



PEACEFUL
PARKS
COALITION

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Protesters Line Up To Save Cormorants Thousands To Be Killed At Presqu'ile

Toronto, May 5, 2005: Dalton McGuinty has slammed the door on any further discussions on the slaughter of thousands of double-crested cormorants at Presqu'ile Provincial Park near Trenton, Ontario by ordering the shooting of nesting cormorants for this year and next year. And protesters are lining up to be there to witness the killing.

"People are going to be there everyday to witness the massacre of thousands of nesting birds," says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition. Last year McGuinty was too ashamed to shoot the birds while protesters were watching. This year protesters will be there everyday to bare witness. "If Dalton is so proud of his decision to kill these birds by the thousands, then he should be ecstatic that we'll be there watching" says Valastro.

The Peaceful Parks has also dispatched a team of veterinarians to retrieve and attempt to save the lives of injured birds. Last year close to 600 birds were injured and drowned after being shot.

While protesters will be at Presqu'ile everyday, the herons that the McGuinty government are supposedly trying to save from intruding cormorants have decided to skip the shooting spree this year.

Great blue herons and black-crowned night herons have failed to return to Presqu'ile after Ontario Parks shot over six thousands cormorants last year. Great blue heron nest counts are down from 64 last year to 39 this year, and it is unlikely this number will increase because the height of their nesting season is early May. The black-crowned night heron nest count is at 5 nests down from 59 nests last year. The height of their nesting season is mid to late May, smack in the middle of the shooting spree. Both avian species have shown a steady decline since Ontario Parks began their "cormorant control management strategy" in 2003.

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Note To The Editor:

Last year seven protesters were arrested at Presqu'ile Provincial Park. Two of those protesters were arrested for distributing flyers to park visitors, and appeared in court. The judge determined the case had no merit and threw it out. The judge also stated the crown had abused court procedure to bring the case forward.

The same protesters filed complaints with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Professional Standards Board for unlawful arrest and harassment. The Board ruled in favour of the protesters and concluded that the arresting officer knew the protesters were within their rights but arrested them anyways.

Video taken by protesters at the time of the incident was accepted as evidence by the investigative officer from the OPP Professional Standards Board.

press release

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