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For Immediate Release - Apr 27, 2004

New York State Turns Their Guns On Ontario's Double-crested Cormorants

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has long been advocating for the destruction of double-crested cormorants nesting in Ontario. Double-crested cormorants are Canadian born birds. They winter in the United States but nest and rear their young in Ontario.

A meeting in 1999 between New York State wildlife officials and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources resulted in a massive egg oiling program on Lake Huron-the largest concentration of nesting cormorants in Ontario.

Not being satisfied, New York State then began advocating for the control of cormorants at Presqu'île Provincial Park just west of Belleville, Ontario. The McGuinty government has responded obediently and is set to slaughter 6000 nesting cormorants at Presqu'île. The slaughter is set to begin within the next two weeks.

Now, New York State officials are back again. This time they want the McGuinty government to control cormorants nesting on islands near Kingston Ontario.

New York State is desperately trying to bolster a declining perch and smallmouth bass sport fishery in eastern Lake Ontario by practicing unadulterated predator control by killing thousands of double-crested cormorants. Cormorants are fish eating birds. Since 1994, the NYSDEC has been controlling cormorant populations in American waters, but there has been no increase in perch or smallmouth bass.

Rather than admit that cormorants cannot be blamed for the decline in the sport fishery, New York State wildlife officials now believe cormorant control hasn't gone far enough.

"Take your hands off our birds, is the message we want to send to both New York State and Dalton McGuinty," says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition.

"Unadulterated predator control is a desperate and shameful form of wildlife management, especially if the sole motivation is to prop up an over exploited sport fishery. Rather than investigate the impacts the sport fishery might have on fish stocks, it is politically simpler to kill the birds," says Valastro.

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press release

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