

Tommy Thompson Park Owl Viewing and Reporting Policy

Tommy Thompson Park (TTP) is located on the Leslie Street Spit, a man-made peninsula which extends 5 km into Lake Ontario. TTP has been designated a globally significant *Important Bird Area* and an *Environmentally Significant Area*.

TTP is open to the public weekends and holidays from 5:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and weekday evenings from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Ten (10) species of owls have been recorded at TTP. Some species are regular winter visitors, but other rarer species arrive during times of food shortage in their northern ranges. Regardless of species, many individuals experience stress during the winter months which can be exacerbated by increased and concentrated attention by birdwatchers and photographers. Diurnal owls (owls that hunt during the day) need to be left alone so they can successfully hunt. Nocturnal owls (owls that hunt at night) need to be left alone so they can rest, to be ready to hunt at night. If an owl does not have the energy to successfully hunt, it is essentially a dead owl.

To protect wildlife and ensure the park's ecological integrity, the following policies will be enforced:

- Pets are not permitted in the park.
- Stay on designated trails and do not trample or remove vegetation, including dead vegetation.
- When observing or photographing owls stay at least twelve (12) meters away.
- Observe owls individually or as a very small group; move slowly and whisper.
- Do not linger around an owl for more than a few minutes.
- Do not intentionally disturb owls or cause them to change their behaviour.
- Do not follow an owl if it flies away.
- When photographing owls never use flash.
- Baiting owls for any purpose is strictly prohibited.
- The use of sound devices (recordings, prey calls, etc.) is strictly prohibited.
- Do not report owl sightings on the internet or birding hotlines.
- If you see anyone disturbing owls or other wildlife call the TTP staff line (416-990-8058 during public open hours) or the TRCA general line (416-661-6600 press "0" for immediate assistance). Wildlife harassment can also be reported to the Ministry of Natural Resources at 1-877-TIPS-MNR.