

MANAGEMENT OF COLONIAL WATERBIRDS AT TOMMY THOMPSON PARK

CORMORANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #10

www.trca.on.ca/cormorants

Thursday January 19, 2012
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Metro Hall, Room 313A
55 John Street, Toronto



CORMORANT ADVISORY GROUP

MEETING #10

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

AGENDA

6:30pm	Welcome	Ralph Toninger
6:35pm	Review of 2011 colonial waterbird data and 2011 cormorant management strategy	Ralph Toninger Karen McDonald
7:30pm	Update on York University studies	Gail Fraser
8:00pm	Proposed Strategic Approach for 2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work plan for 2012 season• Discussion• Timeline• TRCA Board Meeting	Ralph Toninger Karen McDonald
8:55pm	Wrap-up and next meeting	Ralph Toninger



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



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

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

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

McMaster 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

Public Consultation Summary 2011

Advisory Group Meeting #9	February 3, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the 2011 Strategy
TRCA Board	March 25, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present the 2011 Strategy for TRCA Authority action
Colonial Waterbird Interpretation and Presentations	March – November, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winter Waterfowl event• Spring Bird Festival• Butterfly Festival• York University• Centennial College• University of Toronto• TD Friends of the Environment Corporate Events• Sir Sandford Fleming College• Branksome Hall High School• Winged Migration classes• City of Toronto• Toronto Field Naturalists newsletter
Advisory Group Meeting #10	January 19, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the 2011 population data and monitoring program• Review 2011 strategy and research results• Develop the 2012 Strategy

Colonial Waterbirds of Tommy Thompson Park, 2011



Double-crested
Cormorant
11,374 nests



Common Tern
53 nests



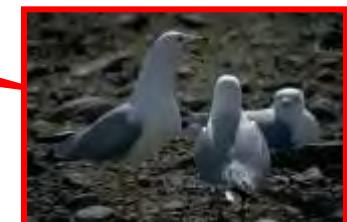
Black-crowned
Night-Heron
423 nests



Herring Gull
<20 nests



Great Egret
7 nests



Ring-billed Gull
30,000 nests

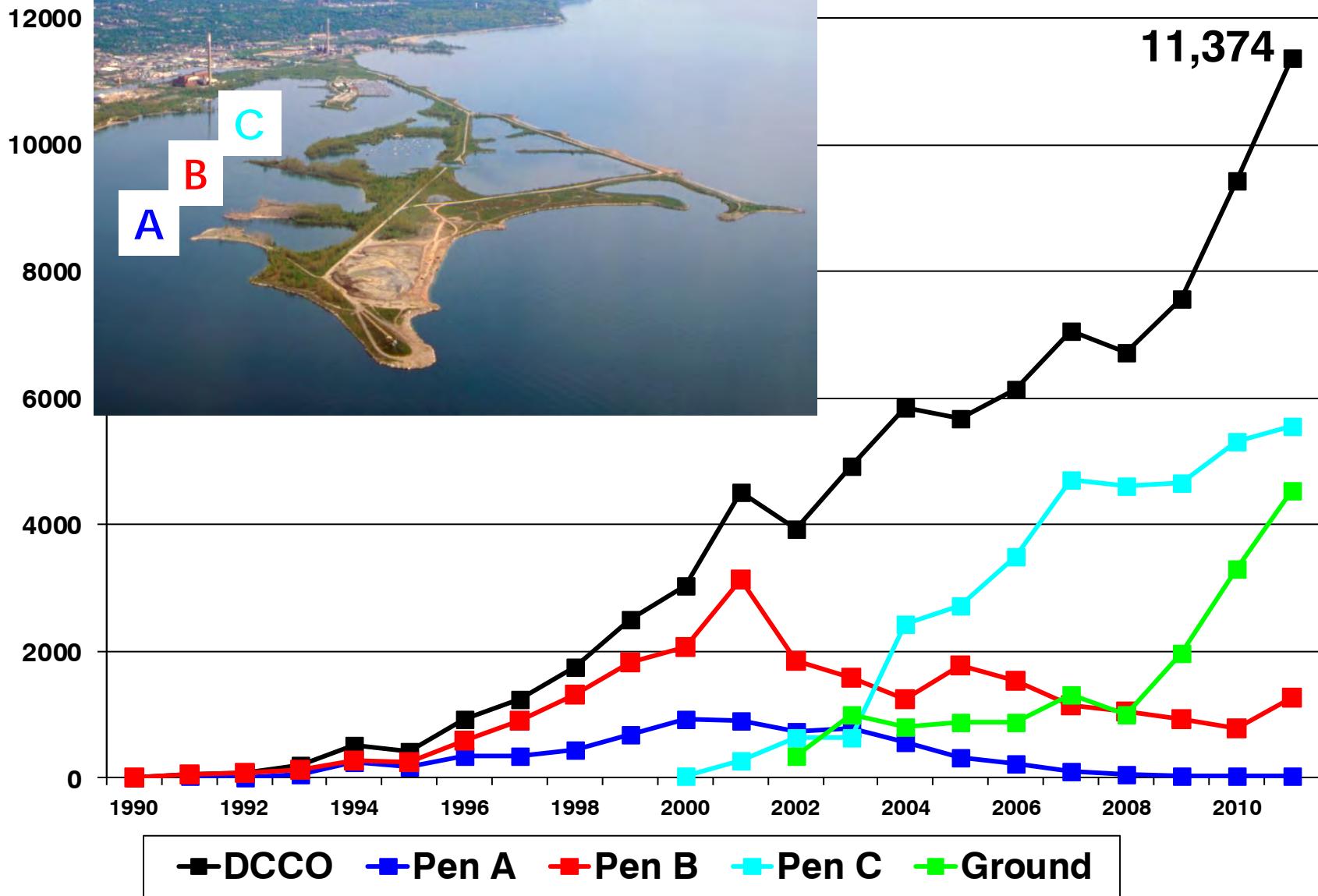
DCCO Nests by Peninsula



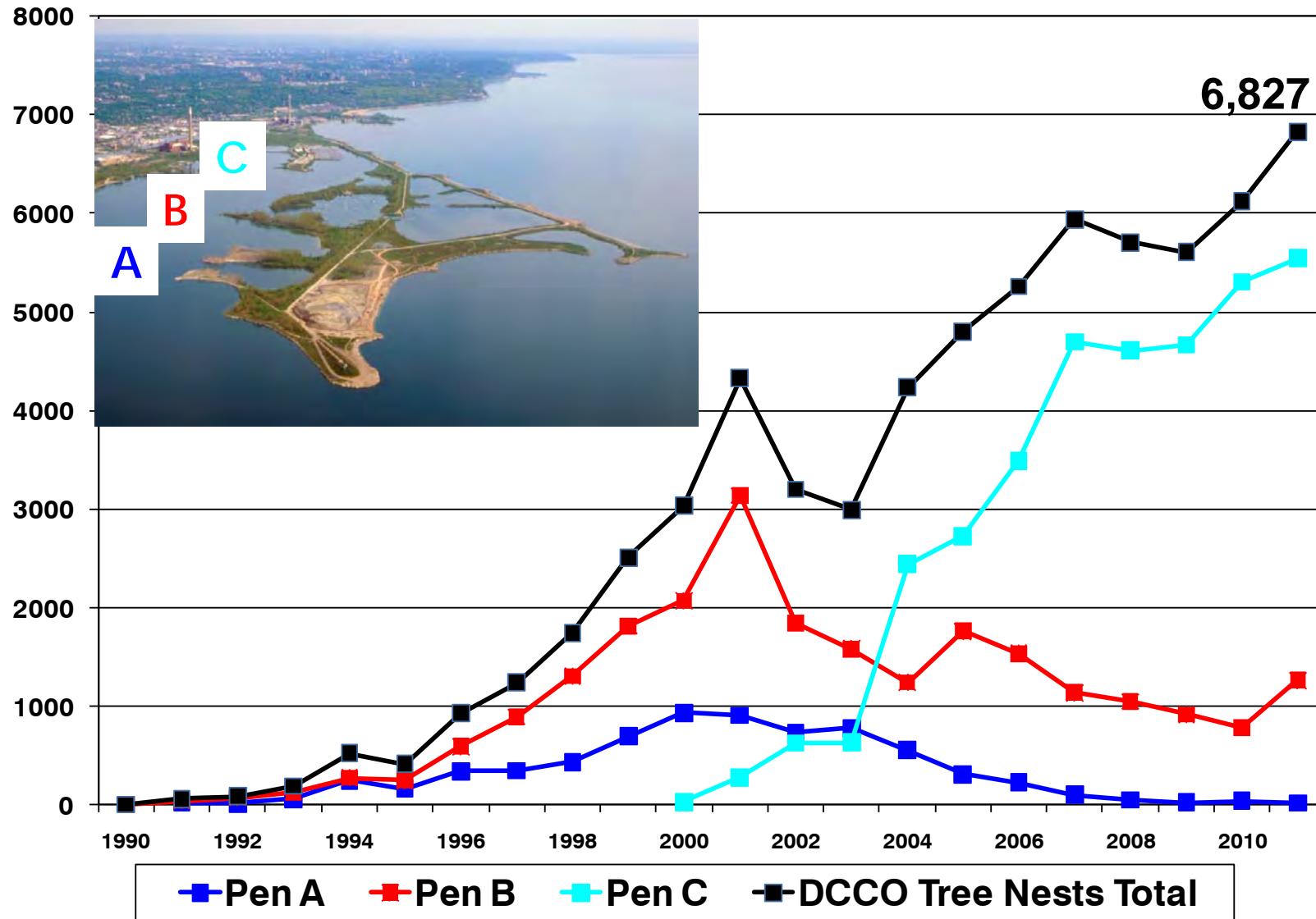
Peak nest count data collected during the last week of May, first week of June annually

