

# Cold weather doesn't deter Canada Geese near Alton

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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Those driving down Illinois Route 143 near Alton can constantly view a group of Canada Geese congregating near the Lincoln Shields area.

Canada Geese are also commonly seen near the Audubon Center at Riverlands in West Alton, Mo.

Even with temperatures below freezing, Canada Geese will be found in the water because they are highly adaptable to conditions, Julie Watson, education manager at the Riverlands center, said.

“The Canada Geese are here all year long,” she said. “Geese are aquatic birds and because we don’t get the solid freeze other places do and they eat the aquatic plants all year long, they stay here. They stay in shallow wetlands and feed from the bottom. They might accidentally eat fish, but they prefer plants.”

Canada Geese sometimes can be seen in fields eating corn or consuming grass in grasslands.

Some don’t recognize the beauty of Canada Geese and find them somewhat annoying, but Watson said she loves seeing them fly.

“We get a lot of Canada Geese here,” she said.

For a period of time in Kentucky, there was a shortage of Canada Geese but after a restoration project there, the numbers have improved.

Some may wonder how the geese stand sub-freezing temperatures in water, but they have special circulation in their legs that keep them from getting frostbite, Watson said.

“Canada Geese are much tougher than humans,” she said. “Birds are very well adapted at handling cold weather.”

Riverlands has two youth programs coming up in relation to birds in March and April.

From 10:30 a.m. to noon, Saturday, March 28, there is an Audubon program for family migration of birds for children. From 10:30 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 11, there will be another program at Riverlands on bird adaptations. The programs are free to the public.