

MANAGEMENT OF COLONIAL WATERBIRDS AT TOMMY THOMPSON PARK

CORMORANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #4

Web page:

<http://www.trca.on.ca/cormorants>

**Wednesday, Dec 10, 2008
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Mennonite New Life Centre,
1774 Queen Street East, Toronto**



**CORMORANT ADVISORY
GROUP
MEETING #4**

Wednesday December 10, 2008

6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

AGENDA

6:35pm	Welcome and Introductions	Suzanne Barrett
6:45pm	Review of Previous Meetings	Suzanne Barrett
7:00pm	Review of 2008 colonial waterbird data and 2008 cormorant management strategy	Ralph Toner
7:40pm	Update on York University studies	Gail Fraser
8:00pm	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Completion of the 2008 Cormorant Management Strategy•Moving into 2009	Ralph Toner
8:55pm	Wrap-up and next meeting	Suzanne Barrett



PROCESS – DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS AT TOMMY THOMPSON PARK

- **November 2007:** TRCA embarked on a process to involve stakeholders and public in assessing need for management of cormorant populations
- **Goal:** to achieve a balance between the continued existence of a healthy, thriving cormorant colony and the other ecological, educational, scientific and recreational values of Tommy Thompson Park



Objectives

- a. Increase public knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of colonial waterbirds
- b. Deter cormorant expansion to Peninsula D
- c. Limit further loss of tree canopy on Peninsulas A, B and C
- d. Continue research on colonial waterbirds in an urban wilderness context

Public Consultation Summary

Advisory Group Meeting #1	January 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values and interests of TTP• Conditions and concerns of DCCO colony• Need for management• Strategies to address concerns
Advisory Group Meeting #2	February 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate management options• Propose alternative approaches
Cormorant Webpage launched	March 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Includes background materials, Advisory Group meeting notes and presentations, Public Meeting workbook and meeting notes, relevant links
Public Meeting	April 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advertised in Toronto Star, The Mirror, TRCA website, TTP information board, TRCA distribution lists, some Advisory Group member websites• Canada Newswire press release, Global TV coverage• Presentations, facilitated round table discussion, individual workbooks for commenting
Advisory Group Meeting #3	April 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review public response• Discuss 2008 strategy
TTP Spring Bird Festival	May 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guided tours of cormorant colony• Public survey on TTP cormorants
Authority Board	May 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present 2008 strategy for Authority action
Advisory Group Meeting #4	Dec10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review 2008 strategy and preliminary research results



ADVISORY GROUP

MANDATE

- Provide input and advice
- Ensure that all perspectives are considered
- Provide linkages with other stakeholders

TRCA

Restoration Services

Federal/Provincial

Canadian Wildlife Service

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Toronto Port Authority

Transport Canada

City of Toronto

Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Academia

University of Toronto

York University

Interest Groups

Aquatic Park Sailing Club

Cormorant Defenders International:

Animal Alliance of Canada

Canadians for Snow Geese

Earthroots

Zoocheck Canada Inc.

Friends of the Spit

Ontario Nature

Toronto Island Residents

Toronto Ornithological Club

Local Experts



Advisory Group Meetings achieved:

- Better understanding of the range of values that TTP represents to different stakeholders.
- Improved understanding of significance and values associated with waterbird colonies, including cormorants, at TTP.
- Development and refinement of the goal and objectives.
- Majority agreement that some form of management is necessary, providing that the methods are humane to cormorants and do not affect other wildlife at TTP.
- Refinement of proposed management techniques for use on each of the four peninsulas.
- Advice on consultation with the public.



Advisory Group

Ongoing concerns:

- The effectiveness and acceptability of egg oiling.
- The compatibility of encouraging ground nesting with the use of egg oiling.
- The use of certain deterrent techniques (eg noise makers).
- Potential effects of management on other colonial nesting birds.



Public Meeting

- Support for consultative, transparent process.
- Support for overall goal, although some concern that “balance” can be interpreted in different ways.
- Most people endorsed objectives to increase public knowledge, awareness and appreciation of colonial waterbirds and to continue research.
- Considerable support for deterring cormorants from nesting on Peninsula D, using least intrusive methods.
- Range of opinions on limiting further loss of tree canopy on other peninsulas, and methods to accomplish this.
- Methods should ensure humane treatment of cormorants and avoid disturbance of other species.
- Of the proposed methods, egg oiling had least amount of support.
- Participants suggested applying various combinations of methods on each peninsula.



May 23, 2008 Authority Meeting Summary

- Gord MacPherson presented 2008 Cormorant Management Plan
- 10 delegations
- 15 correspondence items
- Recommendation carried

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ...continue to work with the Cormorant Advisory Group... in addressing management concerns regarding colonial waterbirds at TTP;
- ... work ...with regulatory agencies to seek approval for the 2008 management strategy...;
- ...implement the proposed management strategy for 2008;
- ...continue to actively participate in ... committees/working groups addressing the management and protection of colonial waterbirds;
- ...staff report back to the Authority next year regarding the management of Double-crested cormorants at TTP.

Strategic Approach 2008

	Peninsula A	Peninsula B	Peninsula C	Peninsula D
Pre-nesting Deterrents				*
Post-Breeding Deterrents			*	*
Enhanced Ground Nesting	*	*		
Restoration	*	*	*	*
Experimental Egg Oiling		*		

