

CORMORANT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING #7

Thursday February 11, 2010

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

Metro Hall, Room 302, 55 John Street, Toronto

FINAL MEETING NOTES

Attendees:

Ralph Toning, TRCA

Karen McDonald, TRCA

Andrea Luger, TRCA

Gail Fraser, York University

Ilona Feldmann, York University

Paul Scott, Aquatic Park Sailing Club

Ainslie Willock, Canadians for Snow Geese*

Patrick Hubert, Ministry of Natural Resources

John Carley, Friends of the Spit

Lynne Freeman, Toronto Ornithological Club

Sarah Melamed, University of Toronto

Aaron Hall, University of Toronto

(*Denotes member of Cormorant Defenders International)

These notes reflect the general nature of the meeting discussion. If there are errors or omissions, please contact A. Luger at aluger@trca.on.ca or 416-661-6600 ext. 5772.

Comments contained herein reflect the opinion of the individual and do not necessarily reflect the position of the organization they represent.

1. Welcome and Introductions

R. Toning welcomed the group and everyone introduced themselves. A. Hall and S. Melamed, students of M. Gross from the University of Toronto, attended the meeting as observers. There were a few regrets to the meeting; however, TRCA will arrange to go over the presentation with absent members as requested. Since the development of the original management strategy, Advisory Group meetings have been held twice a year; a meeting in February to outline the plan for the current year's strategy, and again in December to review data collected during the field season.

At the meeting this evening, comments from meeting #6 will be addressed and a discussion will be held regarding the 2010 management plans, upon which the strategy will be formulated, presented to the board and implemented. Information concerning the board meeting will be circulated in the next few weeks. Errors and omissions from meeting notes #6 were reviewed, then the notes were officially adopted. They will be posted on the cormorant website next week.

K. McDonald invited the group to attend the Tommy Thompson Park Spring Bird Festival scheduled for Saturday May 8, 2010. Many great activities are planned. The colonial waterbird

aspect of the festival will be run a bit differently this year than in previous years. This year a colonial waterbird hike will be offered in the afternoon and the group will hike down to the tip of Peninsula D where they will have the opportunity to view the DCCO colony through spotting scopes, rather than going to the periphery of the colony as in previous years. If the BCNH return in 2010, this new route will reduce disturbance to their colony.

R. Toningier informed the group that Dr. J. Quinn, a professor at McMaster University who has done significant work with the DCCO colony in Hamilton Harbour, will be joining the group as another academic representative with extensive colonial waterbird expertise. Unfortunately due to scheduling conflicts he sent his regrets for this evening. TRCA will meet with J. Quinn to review previous work and discuss the plans for 2010. As presented at meeting #6, most of the BCNH colony abandoned nesting attempts by mid-breeding season and at the time of the meeting TRCA did not know if the birds had nested elsewhere. R. Toningier recently learned from J. Quinn that BCNH were observed in trees at an inactive Stelco Plant in Hamilton in 2009. It is possible that some or all of these birds could have been from TTP.

R. Toningier referred to comments from meeting #6 regarding the rate of tree decline on the peninsulas. He clarified that these data have not yet been published, but that tree dieback has been calculated for Peninsulas A and B. Anecdotally, dieback on Peninsula C has occurred at twice the rate that it occurred on Peninsulas A and B. Peninsula A was the first to be heavily colonized and it was approximately ten years before significant tree dieback was observed. G. Fraser asked if there are data linking tree mortality to DCCO. R. Toningier replied that TRCA has wanted to analyze the tree health data in relation to nest count data, for a long time. TRCA is hoping to publish the data collaboratively. TRCA has also recorded tree loss due to other factors such as beaver. R. Toningier also noted that the control trees for the health study have been lost due to DCCO nesting.

G. Fraser then commented that some of the trees on Peninsula C may be a liability outside of the nesting season and inquired whether signs have been posted to inform the public of the hazard. R. Toningier replied that TRCA carries out hazard tree management and monitoring along trails. G. Fraser also raised a concern regarding removal of vegetative materials from the park and the transfer of European Fire Ants in the vegetation. She suggested that a notice be posted on the bulletin board to inform people about the possibility of spreading these ants. R. Toningier stated that cutting and removal of vegetation is illegal and that this information was being considered in the development of the park signage. He also noted that TRCA's only defense against people removing most vegetation is to prosecute them under trespassing legislation.