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
A	933	909	730	779	557	311	228	101	49	22	39	19
B	2071	3048	1844	1582	1241	1763	1535	1072	1050	917	781	1262
B ground			344	948	809	872	868	1302	1009	1957	3310	4547
C	30	282	625	633	2439	2728	3494	4584	4609	4668	5304	5546
Total	3034	4237	3543	3942	5046	5674	6125	7059	6717	7564	9434	11374

TTP DCCO - All Nests by Peninsula



TTP DCCO - Tree Nests by Peninsula



BCNH Nests by Peninsula



Peak nest count data collected during the last week of May, first week of June annually

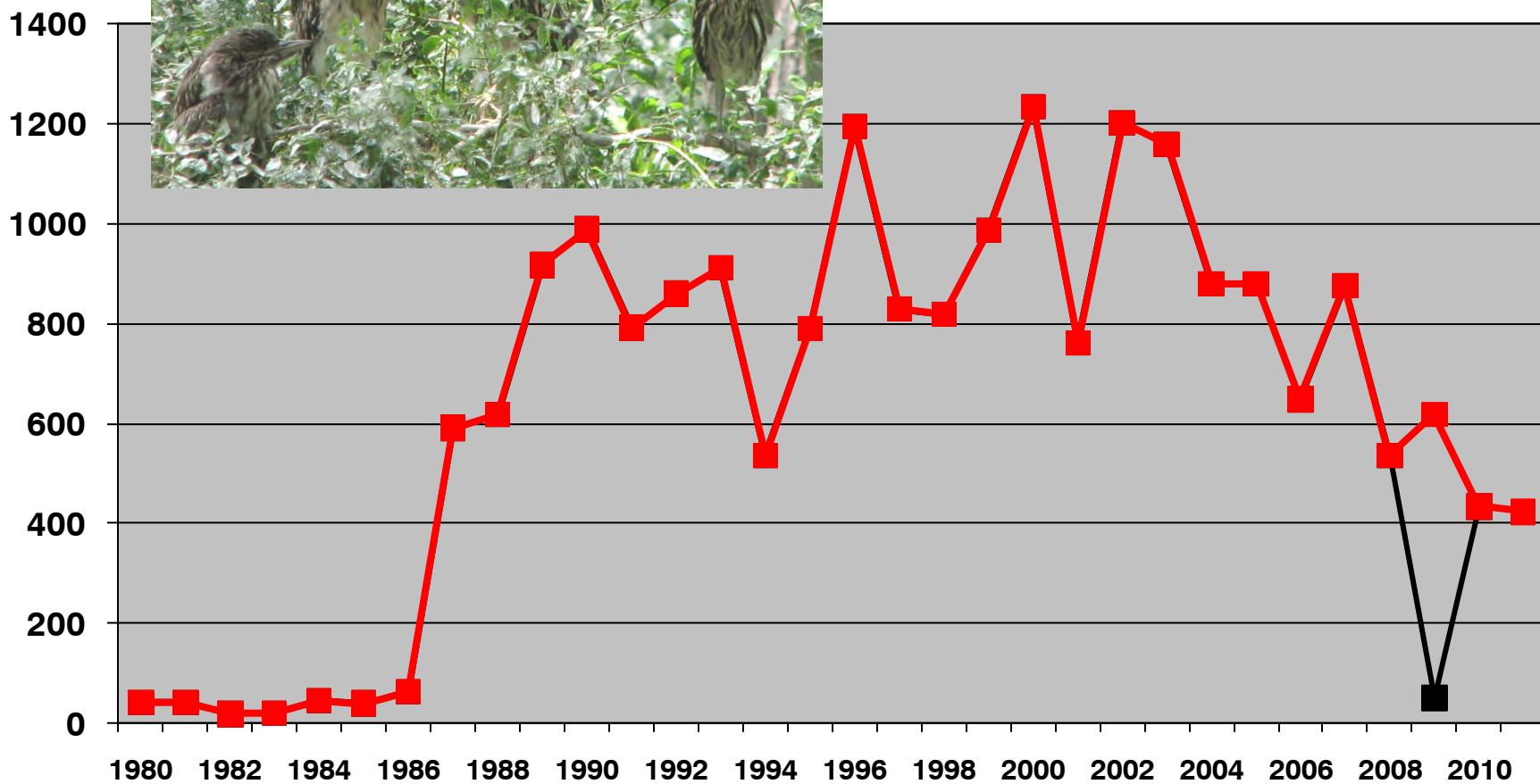
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	163	255	278	270	145	146	81	38	3	100
C	1235	762	1040	904	601	610	504	730	455	546	431	323
Total	1235	762	1203	1159	879	880	649	876	536	584*	434	423