Nesting Pairs of Colonial Waterbirds at TTP 2008



Double-crested
Cormorant
7,038



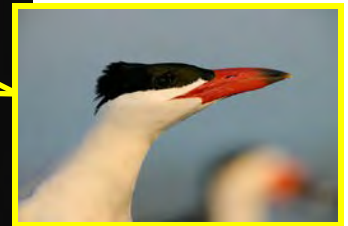
Black-
crowned
Night-Heron
566



Common Tern
310



Great Egret
6



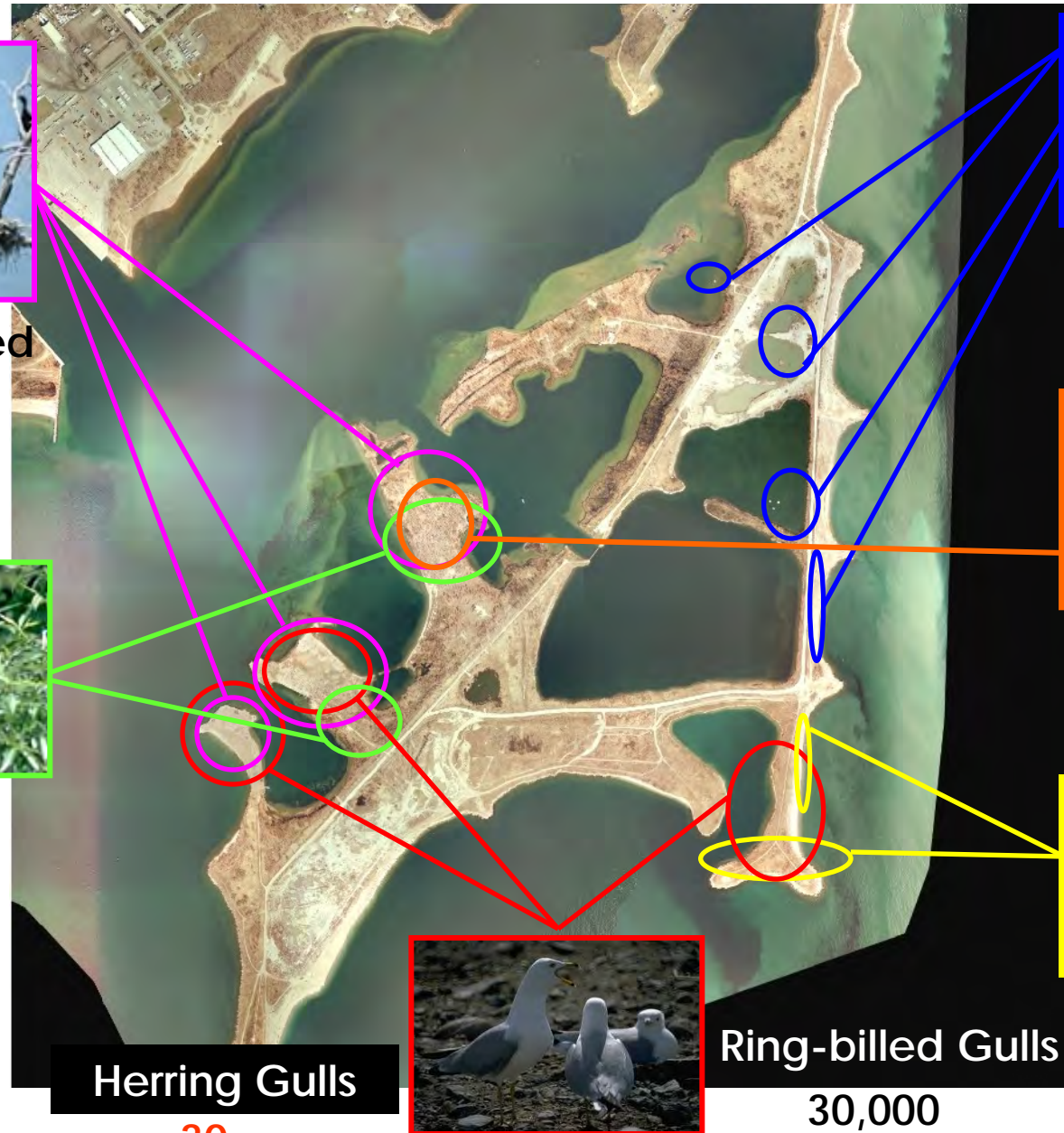
Caspian Tern
No success



Ring-billed Gulls
30,000

Herring Gulls

30



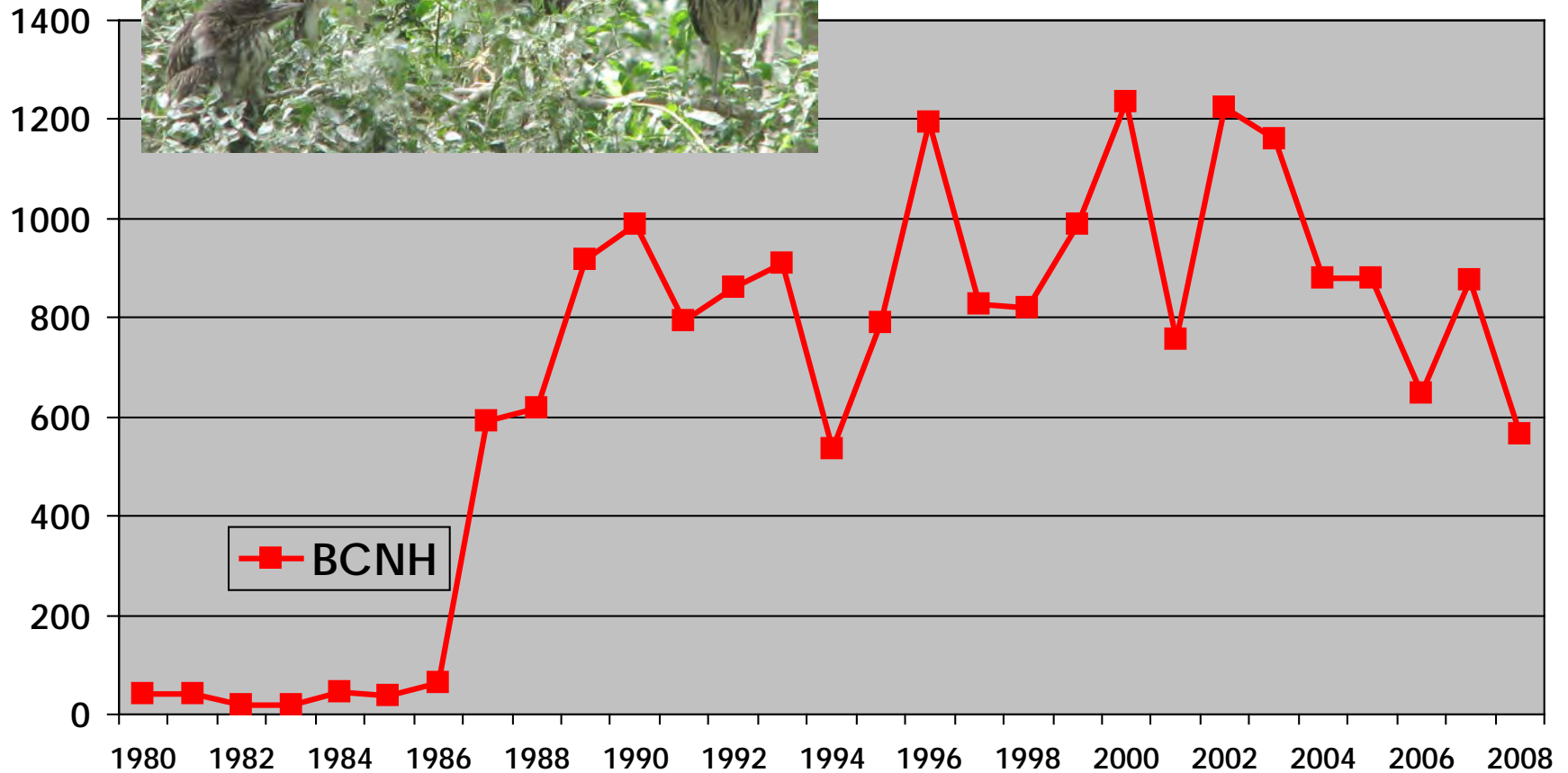


DCCO Nest Numbers 1998 to 2008

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
A	436	695	933	907	730	779	557	311	228	101	49
B	1307	1814	2071	3138	1844	1582	1241	1763	1535	1139	1074
B ground					344	990*	809	872	868	1302	1009
C	0	0	30	281	625	633	2439	2728	3494	4699	4906
Total	1743	2509	3034	4510	3543	3942	5855	5674	6125	7241	7038