2. Review of 2009 Data

R. Toningier provided a brief review of the 2009 data for the Advisory Group members who were absent at meeting #6. The DCCO population increase seen in 2009 is attributed solely to an increased population in the ground nesting colony on Peninsula B. There were fewer trees occupied in 2009 than in 2008 and although ground nesting enhancements were provided on Peninsula A, they were not occupied by DCCO. Deterrents were successful at preventing DCCO expansion onto Peninsula D and the unoccupied trees on the tip of Peninsula C. At the time of the nest count, typically peak during the last week of May, BCNH numbered 584 nests; however most of the BCNH colony had abandoned their nests by mid-June with an estimate of less than 50 pairs persisting throughout the end of the season.

L. Freeman asked if BCNH attempted a second nesting. G. Fraser replied that multiple nesting attempts were made but they were largely unsuccessful and were heavily disturbed by a high level of raccoon activity. L. Freeman asked what could explain the raccoon activity. G. Fraser responded that she feels it was raccoon persistence and specialization. R. Toningner continued by noting the significant spatial shift in the BCNH nest area makes the BCNH more susceptible to raccoon predation. Early in the breeding season BCNH left the traditional nesting grounds and moved into the new area, sandwiched between their old habitat and park use. This new area does not provide optimal habitat: it is closer to public trails; the canopy is much more open and the wind through the area can be much stronger. It is possible that even without predation BCNH would have experienced significant nest failures.

Referring to a slide in the presentation, G. Fraser commented that the use of 50 as the BCNH population for 2009 is a misrepresentation because that number is not from the same time period that the previous data were collected. R. Toningner confirmed that in other presentations he has changed the value back to that collected during peak nest counts the first week of June, but that as he assembled this presentation he mistakenly used an older slide. J. Carley asked what the failure rate has been in previous years. K. McDonald replied that failure rates are not known as only one peak count is completed each season and that the colony is anecdotally observed through the rest of the season. J. Carley asked why a second count was performed in 2009. K. McDonald replied that during peak nest counts the BCNH were in the process of colonizing the new area and it was not yet the peak period for the new area. By the second nest count in mid-June it was evident that the new colony had been abandoned. G. Fraser added that she has BCNH productivity data from 2007 to 2009.

L. Freeman asked if the increase in predation influenced BCNH to move to a new location. R. Toningner responded that it was a strange year; there were ongoing nesting attempts and by the second count most BCNH on Peninsula C had moved from the traditional nesting area to the new area. L. Freeman referred to the colony on Mugg's Island that moved for unknown reasons. J. Carley asked if the proximity to the beach and human disturbance could have influenced the BCNH. R. Toningner replied that he feels human disturbance may be a significant factor. K. McDonald added that fencing was put up around the whole new nesting colony to restrict public access through the area; however it was not possible to restrict people entering the colony area from the water.

R. Toningner reminded the group that it has been clear from the start of this advisory process that management measures are not based on BCNH, but forest cover. BCNH have always been stochastic at TTP, but the colony size has not dropped below 500+ nests since the large shift to TTP in the mid-1980s. In 2000 the TTP BCNH colony represented 30 per cent of the Canadian population. G. Fraser commented that she has a huge vested interest in following the fate of BCNH at the site. L. Freeman wondered what where they will nest if suitable habitat is not available. G. Fraser replied that that is a problem with urban colonies.

3. Proposed 2010 Strategic Approach

The Strategic Approach for 2010 (Table 1) is similar to 2009, except for inactive nest removal which will be discussed this evening. Many questions remain to be answered, such as: should DCCO nests be removed from BCNH habitat prior to the nesting season? This could be an effective technique as time and energy are required to build a new nest and the lack of old nests may encourage ground nesting. DCCO Conservation Zones, located on Peninsula A and the tip of Peninsula B, remain the same as 2009.

