



PEACEFUL  
PARKS  
COALITION

## For Immediate Release - May 25, 2004

### *More Protesters Arrested At Presqu'ile Provincial Park*

More protesters were arrested at Presqu'ile Provincial Park near Trenton, Ontario yesterday for protesting the mass slaughter of 6000 double-crested cormorants.

The protesters were simply handing out flyers outside the park boundary, when park warden Rob Raposo called the Ontario Provincial Police. "It was the most pathetic thing I've ever seen," said one protester. "Three OPP cruisers and the park warden were all huddled together trying to find something to charge the protesters with." The protesters were within their legal and democratic rights but outside Warden Raposo's jurisdiction, so he called the OPP to harass the protesters.

When a protester asked one OPP officer to move her vehicle because she had backed her cruiser onto a pair of binoculars, the OPP officer arrested the protester along with a second protester for causing a disturbance. When a local resident came forward as a witness in defense of the protesters, Brighton OPP were quick to drop the trumped-up charges. Instead they charged one protester under the Highway and Traffic Act, Section 177(2) for "Solicit Business". The protesters were arrested and held for two hours in Brighton.

To date, seven people have been arrested at Presqu'ile in the last week for protesting the slaughter of thousands of double-crested cormorants. Each protester will be contesting their charges. "I'm happy to go to court because I have a right to peaceful protest without being harassed by cowardly park wardens or corrupt police officers," said the protester. "This whole business of shooting thousands of birds in a provincial park is disgusting. Dalton McGuinty has turned out to be a horror story but he can't take away my freedom of speech."

Both protesters are also filing official complaints with Inspector Mike Johnson of the OPP Campbellford Detachment for their treatment by arresting OPP officers.

Both arrestees were female but only one was held in a cell. The cell had an open toilet but was attended to by male officers. This protester was also asthmatic but was denied her medication, even though she informed the officers she was feeling ill. Officers stated she was faking her illness even though her medication was in her coat pocket. Her coat had been searched and was under police custody.

The second female protester remained handcuffed for two hours without ever being charged.

The protesters were also intimidated and threatened. Police officers threatened to keep them in jail with no toilets, would be banned from the City of Brighton, prohibited from speaking to each other, threatened to tow their car, and intentionally misinformed protesters of their legal rights. They also refused to give their names but did give the badge numbers of four officers. There were six officers on the scene. While under arrest, OPP officers consulted with park officials.

The protesters captured their arrest on videotape. The OPP kept the flyers as "evidence" against the protesters.

press release

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**Note To The Editor:** Peaceful Parks is protecting the identity of the protesters until they receive legal advice.

Photos will be available to the media at <http://www.pronature.on.ca/cormorantpictures.html> compliments of The ProNature Network

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

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