• Peninsula A 42, and Peninsula B 948

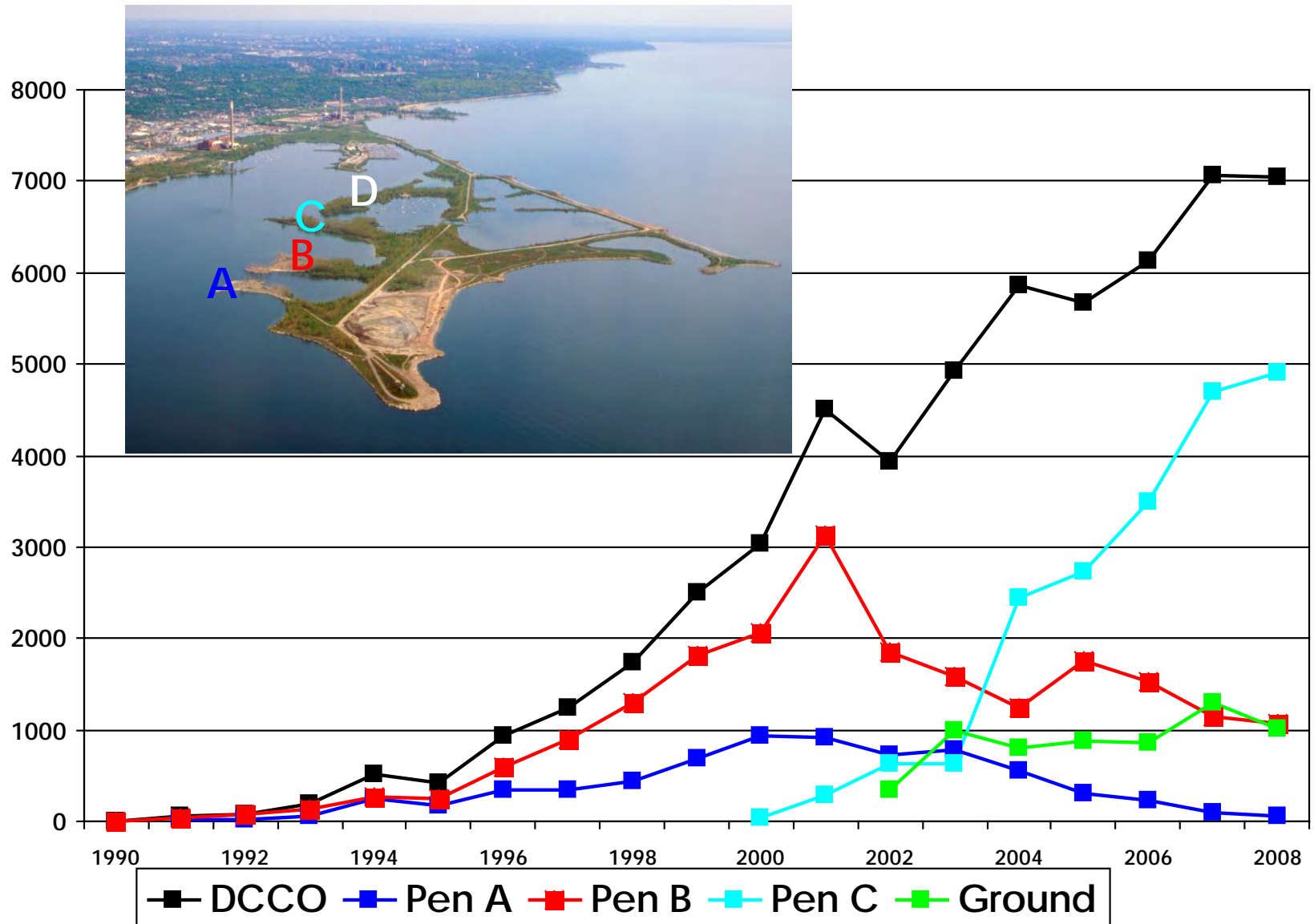
BCNH Nest Numbers 1980 to 2008



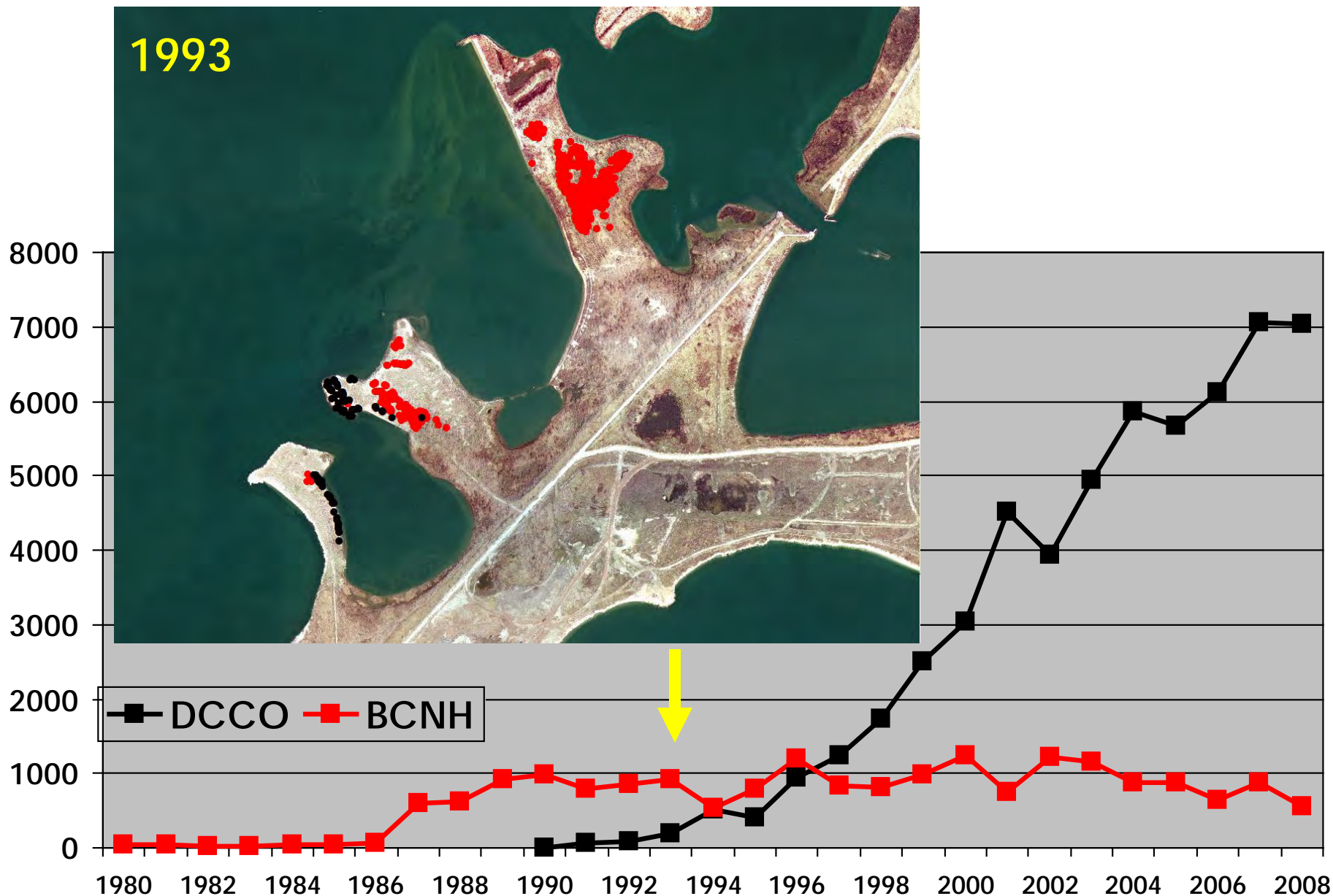
BCNH numbers by Peninsula

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	15	0	0	0	163	255	278	270	145	147	86