Table 1: Proposed 2010 Strategic Approach Matrix

Method	Peninsula A	Peninsula B	Peninsula C	Peninsula D
Inactive Nest Removal (prior to 2010 breeding season)			*	
Pre-nesting Deterrents		*	*	*
Post-Breeding Deterrents			*	*
Enhanced Ground Nesting	*	*		
Habitat Restoration	*	*	*	*

Inactive Nest Removal

Inactive nest removal is a technique that was used on Peninsula C when DCCO first started colonizing the peninsula, but has not been undertaken since 2004 when the major expansion occurred. A question to consider is: by removing nests would we potentially be causing DCCO to steal nesting materials from other species?

By removing inactive nests prior to the breeding season, and with the combination of pre-nesting deterrents and ground nest enhancements, the target area should be less appealing to DCCO and the ground nesting area should seem very attractive. A. Willock commented that if the nests are removed from the colony, DCCO will simply go get more material and rebuild. G. Fraser said that nest removal could be done experimentally. R. Toningier replied that not all of the nests would be removed, but that removal would be matched with deterrents focusing on the tip of Peninsula C. A. Willock agreed that it should be an experimental process and results should be measured. K. McDonald assured that monitoring would be continued. G. Fraser said she couldn't do all of the monitoring, she has far too many other experiments to work on. L. Freeman asked why this would be done at all, data from the previous inactive nest removal activities shows that it doesn't work. K. McDonald replied that matched with the enhancements and deterrent activities it could work. Single treatments are ineffective because DCCO become habituated. R. Toningier added that once DCCO put energy into a nest, their fidelity to that nest can be quite strong.

Naturally, DCCO want to be within very close proximity to other DCCO. By removing inactive nests on the tip of Peninsula C, combined with deterrents, the tree canopy will hopefully be preserved. The inactive nest removal data from early 2000s illustrates that the nest expansion rate on Peninsula C was higher at that time than the expansion rate on the other Peninsulas. These data can be reviewed more closely. Also, at that time, the nests were removed and left where they fell. The only deterrence activity was human presence, but it was not consistent or focused. L. Freeman asked what would be done with the nest materials. K. McDonald replied that the nest material would be used in the ground nesting enhancement areas. R. Toningier added the initial ground nest colony on Peninsula B was established in an area where trees were on the ground and ample nest materials were available. Downed nests were used in the

enhancement areas in 2009 (naturally downed nests collected from the colonies during the winter) and will be used again in 2010. G. Fraser commented that the breeding chronology piece is missing. When DCCO are required to build another nest it may delay egg laying up to one week, which is a long time when birds strive to be in sync with the rest of the colony.

A. Hall asked why the inactive nest removal on Peninsula C was discontinued after 2004. R. Toningier responded that tree climbers were used to remove nests when tree health was good. Tree health started to decline and there were simply too many nests after the 2004 breeding season for inactive nest removal to be cost effective. TRCA decided to manage the colony with a light hand as per the TTP Master Plan and pursue colonial waterbird research with academia.

Restoration Activities and Habitat Enhancements

Restoration activities will continue in 2010 with a focus on plantings to delineate areas that are off limits to park users, protect shorelines and improve overall habitat. In addition to the restoration work that was undertaken in 2009, more trees and shrubs will be planted in a portion of the formerly forested area on Peninsula B; at the base of Peninsula B and at the colony edge at the base of Peninsula C.

G. Fraser provided some information about the 2009 ground nest enhancements at meeting #6. By comparing the size of the ground nest colony on Peninsula B between 2005 and 2009, it is evident that there is still room for significant expansion. We need to know why colonies expand and try to mimic this phenomenon. The ground nesting density has not changed much since it was first established; it remains at approximately 0.7 square metres per nest. R. Toningier commented that at the Waterbird Society Annual Meeting a group presented from Alberta where a ground nesting colony with 10,000 breeding pairs in discrete smaller sub colonies had an average distance between nests approximately twice the length of a cormorant neck.

G. Fraser commented that the figure shown in the presentation representing the yearly changes in ground nest colony size is interesting and that if the large colony expands further south-west it will be encountering herbaceous vegetation. R. Toningier replied that the image is deceiving because it is from 2005 and most of the trees in the photo have now fallen. The herbaceous vegetation in this area is dominated by lamb's quarters, which should not restrict the colony expansion. There is stinging nettle toward the base of the Peninsula, which can get quite tall leaving stems that persist through the winter. R. Toningier added that the RGBU colonies tend to trample the vegetation in the early spring and that significant growth typically does not occur until later in the season.

