Don't Goose me!

A role-play case study on animal protection
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Objective
Enlarge the moral imagination; encourage recognition of all the stakeholders. This will be accomplished by a role-play.

Factual background
Canada Geese historically have bred in the Arctic in summer and migrated south only in winter. With increasing urbanization in northern cities, food and nest sites have become widely available, and predation rates are low. Consequently, the geese have become year round residents in cities, and their population numbers have greatly expanded. In many northern cities (Seattle, Chicago, London, Vancouver) the Canada geese are a nuisance and create potential public health problems by defecating in parks, on golf courses, and in public waterways (ponds, lakes), where they can foul local water supplies. However, no incidences of goose-borne illness have been reported. Their abundance now exceeds that at any time in the recent past. As a consequence of the perceived threat to public health and well-being, management strategies have been proposed that would lethally remove the geese by collecting and gassing them with carbon dioxide. The resulting goose meat would be provided to the starving homeless.

A public meeting in which all stakeholders are present has been called for the Mayor to take a final decision on the proposed course of action.

Stakeholders and concerns
Decision-making
The Mayor will take the final decision after the hearing.

Municipal Services
Municipal Services are responsible for animal population control. Alternative methods of removing the birds have been considered (e.g. hormone control, egg removal) but the urgency in resolving the problem and anticipated costs led to the proposal that gassing by carbon dioxide is the most efficient method. Because the meat will be of excellent quality, there is a proposal to sell it for public consumption and the proceeds would cover some of the costs of the operation. Alternatively, there is a proposal from the Social Services to distribute the meat to the homeless through charitable service organizations.

Public Health Bureau
The Department of Public Health favours lethal removal of Canada geese for the following reasons:
1. Goose excrement fouls both land and water resources within the city. These droppings can contain high levels of bacteria and avian parasites. The bacteria and parasites both potentially threaten public health, especially that of children and the elderly.
2. Other animal pests associated with Canada geese are increasing within the city. For example, rats that prey on goose eggs and chicks are more numerous now than before.
Parents Against Geese
This is a popular movement that aims to wrest the control of local parks from geese. The group professes to be animal lovers (most members have dogs, cats and other pets). When geese were present in low numbers they were a popular attraction for parents and children. However, there are now so many geese that they are perceived as a serious problem. They defecate everywhere, they destroy lawns and gardens, and the park is out of bounds for children. There is fear of a health risk. Presence of geese on roadways makes driving more dangerous. In addition, some people have claimed an increase in allergies perhaps attributable to the geese, and their honking disturbs the peace.

CRAP - Citizens Responsible for Animal Protection
CRAP is an activist group for animal rights that is currently involved in many issues where animal welfare is under consideration such as farm animal production, animal research and traditional hunting. This group will not allow the geese to be molested in any way. They believe that in this case humans unfairly modified the environment, which as it turns out, now is favourable for the geese. The geese should be left alone and instead, humans should modify their behaviour to accommodate the geese. In the past CRAP has allegedly committed acts of violence against those who don´t agree with them.

Social Services
The Department of Social Services is responsible for providing care and assistance to the large population of homeless individuals within the city. In general, the department is understaffed and under funded and has difficulty providing sufficient support for the homeless. Social Services strongly support the proposed method of culling and gassing the geese. This will provide an affordable source of protein for distribution to the homeless.

Chamber of Commerce
The Chamber of Commerce favours removal of the geese. The geese foul local parks and shopping areas driving away both tourists and shoppers. However, the Chamber of Commerce is STRONGLY OPPOSED to the free distribution of goose meat to the homeless because of potential negative effects on retailers´ profits.

Moral issues
Should we proceed with lethal removal?
If yes, should the carcasses be sold, given to the homeless, or otherwise disposed of?
If not, propose and defend alternative management strategies.

Classroom Procedure
1. Students will divide into groups of five.
   a. A chairperson will be identified by determination of who is born first in the year. (instructor will explain)
   b. The chairperson will chair the discussions and appoint a:
      i. Recorder- will write down in a coherent manner all pertinent arguments
      ii. Proactive Student- will develop the arguments to convince the city council to adopt their group´s position
      iii. Reactive Student #1 and #2 these two students will anticipate the positions of other groups and develop counter arguments.
   2. The groups will have 5 minutes to formulate their arguments.
   3. At the end of these 5 minutes the students will sign up (as individuals) in the order they wish to speak at the public meeting.
   4. The public meeting will convene with the instructor acting as the mayor.
      a. The format will be that of a typical public meeting.
      b. The floor will be opened and each individual will be allowed 1 minute to present their comment(s).
c. Individuals will be allowed to speak only once.
d. After all that are signed up have spoken, the mayor will retire to consider public comment and will return with a final decision.