* Almost all nests failed mid-season

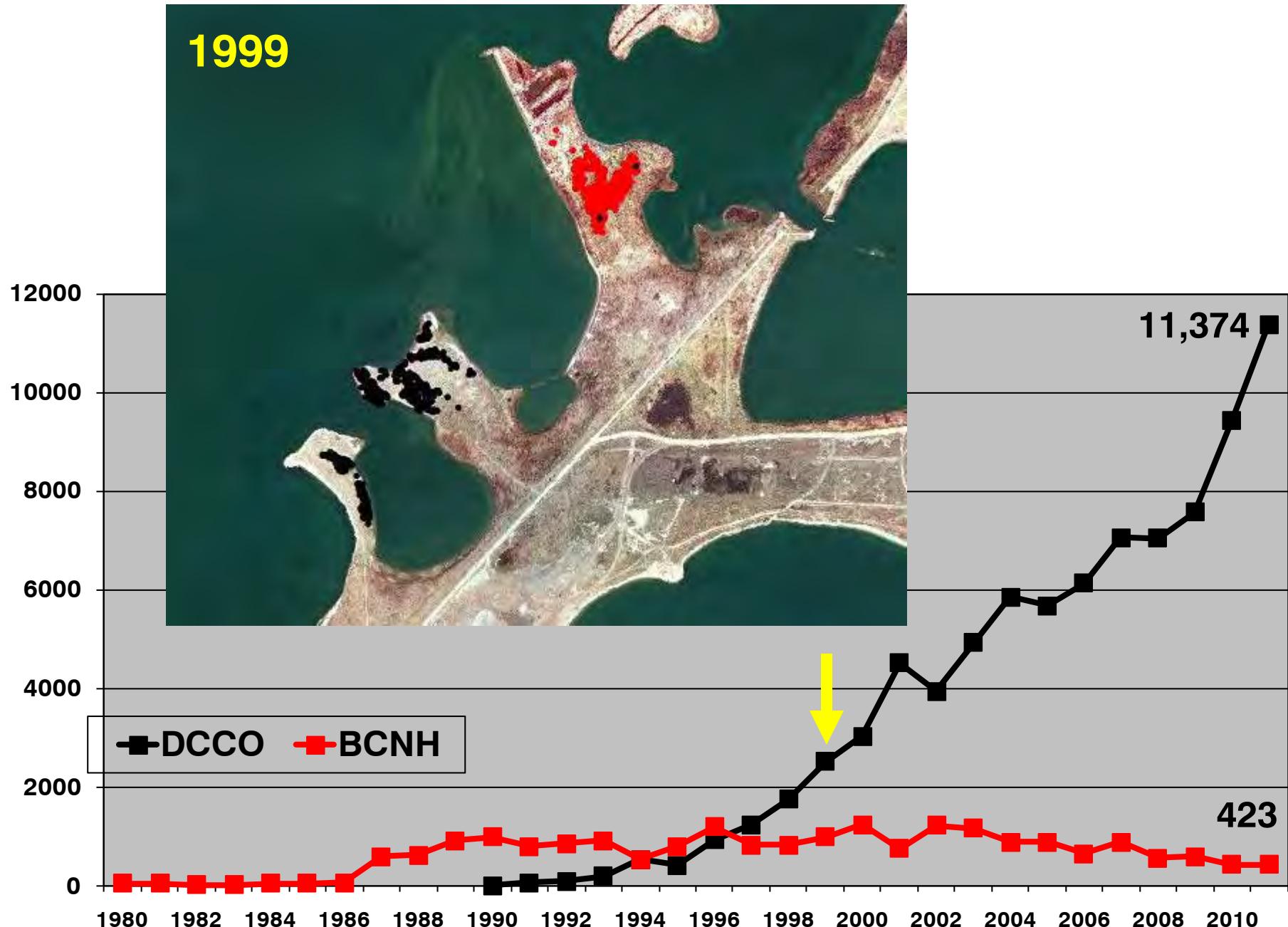
BCNH Peak Nest Numbers 1980 to 2011



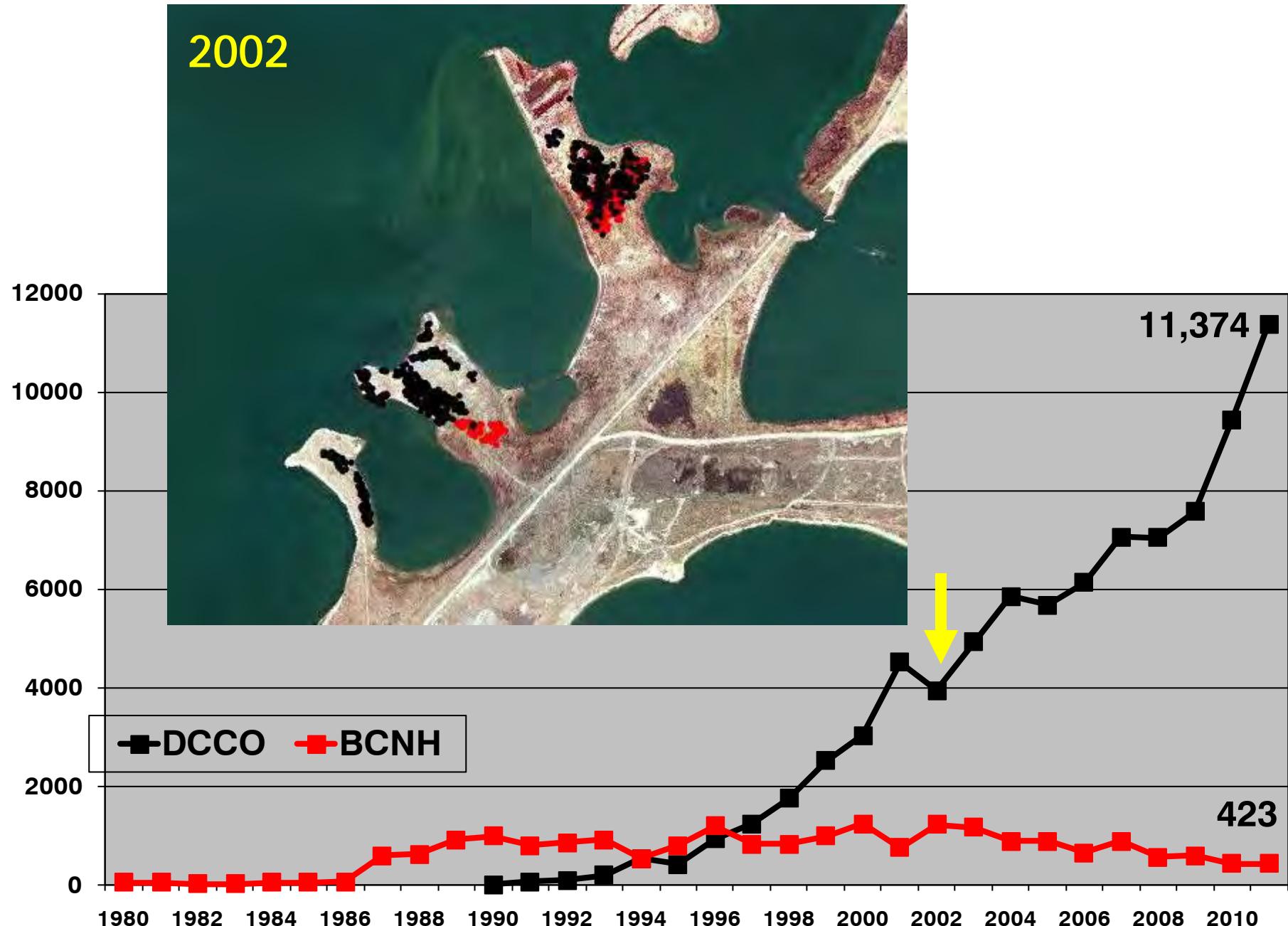
— Peak nest count numbers
— Mid-season nest numbers



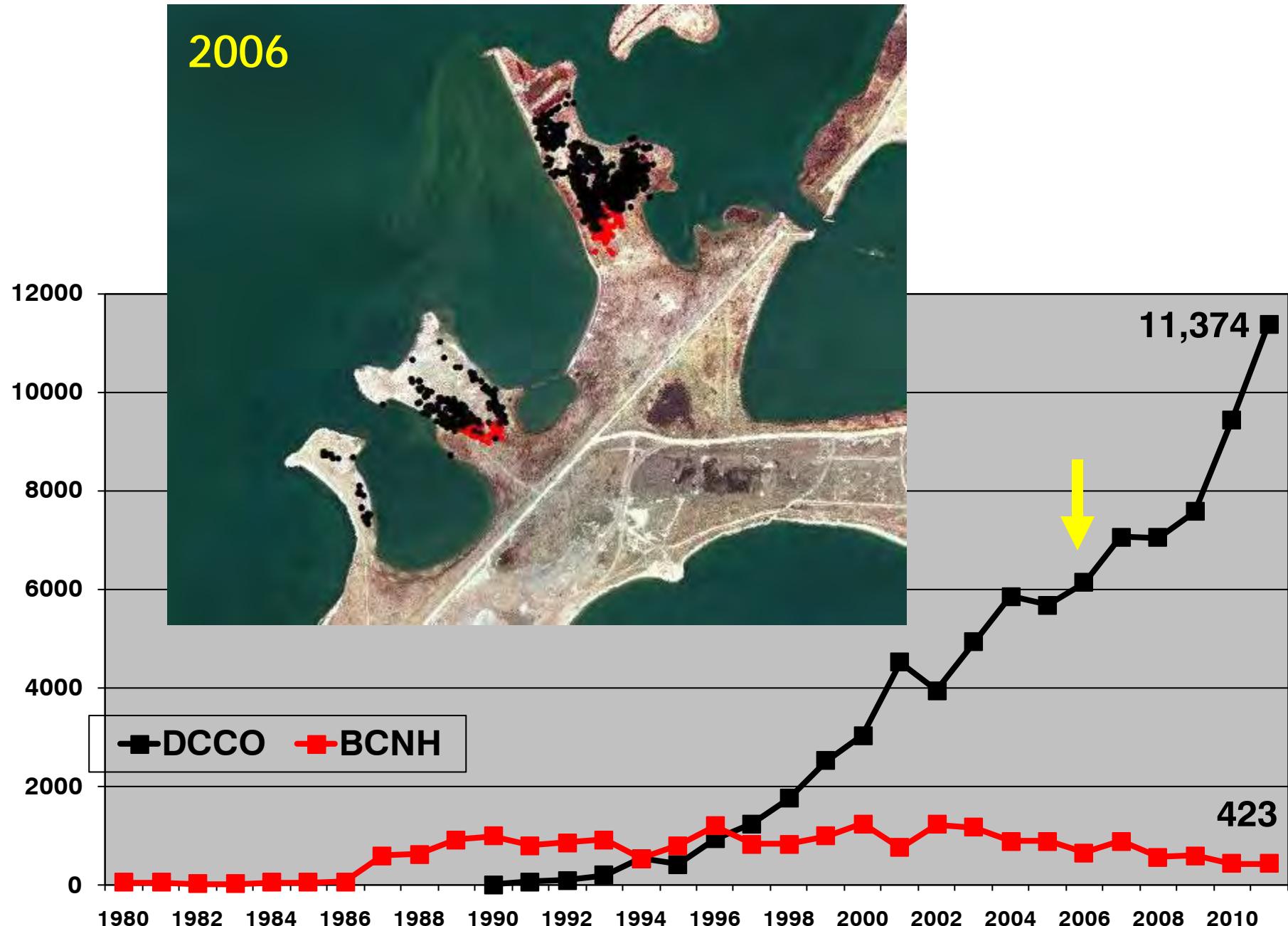
Nest Numbers of DCCO and BCNH at Tommy Thompson