The group working in the Columbia River Estuary presented at the Waterbird Society right before R. Toningier. He said they reported that their enhancements were successful in some places and not in others. While their overall strategy is different than ours, their gained knowledge can be applied. They found that it can take a few years for DCCO to become invested in a breeding site.

G. Fraser will continue her conspecific DCCO ground nest attraction study on Peninsula A in 2010. The access tunnel and blind will be relocated to the other side of the peninsula to improve the colony sightlines and a gate would be added to the tunnel entrance to prevent predators from using it. Last year a remote camera was setup in the tunnel and captured images of various species making use of it. R. Toningier commented on the usefulness of technology to take pictures of the site while we are not there. In 2009, RGBU quickly occupied the tires laid out for DCCO. Was their presence a deterrent to DCCO? Should the RGBU be deterred? G. Fraser confirmed that she will not be deterring RGBU from her study area and she

feels that RBGU may help attract DCCO. She added that she has witnessed DCCO move RBGU out of the way. R. Toninger said J. Quinn has ground nesting gulls beside DCCO and has some experience on this issue. G. Fraser asked if they are HEGU. R. Toninger replied RBGU, HEGU and CATE. The exclusion of gulls will be part of TRCA's experiment, not York University's. TRCA is also considering using DCCO chick decoys to make the site look successful to prospecting DCCOs and would like anyone with ideas for decoy chicks to contact them. There will also be an increased effort in playing audio of DCCO breeding calls and there will be some minor changes to the layout of decoys outside of the York University study area making them denser formation and more consistent in appearance.

Additional ground nest enhancements will be added to Peninsula B in 2010. The perimeter of the existing ground nest colony will be expanded with the addition of downed woody materials, and added structure along with decoys will be used to promote new nesting areas along the eastern side. P. Scott asked if the vegetation is getting in the way of expansion. K. McDonald doesn't think it is since the ground is bare in the spring upon DCCO arrival. R. Toninger added that colonial waterbirds are stochastic in nature. P. Scott then referred to the footprint of the original colony and the extent of the vegetation in the 2009 oblique photograph of the colony. R. Toninger replied that 2009 was a very wet year which could have resulted in heavy vegetation growth abnormal to the site, and that DCCO leave the site by the end of August at the point when vegetation is really starting to expand and grow tall. K. McDonald added that the fallen trees on the peninsula may facilitate the growth of the herbaceous vegetation by creating a micro-climate effect. G. Fraser commented that we must determine the appropriate area to enhance on the east side of Peninsula B. Not all DCCO start nesting and egg laying at the same time, especially with the deterrent activities. The ground nesting area will see the arrival of birds a bit later in the season when the vegetation is starting to get taller, typically the beginning of April. J. Carley asked what kind of structures and where they will be placed. K. McDonald replied that the structural materials will be mainly downed logs and that the targeted enhancement area is a higher elevation, which is what the birds seem to prefer. DCCO are often seen loafing heavily on the sandbar. G. Fraser said it might make sense to build an enhancement area on the west side between the current colony and the eastern high point.

Pre-nesting Deterrents

Pre-nesting deterrents will occur in the same locations as 2009, with the target areas at the tip and base of Peninsula C and Peninsula D. While the deterrents will be primarily focused in these areas, activities may also be carried out at the base of Peninsula B and an expanded area on Peninsula C. A lot of DCCO activity was recorded on the tip of Peninsula C in 2009, and the goal of 2010 will be to make this area much less attractive for nesting and roosting.

Nest removal will occur in the targeted areas. Figure 1 shows the escalation scale proposed for 2010. As in 2009, it is expected that staff will move through the first several levels very quickly in established areas. It is hoped that coupled with nest removal, lower levels will be more effective.