C	803	988	1235	758	1040	904	601	610	504	769	480
Total	818	988	1235	758	1223	1159	879	880	649	916	566

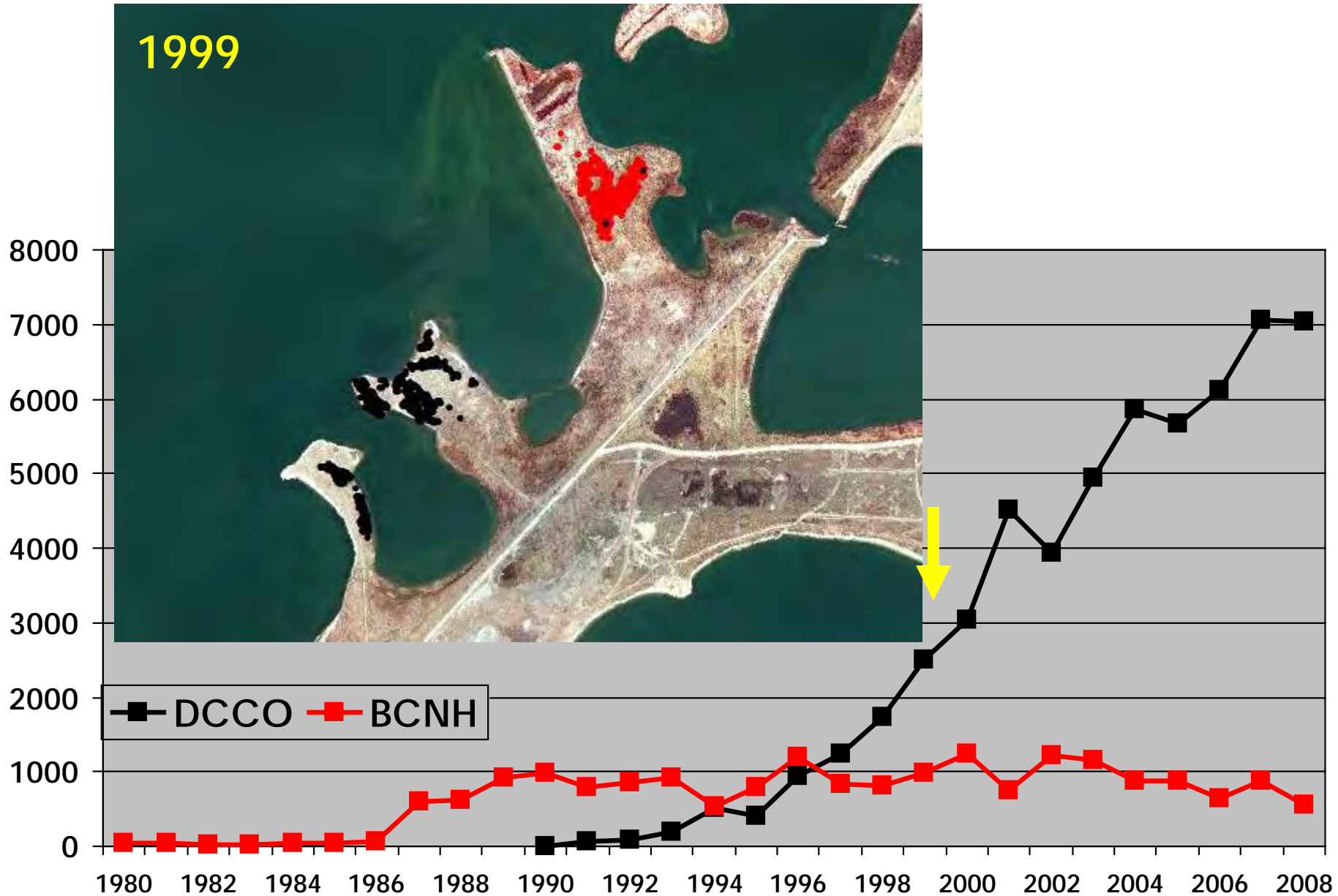
TTP Nests Numbers by Peninsula



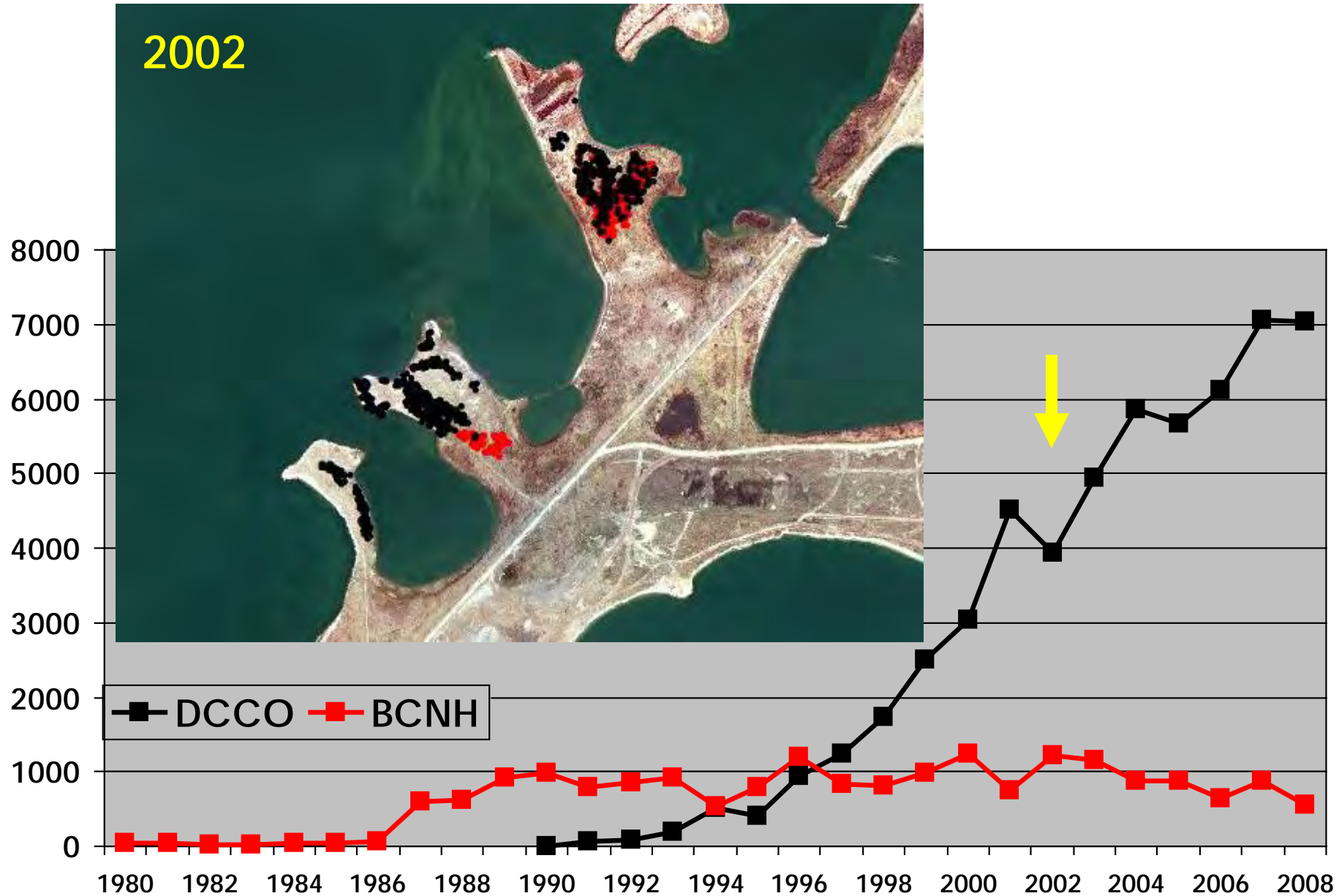
Nests Numbers of DCCO and BCNH at Tommy Thompson



