



DUCKS & GEESE

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – CONTAMINANTS FACT SHEETS



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT DUCKS AND GEESE?

Ducks and geese are migratory birds. They are typically found in the Northwest Territories from May until September. Ducks and geese may eat other animals, such as fish. Animals that eat other animals may have higher levels of contaminants due to a process called biomagnification (see *Contaminants Overview* fact sheet – <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>).

Studies have found that most contaminants are present at such low levels that it is not considered a health risk to consume them. The only contaminants found in slightly higher levels were certain heavy metals which can concentrate in the organs of some ducks.

DUCKS AND GEESE ARE GOOD FOR US!

Duck and goose meat is an excellent source of healthy fats, called omega-3 fats. These fats help to keep the heart healthy and are good for brain development. The meat is also a great source of iron. Iron is used to make healthy blood.

Duck and goose eggs provide us with B vitamins, which help the body to use energy properly.

ARE DUCKS AND GEESE SAFE TO EAT?

Yes! Ducks and geese are safe to eat. They are also some of the healthiest foods available. The benefits of consuming ducks and geese are much greater than the risks of contaminant exposure. A consumption notice has never been issued by the NWT's Chief Public Health Officer to limit the intake of ducks and geese. They can be eaten freely without worry.

Exposure to a heavy metal called lead (see *Lead fact sheet* – <http://www.hss.gov.nt.ca>) may be elevated in traditional foods caught using lead shot, especially if the animal is not cleaned carefully soon after it is shot. It is safer to use steel, bismuth or iron shot to hunt. In the Northwest Territories, non-toxic shot (not containing lead) must be used to hunt migratory game birds. In Canada's National Wildlife Areas, lead shot is prohibited for all hunting, including migratory birds and upland game birds.