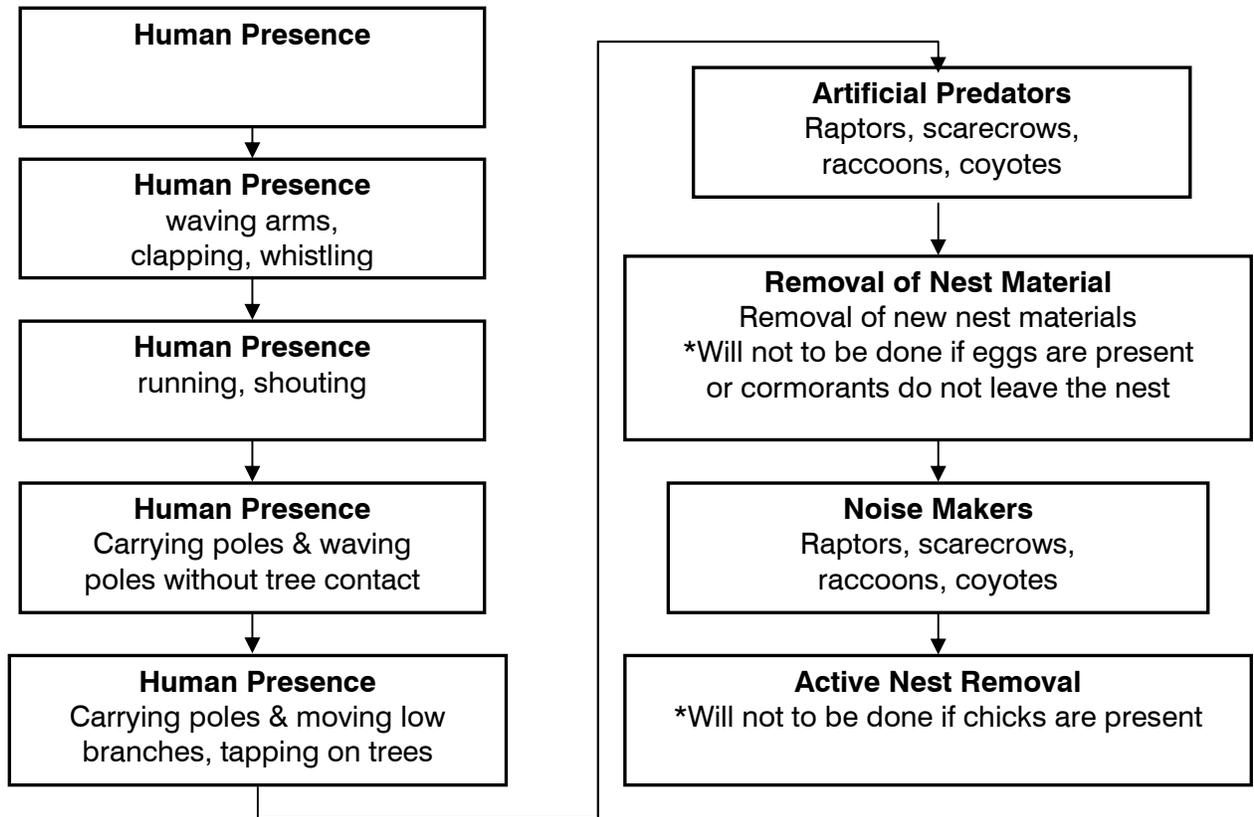


Figure 1: Proposed 2010 Escalation Scale

Active nest removal is something being considered for the target areas. The goal is to remove newly placed nest material before eggs are present. Since the target areas will have all old nests removed in the winter, new nests in these areas should be obvious. TRCA will remove new nests within a certain length of time (to be determined) and treat nests of unknown age very cautiously. This will be an adaptive management technique.

P. Scott asked what the difference is between inactive and active nests. R. Toningier clarified that inactive nests are those that appear not to be occupied, while nests are considered active when a bird is on it or a nearby branch. K. McDonald added that active removal will most likely occur after a weekend when DCCO have had two days to construct a nest without interference. L. Freeman asked where the active nest removal will occur. R. Toningier replied at the tip of Peninsula C. L. Freeman asked why these nests, in an active colony, would be removed. K. McDonald replied that this area was a pre-nesting deterrent area in 2009 and that we want to try to preserve the trees. L. Freeman asked if saving the trees is realistic. K. McDonald responded if all the nests in this area are removed in the winter and deterrents are carried out in the spring then it should be a realistic goal. We want to prevent expansion onto the tip of Peninsula C. During the spring of 2009, nest materials were removed approximately ten times from that area. R. Toningier added that this has been an expanding area in recent years. K. McDonald said we haven't given up hope yet, but we might need to go to the next level of deterrents. L. Freeman said you should just give up hope. G. Fraser commented that the deterrent activities and the ground nesting enhancements are a dual piece – they should be coordinated. K. McDonald said that the strategy is to change the behaviour of DCCO from tree nesting to ground nesting

birds. TRCA is hoping that by deterring DCCO they will realize that they can't easily nest in the target areas and the ground nesting colony will be much more appealing.