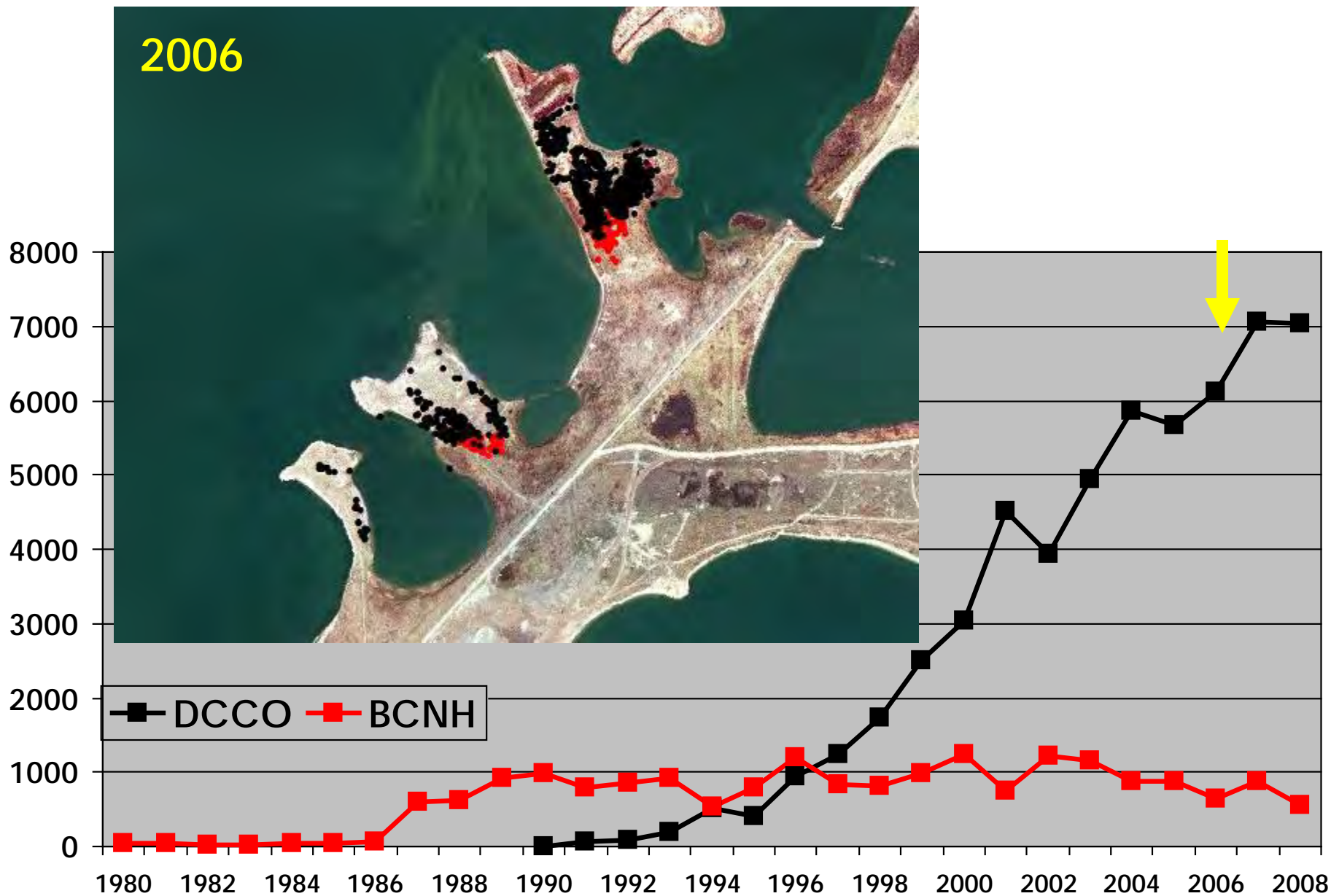
Nests Numbers of DCCO and BCNH at Tommy Thompson