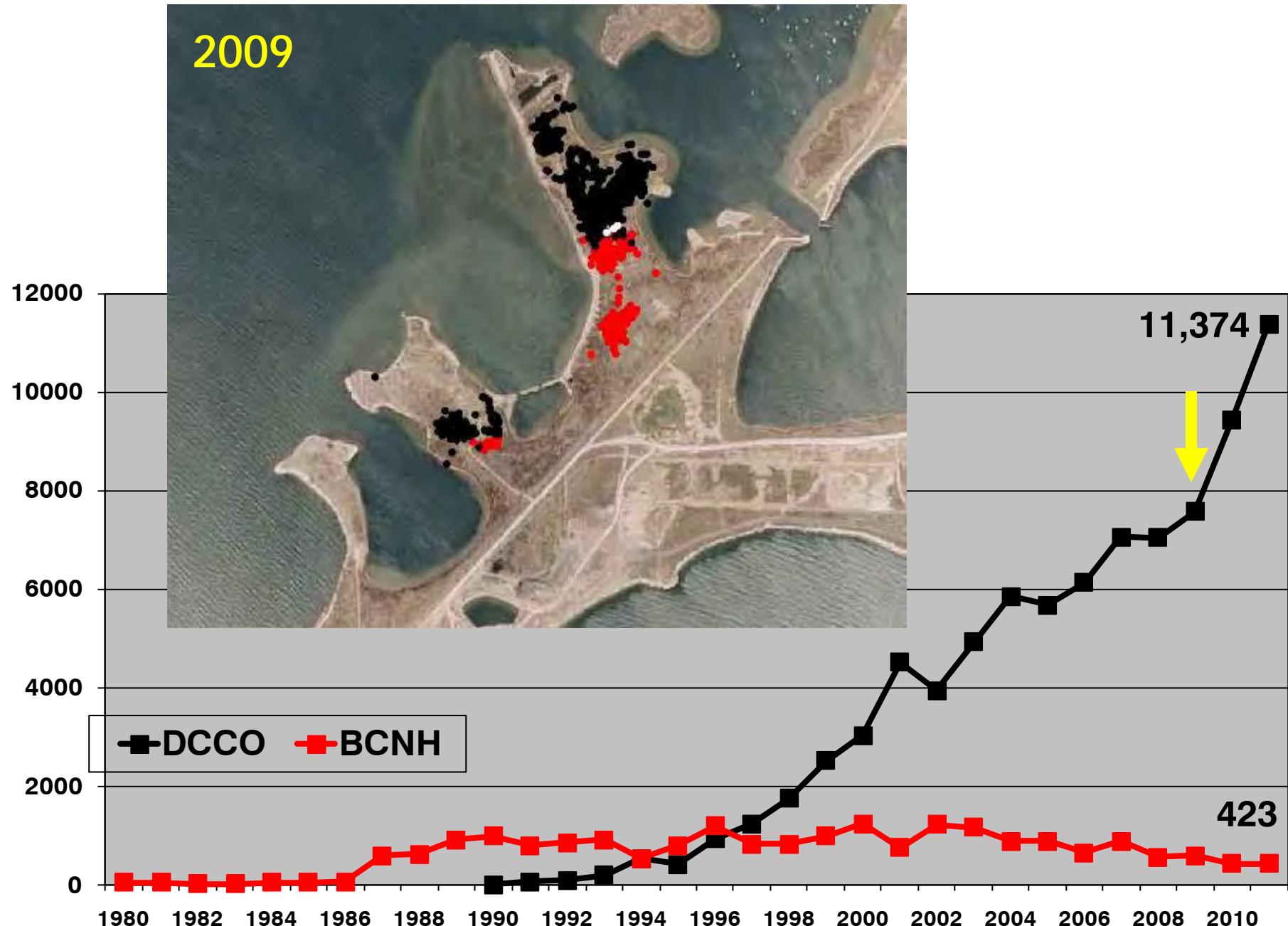
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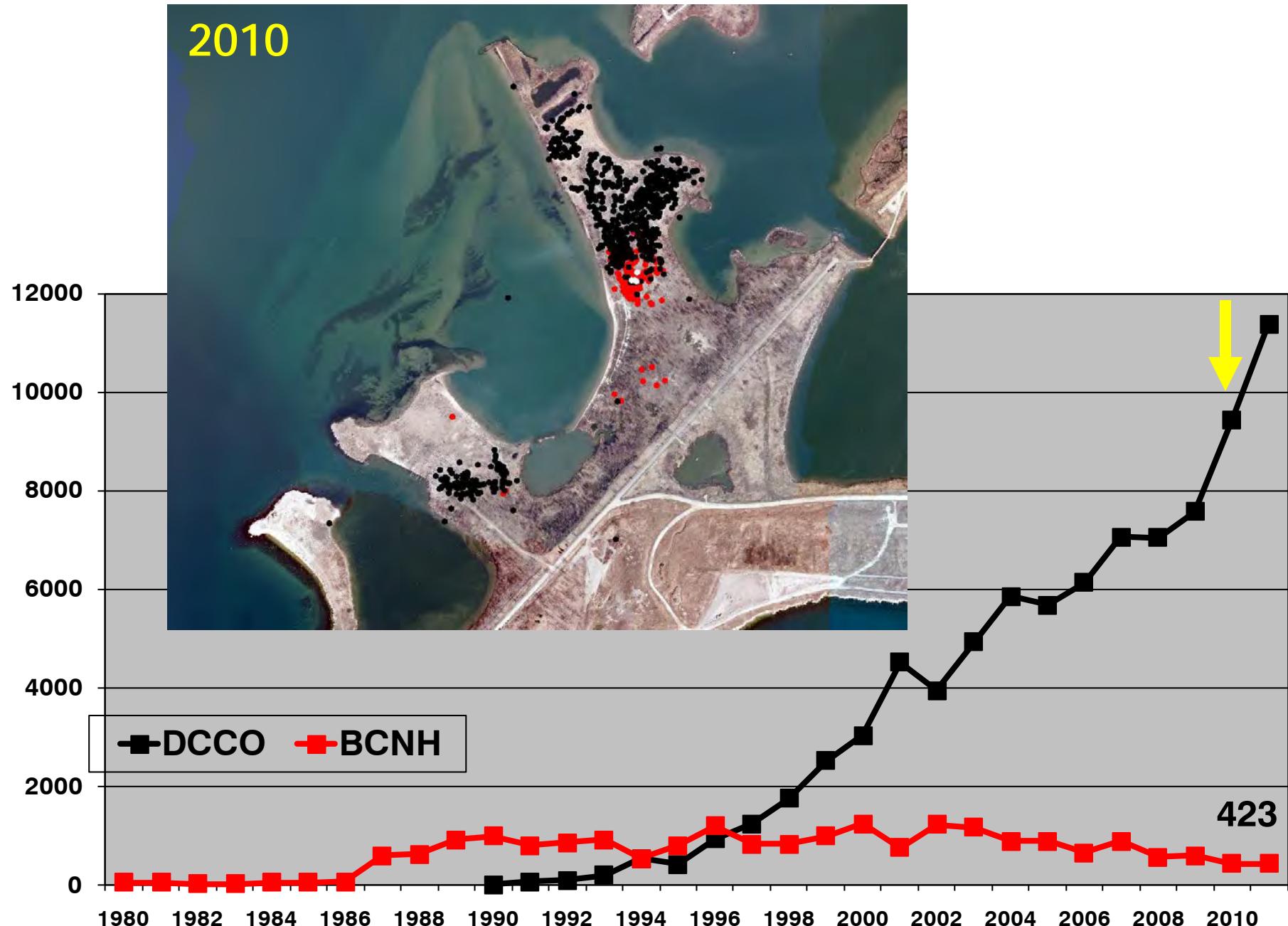
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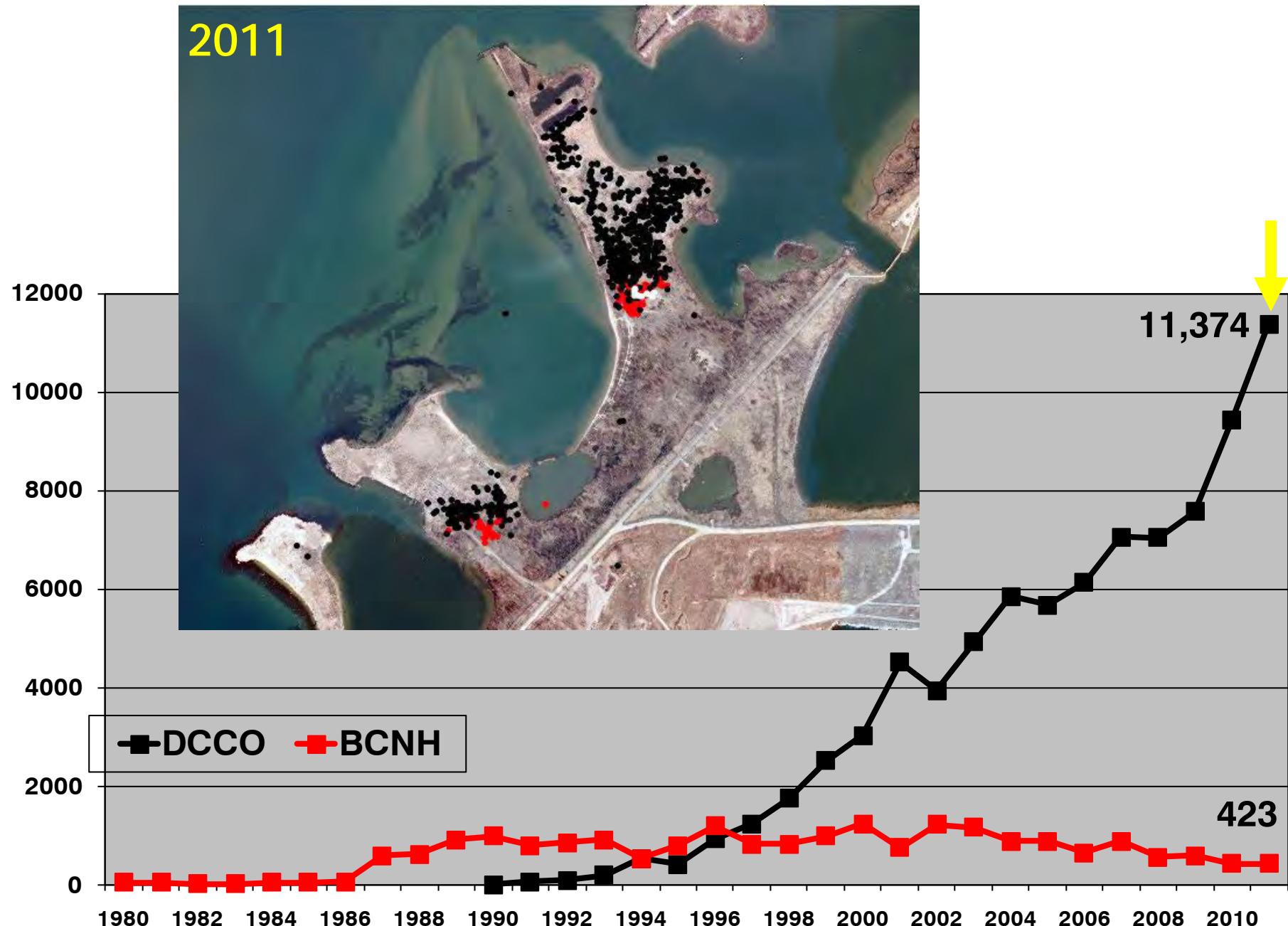
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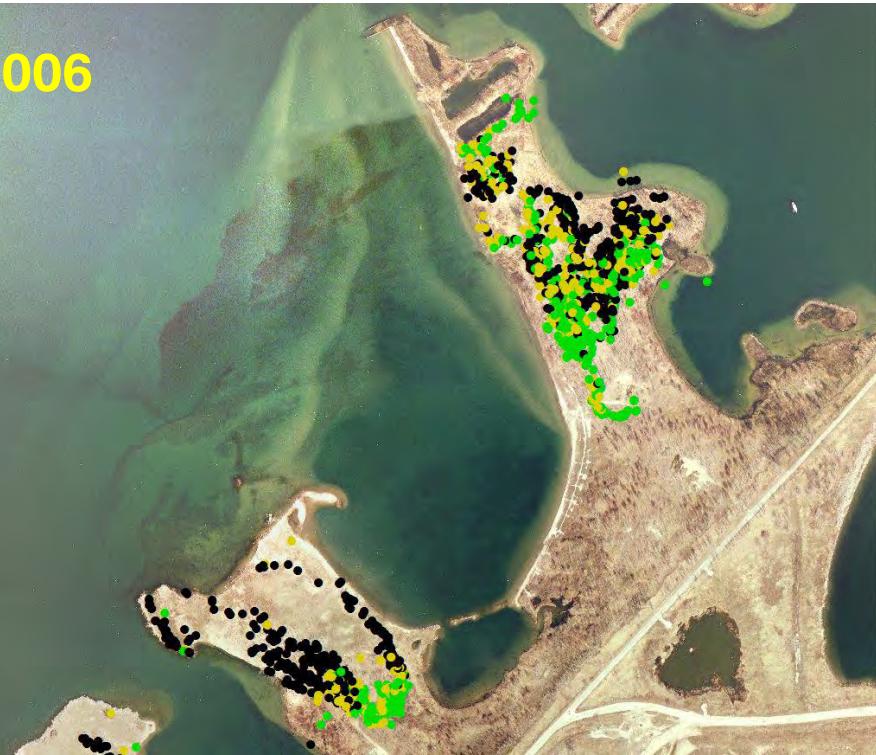
New DCCO nest
trees 2011

