

## **Proposed Amendment Management Strategy for Double-crested Cormorants at Presqu'ile Provincial Park**

November 24, 2006

### **1. Background**

A management strategy was approved in 2002 to guide the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) in a four year program to manage double-crested cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) (hereafter referred to as cormorants) in Presqu'ile Provincial Park. The strategy was implemented 2003-06, with amendments approved in 2003 and 2004 to improve its effectiveness. A copy of the approved 2004 amended strategy can be obtained on the Ontario Parks website via: [http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/pres\\_planning.html](http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/pres_planning.html)

The goal and objectives of the strategy are as follows:

The goal of cormorant management operations at Presqu'ile Provincial Park is:

- to protect representative woodland flora and fauna of High Bluff Island, Presqu'ile Provincial Park, while retaining maximum diversity of nesting colonial bird species.

There are four objectives associated with the goal:

- to limit cormorant use of trees for nesting on High Bluff Island,
- to reduce cormorant use of trees for roosting on High Bluff Island,
- to reduce recruitment from ground nesting cormorants on Gull and High Bluff Islands, and
- to minimize impacts of cormorant management on other colonial bird species nesting on Gull and High Bluff Islands.

Based on annual evaluations to date, the strategy has had some success in meeting the first two strategy objectives (limiting nesting in trees and limiting roosting in trees) and greater success in meeting the last two objectives (reducing recruitment from ground nests, minimizing impacts on non-target colonial waterbird species nesting on High Bluff Island). It is clear that the number of cormorants at Presqu'ile has been reduced to levels similar to those observed in the early 1990s.

The approved strategy is scheduled to end in December 2006. In accordance with this strategy, MNR has begun a full review and assessment of the results of the current management strategy and this process is anticipated to take at least a year to complete. Based on the outcome of the review and assessment, a new strategy will be developed; however, such a strategy would not be ready for implementation in 2007.

Experience and annual evaluations to date suggest that some level of control will be required in 2007 to prevent the cormorant population at Presqu'ile from increasing while the program undergoes a full review and assessment.

An amendment is required to extend the period of the strategy by one year to allow continued implementation of some of the management activities during the 2007 season. The goal of the amendment will be to maintain the cormorant population at the 2006 population level to prevent an increase in the negative impacts of cormorants on the woodland habitat of the Presqu'ile islands while a new strategy is being developed.

The techniques which will be used include egg oiling, removal of nests, disturbance of roosting cormorants and will not include culling.

## **2. Amendment**

An amendment is required to extend the period of the strategy by one year to allow continued implementation of some of the management activities during the 2007 season.

### **2.1 Management Technique Evaluation and Selection (section 6 of the approved strategy, page 15)**

This proposed amendment extends the strategy for one year, allowing management in 2007. The management program in 2007 will involve:

- oiling of eggs in ground nests;
- removal of tree nests; and
- disturbance of roosting cormorants.

The combination of techniques listed above for the 2007 management program is expected to maintain the cormorant population at 2006 levels to prevent an increase in the negative impacts of cormorants on the woodland habitat, pending the outcome of a full review and assessment of the current strategy and development of a new strategy. Monitoring and restoration efforts will continue.

Culling of breeding adult tree nesting cormorants will not occur in 2007. All references to culling in the strategy do not apply to 2007 management.

### **2.2 Implementation Details (section 7.0 of the strategy, page 18)**

Management at Presqu'île in 2007 will include a combination of egg oiling, nest removal and disturbance of roosting cormorants. Culling of adult birds will not be utilized as a control technique in 2007.

## **3. Amendment and Implementation Process**

The amendment process will follow MNR policy and procedures requirements, including posting on the Environmental Registry.

Environmental assessment requirements for this wildlife management project will follow MNR's requirements under *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*.

### **3.1 Consultation on Amendment**

Comment is now invited on this proposed amendment to the strategy; see Environmental Registry posting [http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env\\_reg/ebr/english/](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ebr/english/) .

Following the 33 day comment period, the final amendment will be completed and made available for inspection. The final amendment will include a summary of the comments received on the proposed amendment.

Comments will be accepted until **December 27, 2006**. Please direct comments in writing to the following address:

Ministry of Natural Resources  
Ontario Parks, South Eastern Zone  
51 Heakes Lane  
Kingston, Ontario K7M 9B1  
Fax: 613-536-7228 / Email: [DCCO@mnr.gov.on.ca](mailto:DCCO@mnr.gov.on.ca)

Notice of this proposal will be posted on the Environmental Registry of the *Environmental Bill of Rights* at the following Web address:  
[http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env\\_reg/ebr/english/](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ebr/english/)

A notice will be posted in the park office.

Individuals and groups that are on the contact list for this project will be notified directly, via postal mail or e-mail.

Comments and personal information regarding this proposal are collected under the authority of the *Provincial Parks Act* and *Environmental Assessment Act* to assist MNR in making decisions and to determine further consultation needs. Comments and opinions which do not constitute personal information as defined by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, will be shared within the MNR and may be included in documentation that is made available for review. Personal information will remain confidential unless consent to disclose is obtained. This information may be used by the MNR to seek input on other resource management matters pertaining to the park. For further information regarding this Act, please contact Robert Moos, Strategic Planning Officer, Ontario Parks (Tel: 705-755-1773).

### 3.2 Consultation on Project Implementation

To date, implementation of the strategy has been under *Environmental Assessment Act* Exemption Order MNR 59/2. In January of 2004 the Exemption Order was replaced by *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (Class EA), and in accordance with transitional provisions in the Class EA, the ongoing project has continued under the Exemption Order.

The proposed amendment involves project implementation beyond the period approved in the original strategy. The requirements of the *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* are being applied to project implementation (wildlife management) in 2007.

The management techniques proposed for 2007 have been assessed under the Class EA. The project (manage a wildlife population) has been identified as a Category B project under the Class EA.

### 3.3 Decision Process

Notice of the proposed amendment to the strategy is occurring concurrently with notice as required by the Category B project evaluation.

Following review of comments received for the proposed amendment to the strategy, a decision notice will be posted on the Environmental Registry. The final amendment will be posted on the Ontario Parks website.

Only those who request notice or who submit comments will receive the Notice of Completion of the Class EA requirements for the management activities (egg oiling, tree nest removal and disturbance of roosting cormorants).