Nests Numbers of DCCO and BCNH at Tommy Thompson



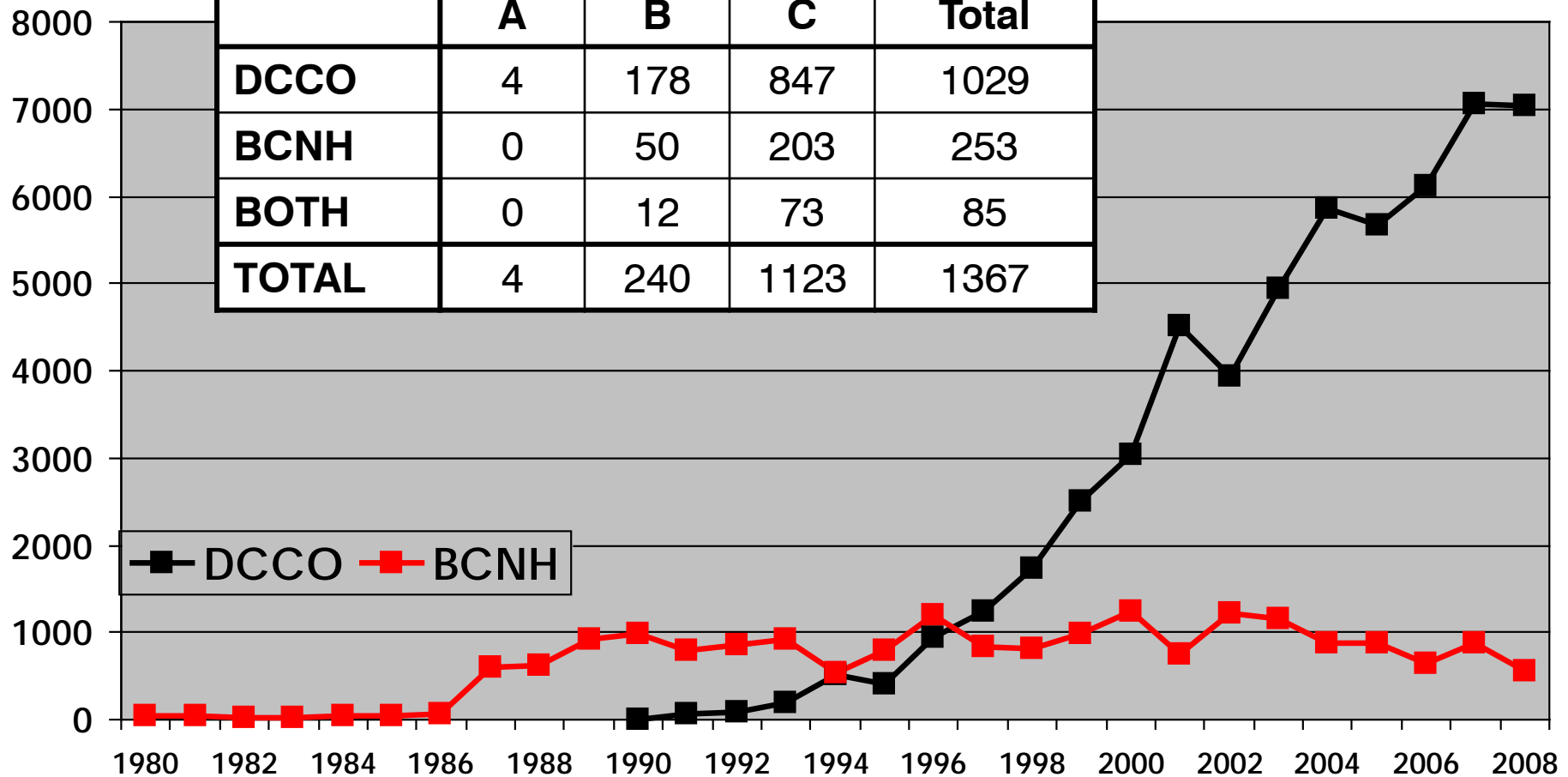
Nests Numbers of DCCO and BCNH at Tommy Thompson



Nests Numbers of DCCO and BCNH at Tommy Thompson

Number of trees with nests

	A	B	C	Grand Total
DCCO	4	178	847	1029
BCNH	0	50	203	253
BOTH	0	12	73	85
TOTAL	4	240	1123	1367



Ground Nests at TTP 2008



Trees Nested in per Year

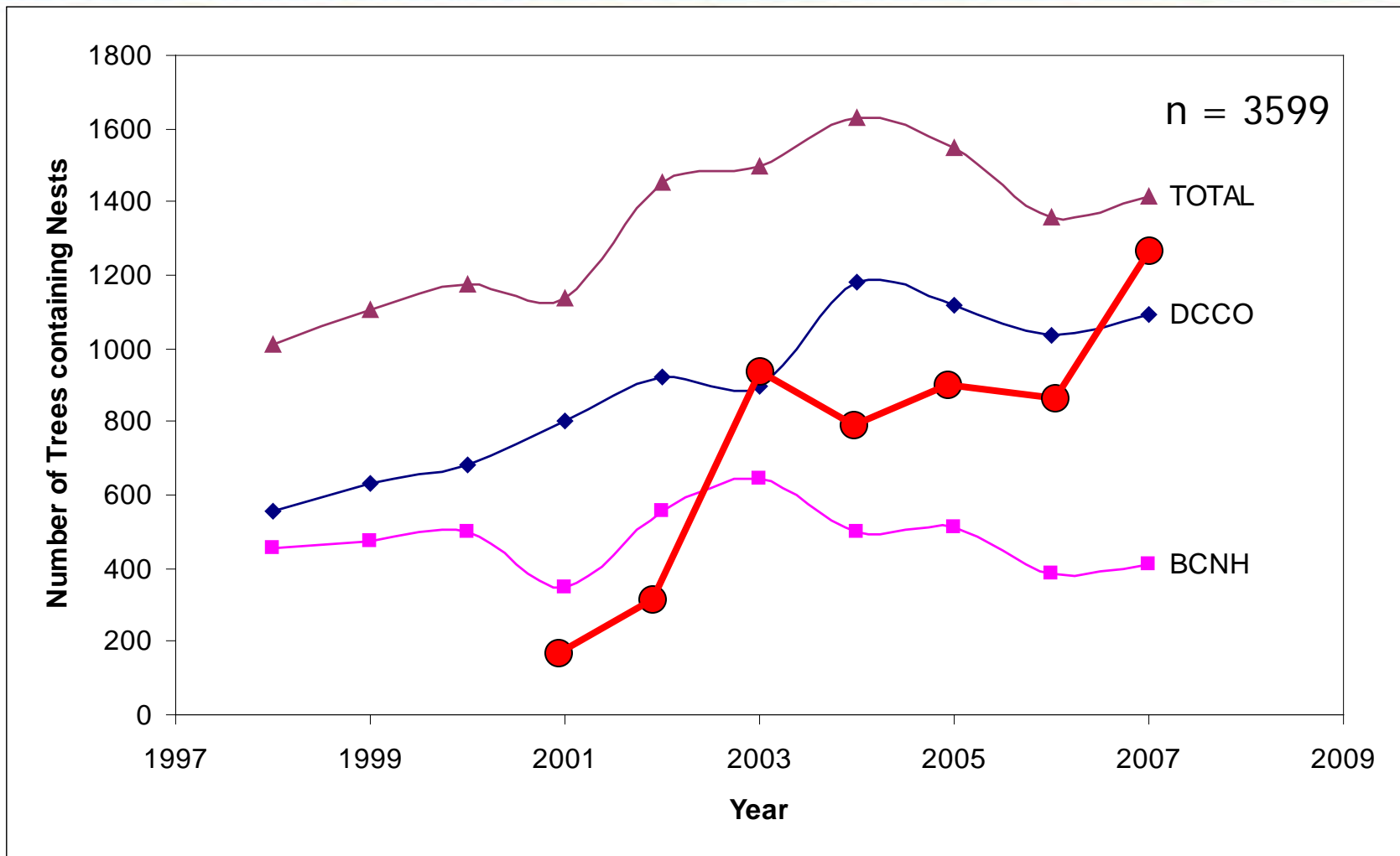


Figure 1: Figure 1: Summary of the number of TRCA trees containing nests

Source TRCA Data produced by University of Toronto (Eric Davies, Michelle Thomas, Mart Gross)