NEW DCCO NEST TREES

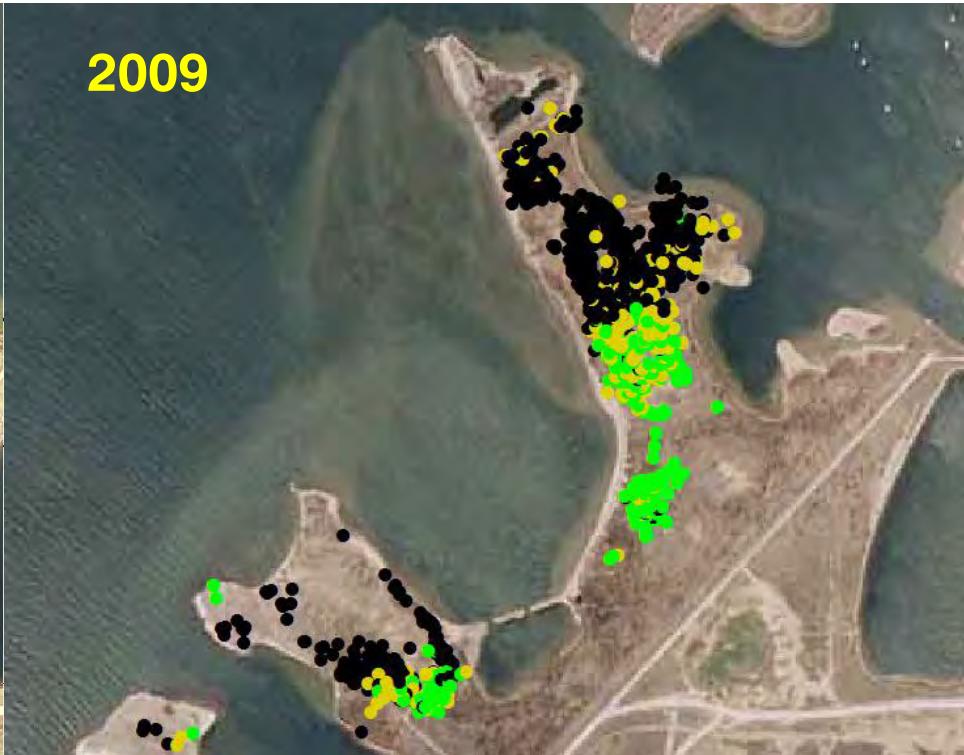
	2010	2011
Peninsula A	-	-
Peninsula B	7	25
Peninsula C	37	23
TOTAL	44	48

The Change in Tree Health between 2006 and 2009

2006

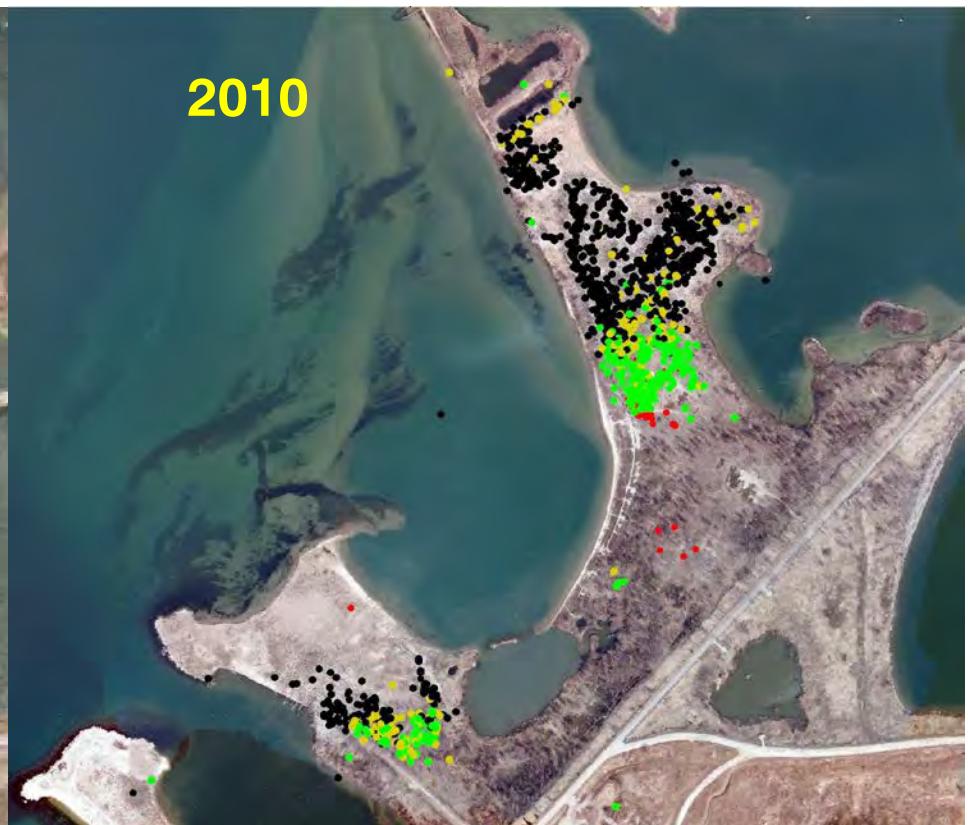
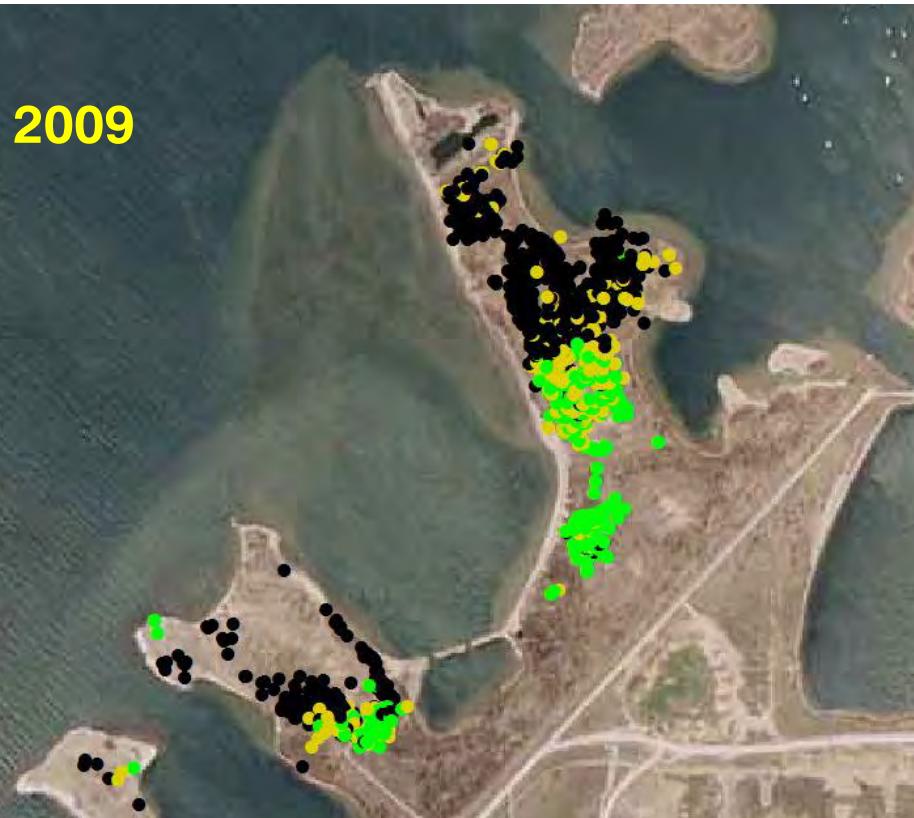