R. Toningner noted that the difference between TTP and typical island colonies is that at TTP tree nesting versus ground nesting is a chosen strategy that we don't fully understand. Perhaps it is a security factor. DCCO want to be successful fledging young and must make choices to ensure that success. Protecting the tip of Peninsula C is a long-term commitment and some of the habitat in that area has potential for BCNH nesting. There is significant value in protecting the habitat at tip of Peninsula C. A. Willock asked if BCNH were to nest in that area, would their nests be removed. R. Toningner replied no. A. Willock asked what would happen if DCCO were to follow. K. McDonald responded that TRCA will be deterring, so the area should be unattractive to breeding birds. P. Scott noted that BCNH arrive later in the season. G. Fraser said that chick productivity is lower in trees than on the ground, so sooner or later the ground should start to look more appealing to DCCO.

A. Willock asked why the trees in the target area on Peninsula C are worth saving. K. McDonald replied that the entire stand of trees may no longer be savable, but there are still healthy trees at the very tip and noted that the process is also related to behaviour modification. L. Freeman asked when a nest is considered active. K. McDonald replied that staff will prevent nests from being established in the target area during the week, but that nests could be built and considered active at the end of the weekend when a bird is seen on or very near a new nest. J. Carley asked about removing nests with eggs versus with chicks. R. Toningner replied that the goal is to not remove nests with chicks or eggs, but that there is a risk it could happen. Active nests will only be removed from the target and their removal will be coupled with the other deterrent techniques.

A. Willock asked how long DCCO sit on the nest before eggs are laid. G. Fraser replied that it is variable and depends on when they arrive at the breeding site. K. McDonald asked G. Fraser how long courtship lasts before copulation. G. Fraser said it depends on when courtship starts, the later in the season the shorter the period because it becomes timing more urgent. R. Toningner said the intent is not to destroy nests with eggs, but there is a possibility that it could happen, and we don't want to hide that fact. A rationale for the procedure will be developed and there will be a cutoff point. G. Fraser commented that it will not get to the chick stage. L. Freeman informed the group about Yellow-bellied Sapsucker research carried out by a TOC member that utilized long poles with cameras attached to the ends. R. Toningner stated that TRCA has used similar techniques in the past, long poles with bike mirrors to see into the nests, but that some really high nests are difficult to reach with the apparatus.

L. Freeman asked if there is value to banding. K. McDonald replied we would love to band adults, but tree nesting birds are very difficult to safely capture. R. Toningner added that ground nesting chicks have been banded in the past with aluminum and colour leg bands. Observers in the colonies monitor the birds, but it is impossible to identify individuals without colour leg bands. G. Fraser stated that banding adults on tree nests has been done at other locations using a technique called noose banding. This technique causes substantial disturbance. She has wanted to band adults for the past several years and may attempt banding ground nesting adults this season using a different technique. L. Freeman asked if the other way is to judge by the total number of DCCO. R. Toningner said the peak nest count and those done by G. Fraser and her students in the blind provide the best estimate.

Pre-nesting deterrents being considered for use on Peninsula C include: night and dawn deterrents, raccoon decoys, nest predation mimicry, DCCO distress calls, predator calls,

dancing Santa in a tree, remote control plane, and active and inactive nest removal. The dancing Santa technique is one that J. Quinn has used successfully to deter ground nesting DCCO from displacing HEGU in the Hamilton Harbour. The presence of a bright red dancing Santa, however, does not fit well with the urban wilderness of TTP. There are other techniques that have worked in other places. These techniques are successful because the birds imprint that the areas with deterrents are not suitable breeding grounds.

A. Willock asked for details about nest predation mimicry. R. Tonerger replied that the some nests that are removed could have a raccoon decoy placed in it. G. Fraser added that putting the decoy in is very important. DCCO distress and predator calls will be used in coordination with the nest predation mimicry. Different deterrent techniques work on different days. A. Willock asked if these techniques will be used throughout Peninsula C. R. Tonerger confirmed they will only be used in the target areas. K. McDonald added that deterrents were not required on the base of Peninsula C in 2009. G. Fraser guessed that the public does the deterring for us in that location.