Pre-nesting Deterrents on Peninsula D

Least intrusive methods Favored

- **Human Presence**
 - Public use
 - Staff activities
- **Artificial Predators**
- **Noisemakers**
 - Staff controlled
 - Automatic devices



Post-Breeding Deterrents

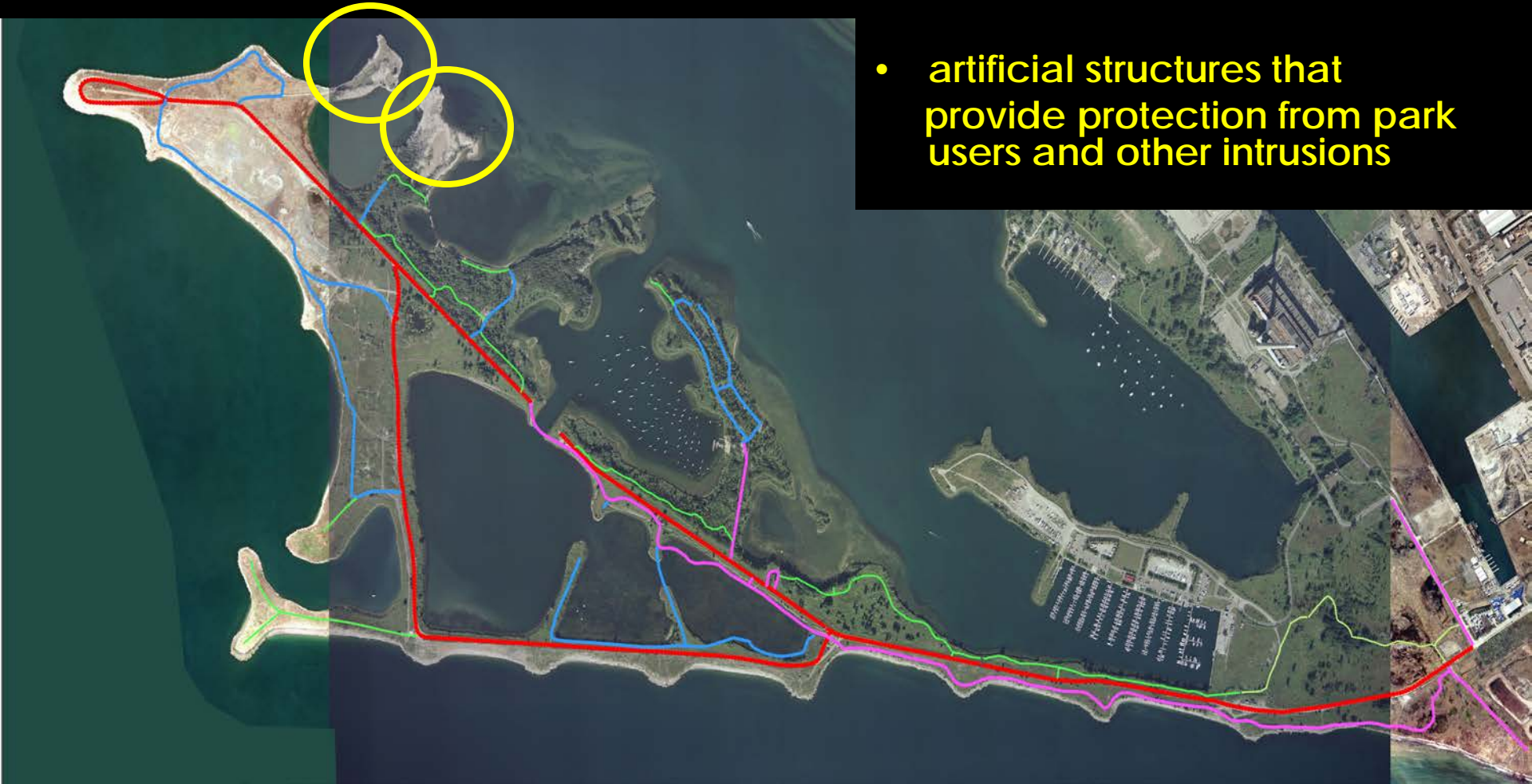
Peninsula D and Tip of C

- Human Presence
- Artificial Predators
- Noisemakers



Enhanced Ground Nesting

- Peninsulas A and B
- artificial structures that provide protection from park users and other intrusions



Restoration

- Revegetate with trees, shrubs and meadow species
- Natural Area Enhancement Plan
- Shrub planting to enhance BCNH



December 2008
TRCA cormorant advisory committee
G. Fraser, York University



Implications for Management and Monitoring

- Recommend activities that require being in the colony occur at night
- How areas adjacent to colony are accessed is important (water vs land)
- Quantify overall disturbance to colony
- Control observer based disturbance
- Predator control ?



Additional Data Available for Analysis

- Productivity
- Fledging
- Nest attendance
- Average hatching date
- Social Behaviours



Next Steps

Enhanced Ground Nesting

- Peninsula A and B
- Enhance artificial structures that provide protection from park users and other intrusions



Encourage Ground Nesting

Techniques include;
decoys
recordings
natural and artificial structures
providing nesting materials

Provide protection from the public,
the environment, urban influences
(raccoons, unauthorized activities)