2009



- **Live Trees**
- **Tree in Decline**
- **Dead or Dying Trees**

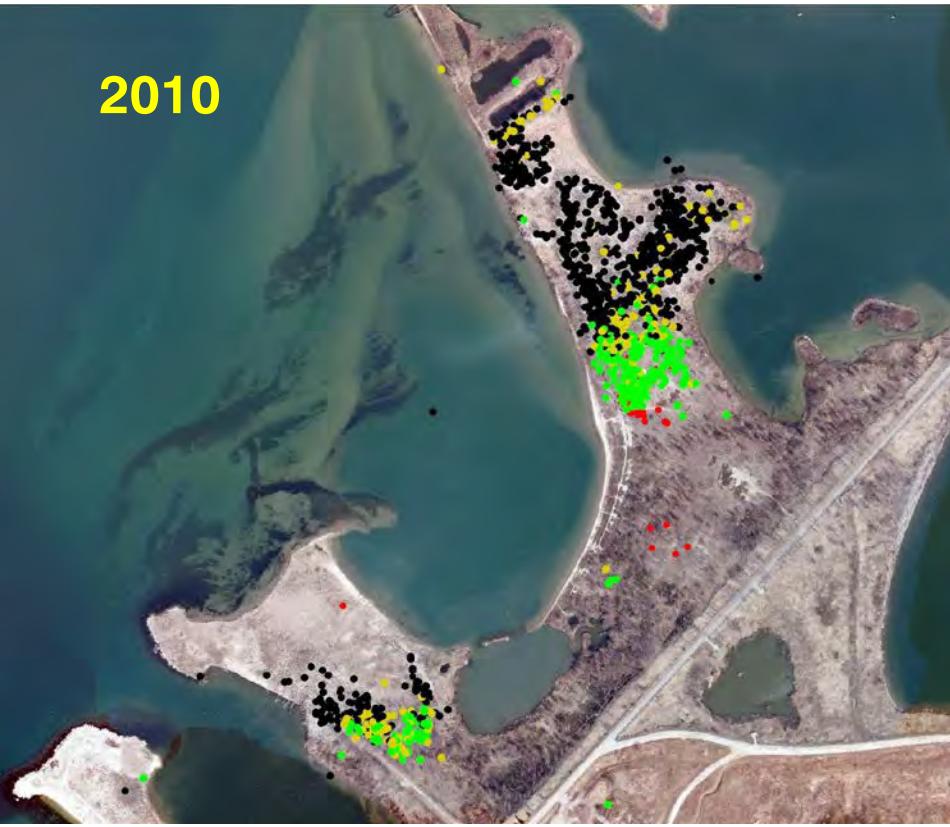
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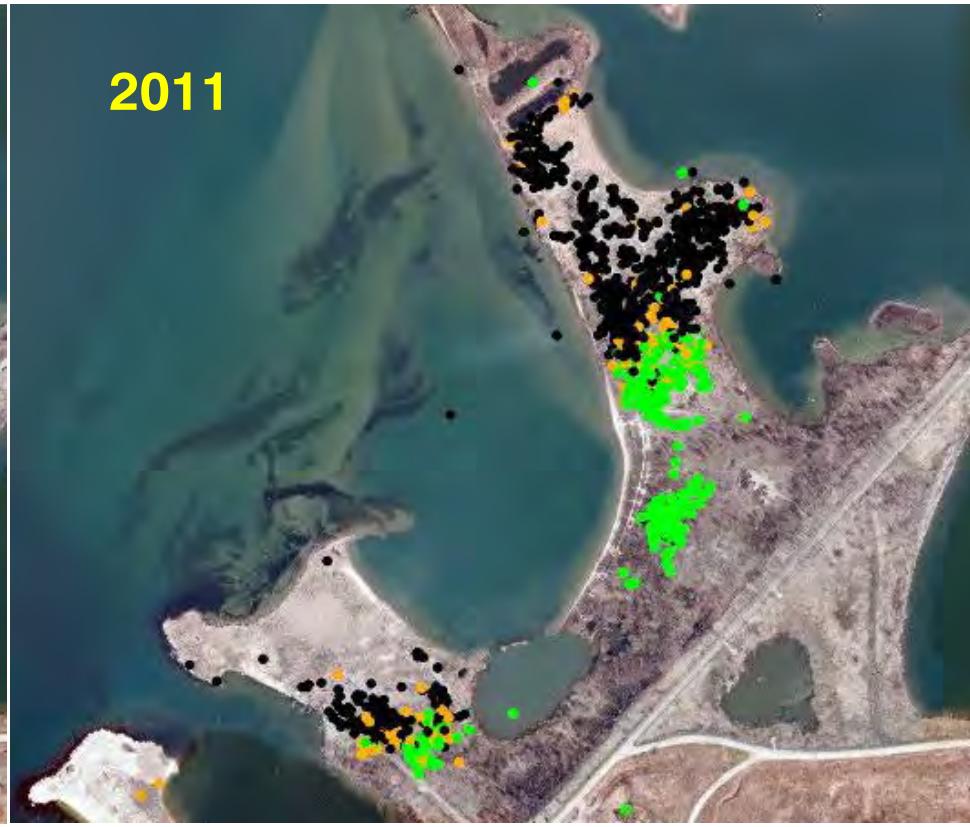
- **Live Trees**
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The Change in Tree Health between 2010 and 2011

2010



2011



- **Live Trees**
- **Tree in Decline**
- **Dead or Dying Trees**

DCCO Nest Tree Occupation

TREES OCCUPIED WITH DCCO

	2009	2010	2011
Peninsula A	1	2	1
Peninsula B	179	162	190
Peninusla C	865	883	885
TOTAL	1045	1047	1076

Peninsula B

- Tree occupancy decreased by 10% in 2010
- Tree occupancy increased by 17% in 2011

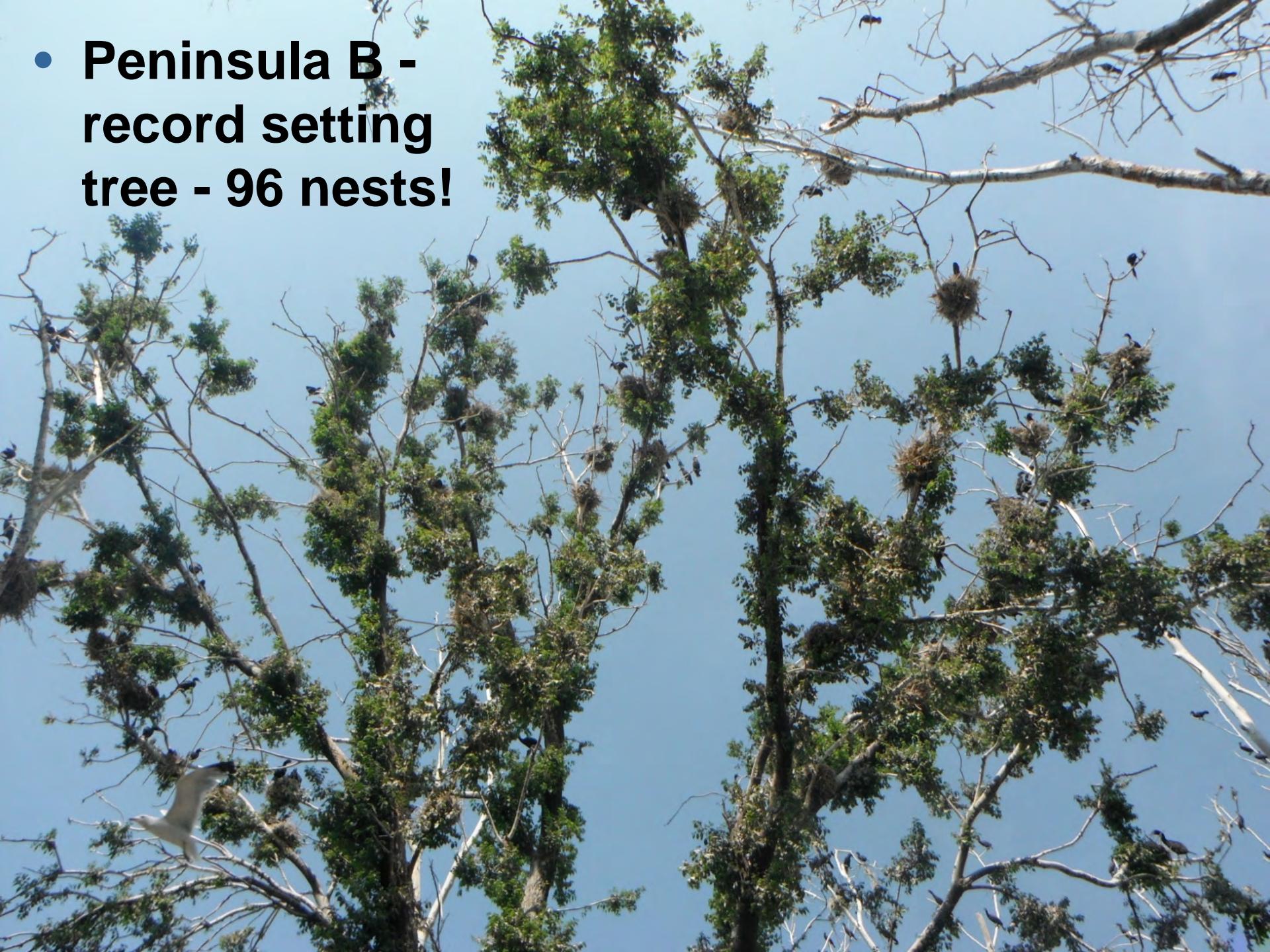
Peninsula C

- Tree occupancy increased by 2% in 2010
- Tree occupancy increased by 0.2% in 2011

Overall

- Tree occupancy increased by 0.2% in 2010
- Tree occupancy increased by 3% in 2011

- Peninsula B - record setting tree - 96 nests!



