mute swan control measures.
- Notify the board of directors and association membership (on the association website) when board-approved specific mute swan control measures have been attempted and the outcome of such attempts.

1 If lethal destruction of mute swans is contemplated:

- 2 • The NWAC committee will ensure that lake association membership
3 is notified of the date and time of the board meeting at which lethal
4 destruction of mute swans will be considered. Association members
5 may attend but may speak on the issue only if arrangements are
6 made in advance or if invited to speak by the President.
- 7 • A specific plan for lethal destruction will be presented. This may
8 include the number of target swans, shooter, range of dates and
9 times as is consistent with effective operation. Resident safety
10 provisions included in the plan must not be less than that required for
11 control of other waterfowl or for hunting.

12 If lethal destruction of mute swans is approved:

- 13 • Notice shall be given on the official Association web site. This should
14 include the specific control method to be employed and
15 considerations for resident safety but may omit specific dates or times
16 of day if inconsistent with an effective operation. The Lake
17 Association may be limited in its ability to give notice of destruction
18 implemented by the USDA or Indiana DNR.
- 19 • The NWAC Committee will ensure appropriate supervision and
20 coordination by the permit holder of the assistant completing the
21 destruction.
- 22 • The NWAC Committee will oversee board-approved control methods
23 including proper body disposal, required documentation of control
24 outcome to Indiana DNR and notice on the association website of
25 actions taken.

26 **Methods of Mute Swan Control considered under this policy**

- 27 • Nest Destruction
- 28 • Egg Oiling
- 29 • Mute Swan lethal destruction

Nest Destruction

Factors for determining whether nest destruction may be considered. All factors are not required. NWAC Permit is not required for nest destruction

- Evidence of swan nest building
- Analysis of whether nest destruction is safe
- Discussion and decision by Nuisance Wild Animal Committee for nest destruction.
- Determination that the required removing or scattering of nest materials from the site can be accomplished.

Egg Oiling

Factors for determining whether egg oiling may be considered. All factors are not required.

- Evaluation of the safety of egg oiling under current conditions.
- Confirmation that Lake Association current NWAC Permit allows egg oiling.

Lethal Action

Factors for determining whether lethal action may be considered. All factors are not required.

- Presence of nesting pairs of mute swans and juveniles on the lake,
- Perceived increase in mute swan population based on observations
- Increase in visible harm by mute swans to native food sources and habitat.
- Serious or repeated acts of aggression by one or more mute swans.
- Indiana DNR or USDA recommendation that population levels endanger lake safety, recreational use, water quality, natural habitats, and/or native wildlife.
- Inability to use or lack of success with less invasive control methods to avoid threat of harm or damage.

Policy Specific for the Control of Canada Geese

Federal Law allows landowners and homeowner associations to register for authorization to destroy resident Canada Goose nests and eggs.

The Lake Association has been the contact and recipient of a Canada Goose Registration for several years. The registration allows for nest and egg destruction only on the Crooked Lake Island and on property where landowners have given permission. The landowners and association volunteers are specifically listed in the registration.

Volunteers receive training that is respectful of the Geese. The eggs are destroyed by oiling and one egg is left “unoiled” in each nest to the extent possible.

Oiling is used sparingly as a method to maintain reasonable population levels on Crooked Lake.