



PEACEFUL  
PARKS  
COALITION

## For Immediate Release - May 11, 2004

### *Lead Shot More Polluting Than Bird Shit*

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has taken a short reprieve from shooting double-crested cormorants at High Bluff Island in Presqu'île Provincial Park because the birds are getting skittish. The Ministry shot and killed 320 birds on the first day -- Thursday May 6, 150 birds on the second day -- Friday May 7, and 50 birds on Saturday May 8. The Ministry will begin oiling ground nests on Tuesday May 11.

The Peaceful Parks Coalition took the opportunity to investigate the colony at High Bluff Island. Peaceful Parks traveled to the island on Mother's Day, Sunday May 9, and again Monday May 10. There were many empty nests and dispersed adult cormorants. The Ministry kills one adult from each nesting pair. Since it takes two adults to incubate a clutch, the remaining adult is forced to abandon the nest, and the eggs will be left to rot.

The Ministry is also using low velocity lead bullets. They intend to shoot 6000 birds, and leave them to decompose on the island. "The government is killing these birds because they claim their guano destroys the vegetation, but what sort of impact will all the lead bullets and 6000 rotting birds have on the soil and vegetation," asks AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition.

The Liberal government has imposed a blackout on their activities, including a 200 metre buffer around the island, and has shut down a large portion of the campground on the mainland. There are also no press releases announcing their decision on either the Ministry's website or Ontario Parks. Even the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters is eerily quiet on the issue, even though they lobbied hard to have the birds killed.

"David Ramsay believes once the killing begins, people will just surrender to the idea," says Valastro. "But they're mute on their decision because they're ashamed. Cormorants don't destroy vegetation anymore than forest fires destroy forests. Large birds need trees denuded of foliage because they are too large to fly into the branches otherwise. They're just creating a habitat for themselves."

The Peaceful Parks will continue to have a presence at the colony and will issue regular updates.

Contact AnnaMaria Valastro 416.537.3212 or

Gus Zylstra at 613.332.3651

#### **Note to the Editor**

The government claims the 200 metre buffer around High Bluff Island applies during all nesting seasons, but there is no signage marking the boundary, and Park personal do not enforce it during the regular nesting season. It is however being enforced during the shooting.

(Link to Automated Cormorant Letter or use this template to write your own letter to the minister!)

PO Box 326, Station B,

Toronto, Ontario

Canada, M5T 2W2

T: 416.537.3212

W: [www.peacefulparks.org](http://www.peacefulparks.org)

E: [ppc@peaceulparks.org](mailto:ppc@peaceulparks.org)

press release