Strategic Approach 2011

	Peninsula A	Peninsula B	Peninsula C	Peninsula D
Inactive Nest Removal (prior to 2011 breeding season)			*	
Pre-Nesting Deterrents		*	*	*
Post-Breeding Deterrents			*	*
Enhanced Ground Nesting	*	*		
Habitat Restoration	*	*	*	*

Cormorant Conservation Zones



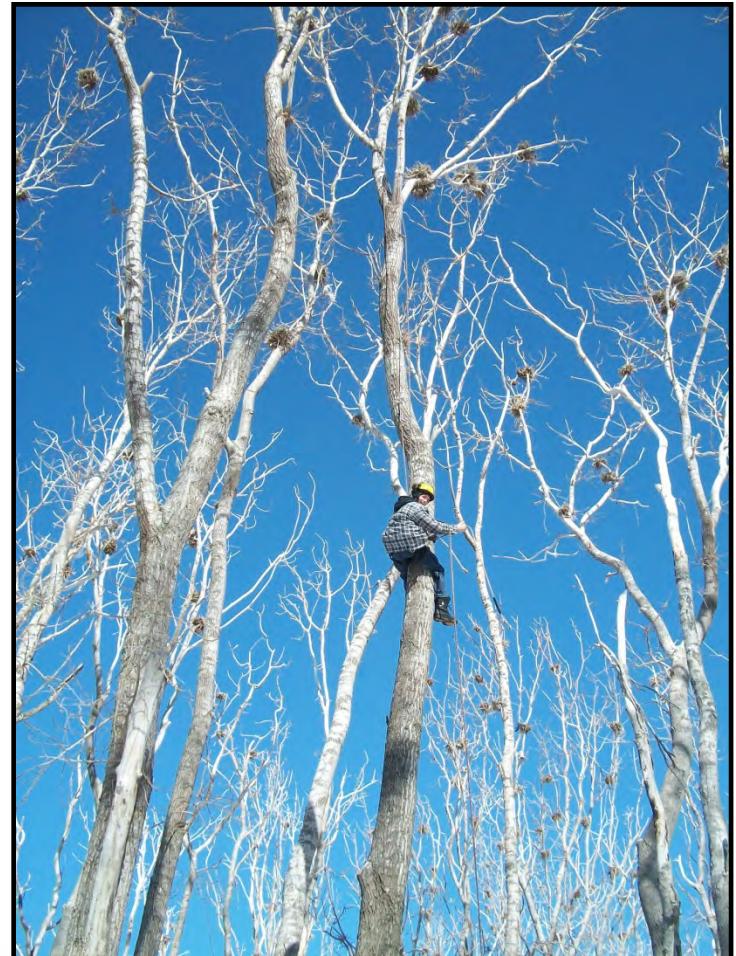


Inactive Nest Removal

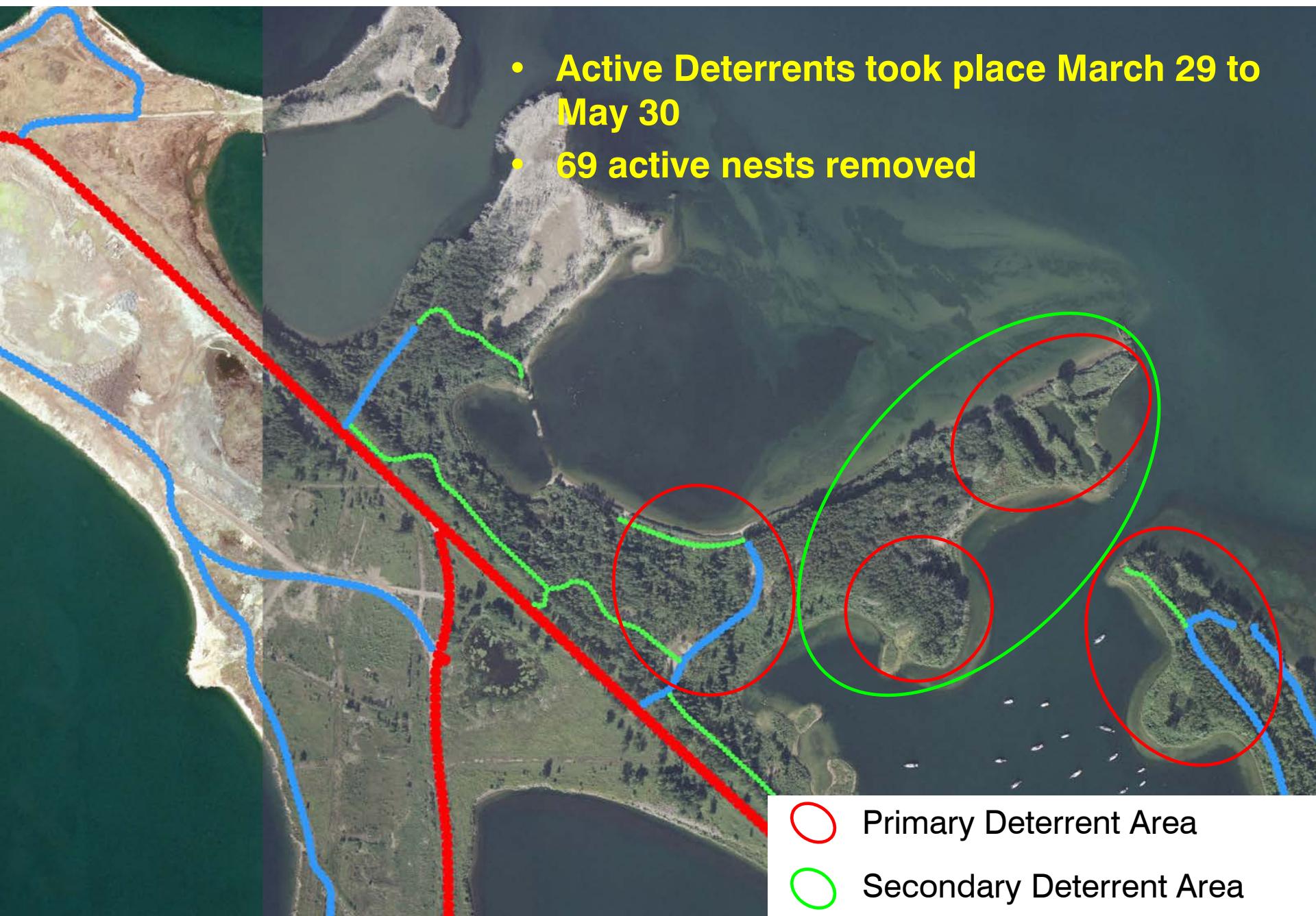
Nests removed prior to breeding season

- 2001-2003 - Professional tree climbers removed inactive nests from Peninsula C
- 2011 Professional tree climber removed 10 inactive nests from 2 trees on Peninsula C
- 2004, 2010 and 2011 nest removal was done with forestry poles

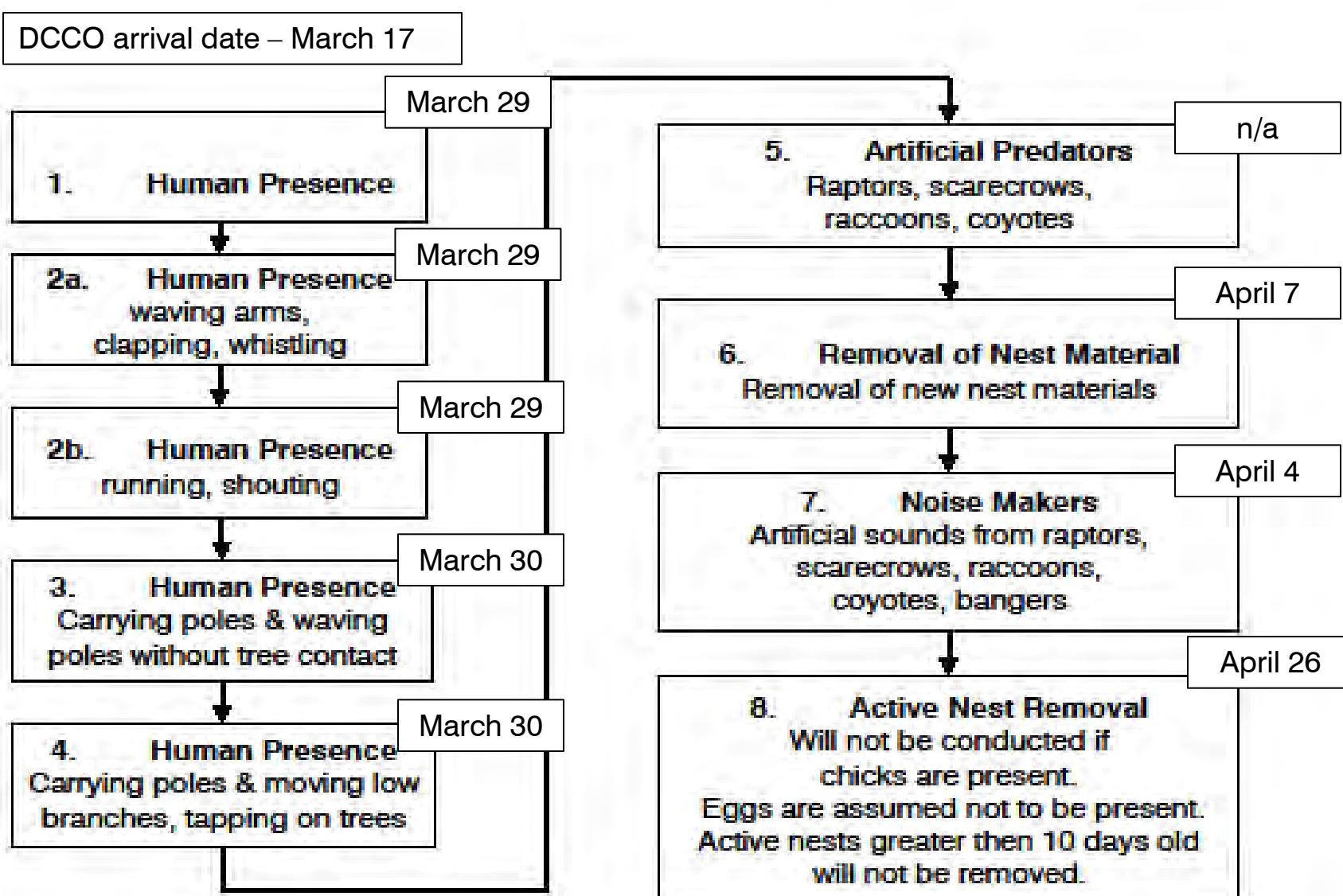
Year	Nests Removed
2001	31
2002	281
2003	647
2004	~400
2010	32
2011	236