P. Scott asked if all the techniques are new or if some have been used previously. R. Tonerger replied that some have been attempted; the raccoon predation mimicry has not been used yet at TTP. S. Melamed suggested mimicking predators by using scent. R. Tonerger agreed that technique could be used; coyote urine was used as a RBGU deterrent technique in combination with staff dressing up as a coyote and running through the colony. K. McDonald inquired if DCCO have a developed sense of smell and G. Fraser doesn't think they do.

J. Carley asked what permits are required to carry out this work. R. Tonerger replied that there are a couple of possibilities. Nest removal and destruction will likely require a letter or permit from the MNR, but under protection of property legislation a landowner can remove a threat from the premises. TRCA will need to discuss the requirements with the MNR and obtain whatever permits are required. P. Hubert confirmed that a permit would be required during active nest removal. G. Fraser has permits to band DCCO from CWS.

Post-breeding Deterrents

Post-breeding deterrents will most likely be lower on the escalation scale than the pre-nesting deterrents. DCCO will be deterred out of target areas, the tip of Peninsula C and Peninsula D, in the post-breeding season. The sandbar off Peninsula B is an important loafing site, and the adjacent area has potential to become a nesting site in the future. P. Scott asked why deterrents will only occur on the tip of Peninsulas C and on Peninsula D. R. Tonerger replied those are the locations where they loaf. At this point in the season they do not seem to roost heavily in the colony core. P. Scott clarified that post-breeding deterrents will not be occurring at the base of Peninsula C. K. McDonald confirmed that is not a typical loafing area and deterrents will not occur there unless required.

BCNH

R. Tonerger then discussed BCNH. TRCA would like to understand the significance of the large scale abandonment of 2009 and the stochastic nature of BCNH nesting at TTP. We also hope to work with other organizations and researchers to help understand the Lake Ontario BCNH population. TTP was the single largest colony on the north shore of Lake Ontario. We need to get a better understanding about the raccoon population at the park. We are still concerned about the illegal releases and hope to engage in a mark and release program to expose hotspots and specialized raccoons preying BCNH. R. Tonerger will obtain necessary permits to live trap raccoons, but will need to collaborate with York University's animal care committee regarding marking the raccoons and the necessary permit requirements.

Predator guards will be installed on BCNH trees to reduce nest predation and we will work with other professionals and academia to determine the best enhancements for the site to attract nesting BCNH. P. Scott asked if the use of predator guards will be expanded. R. Toningner replied the use will be expanded in core areas to get a better handle on productivity, but it all depends on what happens in the spring. G. Fraser added that it's an important part of her research and it will be good to follow up after the significant predation in 2009. Raccoons are not the only threat to BCNH, European fire ants may also be a cause of nest abandonment. G. Fraser wants to gain a better understanding of the impact of the ants and has a student working on a project. R. Toningner agreed the ants are likely impacting all colonial waterbirds.

S. Melamed offered to make DCCO chick decoys as she has experience making props for theater. One consideration is they must be resistant to the outdoors and DCCO guano.

4. Wrap-Up

R. Toningner stated that TRCA will take the feedback from this meeting and will develop the 2010 strategy, form it into an action plan and present it to the Authority Board. Meeting notes will be circulated by the end of the month and we want to make sure everyone have the opportunity to comment. Please send TRCA any additional comments as soon as possible. A. Willock asked if the Advisory Group will have a chance to review the strategy before it is submitted to the board and then asked for a timeline. R. Toningner responded that yes, the draft strategy will be available for review within the next few weeks.

K. McDonald added the board meeting is March 26th, and the communication must be submitted 2 weeks in advance, so it should be available by the first half of the second week of March. R. Toningner then told the group that an e-mail summarizing the important dates leading up to the board meeting will be sent out on February 17th and that the availability of the strategy will be committed at that time. A. Willock told the group she will make notes about tonight's meeting for J. Woodyer and L. White. She also added that it is to the advantage of TRCA to have the Advisory Groups' comments prior to going to the Board. R. Toningner concluded the meeting and thanked everyone for coming.