



PEACEFUL
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COALITION

For Immediate Release - May 21, 2004

Great Blue Herons Abandon Nests at Presqu'ile Provincial Park

Soon after The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources began shooting double-crested cormorants at High Bluff Island in Presqu'ile Provincial Park, great blue herons abandoned their nests. The Peaceful Parks observed empty nests on two separate visits, and the Ministry finally confirmed their observations this week.

"It's difficult to confirm from a distance but we think as many as six nests are empty," says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition. "The Ministry won't reveal how many nests have been deserted. They admitted nests had been abandoned only after we approached them with our observations," says Valastro.

Great blue herons and double-crested cormorants nest in close proximity, at times side by side. It would be impossible to shoot thousands of cormorants without causing chaos in the breeding colony.

The Liberal government approved a plan on May 5, 2004 to shoot 6000 cormorants for four years at High Bluff Island. There are approximately 7,500 nesting pairs of cormorants on the island, according to the Canadian Wildlife Service.

The reason for shooting thousands of cormorants, according to the Liberal government, is to make room for other waterbirds also nesting on High Bluff Island, but the disruption being created from shooting hundreds of birds everyday is causing the birds they are trying to protect to abandon their nests.

On Monday May 17, the government shot 458 birds for a total of 1586 dead birds in seven days of shooting.

Other waterbirds nesting on High Bluff Island, such as the great egrets and the black-crowned night herons, nest separately in different areas on the island. Cormorants have little affect on these birds.

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Note to the Editor:

The Ministry claims cormorants have invaded heron nests and are the cause of their abandonment. But Peaceful Parks has footage of the heron nests that dispute their claims. Great blue herons and a red-tailed hawk also abandoned last year during fire hos-ing of cormorant nests. The Ministry blamed the cormorants last year too.

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

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press release