

Edible Lawnmowers.

The Order of birds has species that cover the whole global range of habitats. The one family that should interest coffee growers is the “Anatidae” or Geese family. This is because geese, swans, and ducks, eat grass and weeds, and we can eat Geese!

A flock of geese in ones coffee plantation, if one can stop the local Yokels and their village dogs, from stealing and eating them, will greatly assist in keeping the ground clear and tidy. In fact its not that hard to keep a flock because Geese are one of the best alarm systems going. Haven't you heard of the old story of Rome and the temple of Juno! http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_goose

All that one has to do is to clip one wing to stop them flying away! Then they will redistribute the local grass as good coffee fertilizer. If one is more interested in the eating than the weeding, then some supplementary high protein feed like grains or legumes etc., will make them very tame and very fat. Just do not feed them in the yard, or else you will be wading through inches deep of poo!

Clipping one wing at the first finger or pinion joint will make them so unbalanced that they become a sedentary population and make no effort to even try and fly. It is a simple matter to round up the flock when that seasons young geese or goslings are just beginning to grow feathers and become “fledglings”. It is easy enough to grab each young bird in the pen and spread one wing over a chopping block. Then, one blow of an axe will take off that end joint with a minimum of bleeding



Geese at Kona Le'a plantation on Hawaii helping the coffee grow
(<http://www.konalea.com/>)

If the local habitat is dry and has a lot of grasshoppers and other insects one can also run some turkeys along with the geese. It is the male Geese that will attack marauding dogs, whereas there is nothing as silly as a turkey gobbler and turkeys alone are fair game for any predator. However, it is the turkeys that can best eat insects, including the ants that farm green scale. It is the Organic coffee movement on Hawaii that have shown how Geese and coffee can work together.

“A casual observer will often see the flocks of geese grazing in the grass. A mowed lawn around a pond has fresh grass shoots and a wide area of visibility for the eating flock. It is easy to see sentinels posted amongst the eating geese. There are always a few with their heads up, keeping watch. Along with grass, geese eat aquatic plants and even small water animals like snails. During spring and summer they eat grasshoppers, other insects, and earthworms. With the advent of farming, geese added domestic grains to their diets and now are frequently seen gleaning corn in harvested fields. Geese are among the few kinds of birds that can live on a diet of grass. Their legs are placed farther forward on their bodies than those of ducks and swans as an adaptation

to grazing. However, they digest grass poorly and it passes through their bodies in about two hours. For this reason, geese must eat a lot of grass and therefore graze almost constantly.”

<http://www.coffeetimes.com/thunder.htm>

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<http://www.agroforestry.net/events/afwksp2006/HolualoaKonacoffee.html>

<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast538.htm>

So, who wants to spend money on petrol, wages and mower repairs when you can celebrate your Birthdays and Holy days with a Roast Goose on the table.

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