Successful Ground Nest Enhancements



Cormorant Decoy

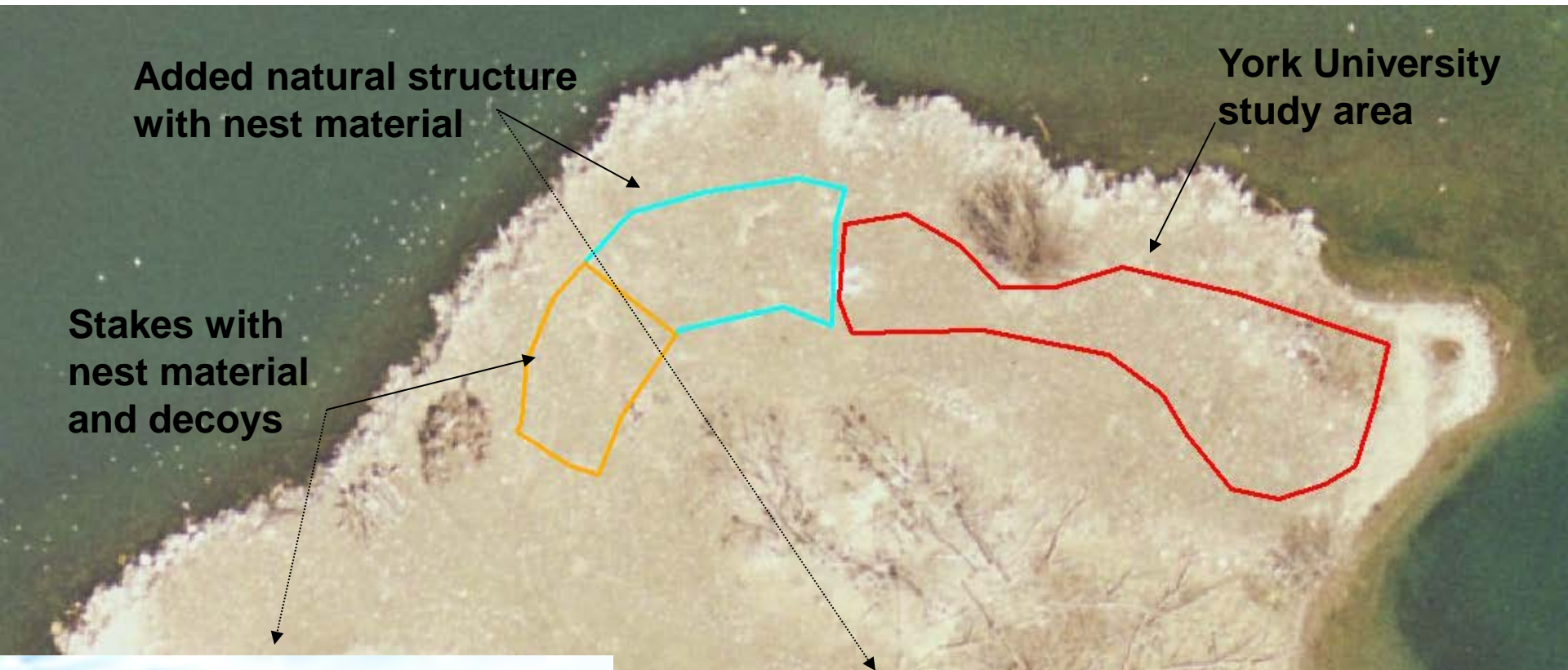


Photo credit - Columbia River Avian Predation Program

Current Ground Nest Enhancements at TTP



PENINSULA A - 2009 GROUND NEST ENHANCEMENTS

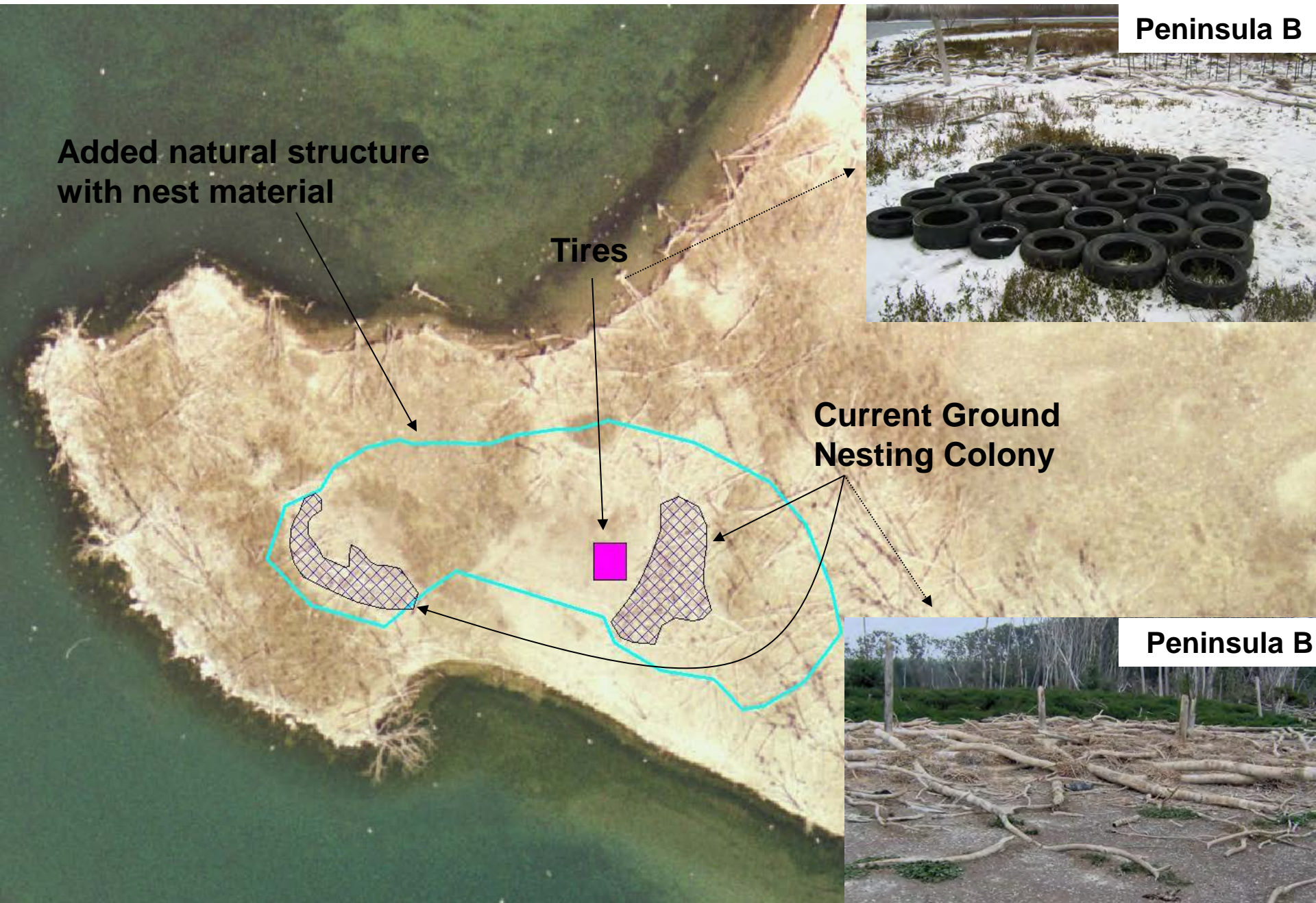


Presqu'ile Provincial Park



Peninsula B

PENINSULA B - 2009 GROUND NEST ENHANCEMENTS



Revegetation and Habitat Restoration in Impacted Areas

Plant nodes in strategic areas

Soil amendment and seeding in specific areas



Restoration



HABITAT RESTORATION ON Peninsulas A and B - 2009



Soil augmentation and nodal plantings of site appropriate species:

- willow species**
- red-osier dogwood**
- Speckled alder**
- Poplar species**
- Herbaceous species**

Discussion



Proposed Strategic Approach 2009

	Peninsula A	Peninsula B	Peninsula C	Peninsula D
Pre-nesting Deterrents		*	*	*
Post-Breeding Deterrents			*	*
Enhanced Ground Nesting	*	*		
Restoration	*	*	*	*
Experimental Egg Oiling		*		



2009 Timeline

- **Wednesday February 4** – Advisory Group Meeting to discuss 2009 Strategy
- **Friday March 27** – Authority Meeting to approve 2009 Strategy
- **Late Fall** – Advisory Group Meeting to review 2009 Strategy

A photograph of three black cormorant chicks on a nest made of dry sticks and twigs. The chicks are dark with lighter-colored throats. One chick in the foreground has a small white tag on its leg. A speech bubble is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Thank you!