Pre-Nesting Deterrents - 2011



2011 Deterrent Escalation



Peninsulas Summary

Peninsula A

- Attraction study continued

Peninsula B

- Structure & downed nests added to east enhancement area
- Decoys cleaned/maintained in early season
- Webcam added
- Tree nesting deterrents not undertaken due to BCNH
- Viewing blind not undertaken due to BCNH
- Tree nesting increased by 62% (481 nests)
- Ground nesting increased by 37% (1237 nests)

Peninsula C

- Tree nesting increased by 5%
- Very late nesting observed



Cormorant Web Cam

www.trca.on.ca/birdcam



G.Fraser



Ground Nests at TTP

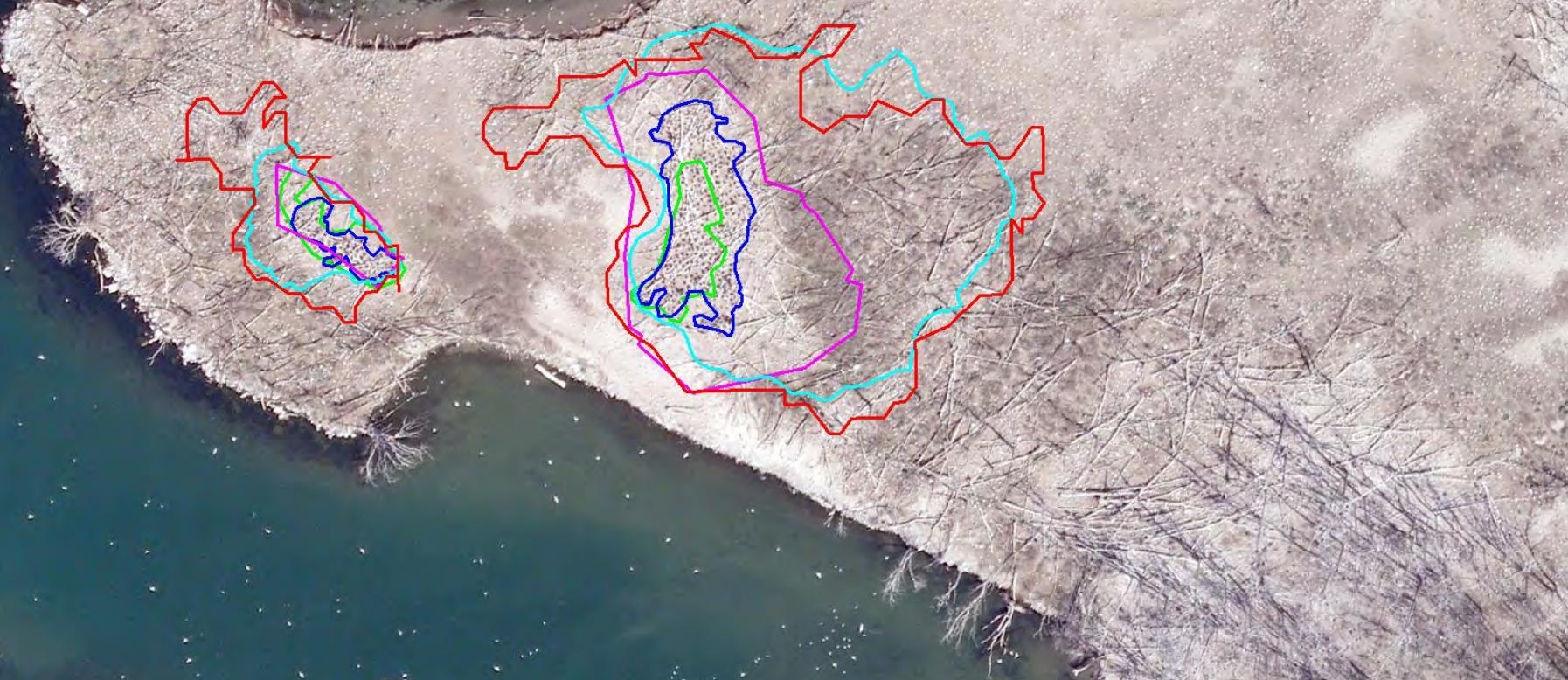
2005 = 180m² & 139m² / 872 nests

2007 = 394m² & 83m² / 1302 nests

2009 = 1327m² & 180m² / 1957 nests

2010 = 2622m² & 319m² / 3310 nests

2011 = 3025m² & 559m² / 4547 nests



2011 Season Summary

- Prevented expansion onto Peninsula D
- Ground nests increased by 351% from 2008 (from 15% of the total colony in 2008 to 40% of the total colony in 2011); stakes being used
- Tree nests increased on Peninsulas B and C
- Webcam added to Peninsula B
- Viewing blind added to Peninsula C
- BCNH holding steady



G. Fraser



Gail

2012 Season

- Remove inactive nests on Peninsula B and C
- Continue with ground nest enhancements/attraction experiment on Peninsulas A and B
- Continue with active deterrents as in 2011
OR
- Discontinue active deterrents within nesting areas, but maintain deterrents to prevent expansion and adapt strategy to include deterrents if BCNH do not return to Peninsulas B or C



Authority Board

Friday March 30th, 2012

Black Creek Pioneer Village

1000 Murray Ross Pkwy, Downsview



Photo by: G. Fraser



12th Annual Spring Bird Festival

**Saturday May 12, 2012 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
International Migratory Bird Day**

- Early bird hikes
- Baillie Bird-a-thon
- Bird banding demonstrations
- Children's activities
- Specialized workshops
- Educational displays
- **Colonial Waterbird Hike**





Thank you!

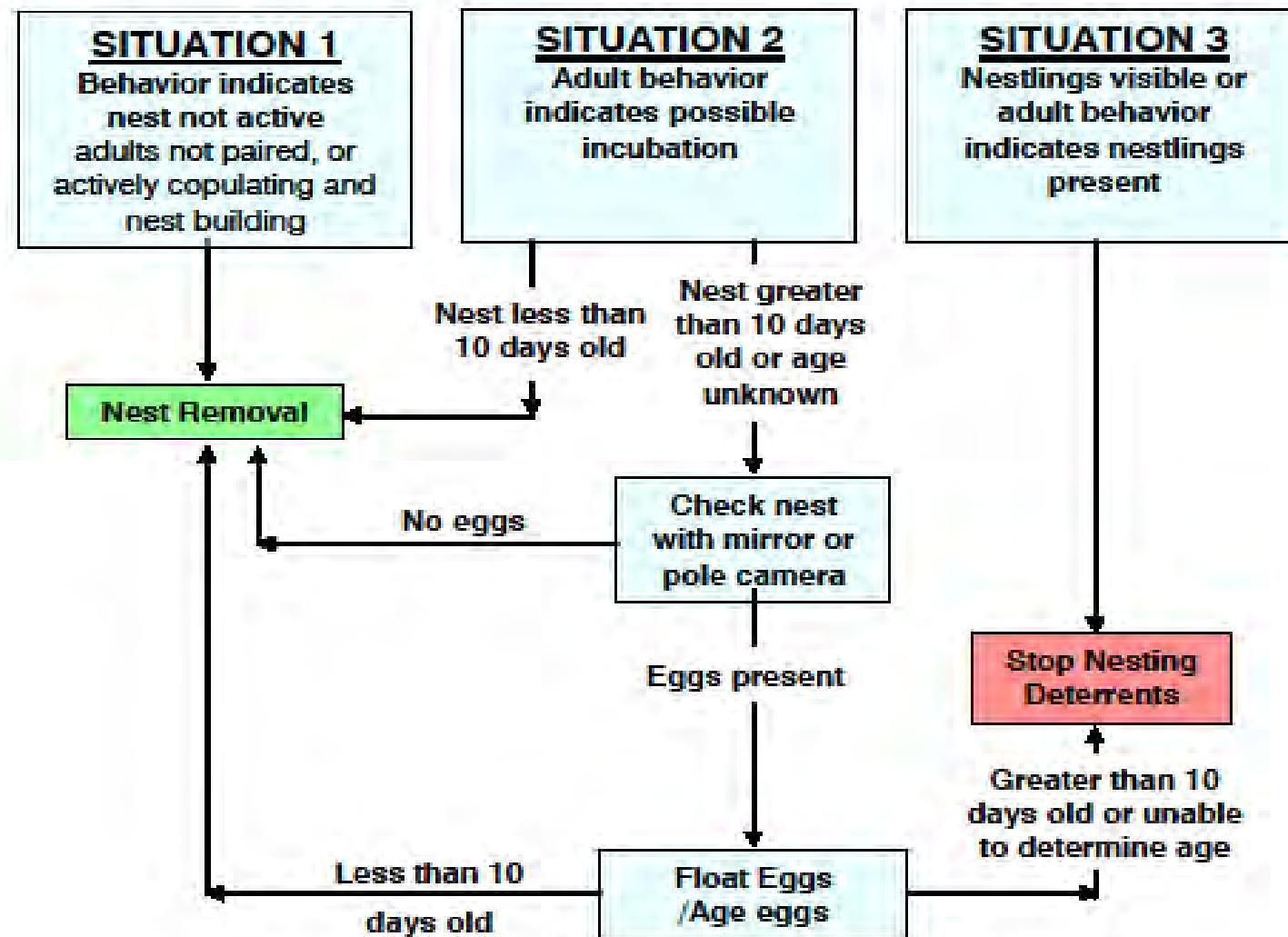
 **TORONTO AND REGION
Conservation**
for The Living City



TommyThompsonPark

Toronto's Urban Wilderness

Active Nest Removal Flow Chart



Post-Breeding Deterrents

- Least intrusive methods favoured
- Techniques will escalate if necessary



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

