Control of Gulls in the Upper St. Lawrence River

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Abstract

The enormous increase in the breeding population of Ring-billed Gulls on the Great lakes and upper St. Lawrence River (USLR) since the early 1960s resulted in the decline of the breeding population of Common Terns because the larger gulls arrive earlier on the colony sites and usurp traditional tern nesting areas. Natural nesting sites are lost and often the birds move to small artificial sites. Management action at Ice Island near Mallorytown Landing has proven successful in excluding the gulls and restoring the island as a tern colony. The gulls also impact the natural vegetation of the nesting sites through acidic defecation, trampling and pulling. These actions lead to the death of most of the natural vegetation and a tendency for the islands to lose their thin layers of soil. The come-back of the Double-crested Cormorant was first hailed as a post contaminant period success story, only to become one of the most controversial species in the Great Lakes region. The cormorants now nest on several islands in the USLR between Cornwall and Kingston. Colonization of further islands will likely occur leading to the further displacement of colonial waterbird nesters such as gulls and terns, and the disappearance of some of the island's vegetation within a few years. In order to maintain Common Tern colonies at natural vegetated sites in the USLR, an on-going program to control or discourage nesting of both Ring-billed Gulls and Double-crested Cormorants may be needed.

Tall Grass Prairie and Savannah ANSI Theme Study

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Abstract

The OMNR Parks and Protected Areas System is designed to ensure the long-term sustainability of Ontario's ecological diversity. In southern Ontario, this is accomplished through of the establishment of provincial parks with representative natural heritage features, and indirectly through the designation of Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs) for those areas not represented in parks. It is recognized that this system has under-represented some types of biologically diverse, specialized habitats, including Tallgrass Prairie and Savannah. After conducting a background review of existing information along with supplementary fieldwork, a gap analysis of Tallgrass Prairie and Savannah remnants was conducted for southern Ontario. Occurrences of prairie and savannahs were stratified by Ecological Site District, and further

subdivided by physiographic region. The best examples of each vegetation type were identified in each physiographic region and ecodistrict, and if minimum size and quality targets were met, identified as candidate ANSIs. The purpose of this analysis was to identify viable prairie and savannah remnants that fill the gaps in representation of these important ecological communities. A report which reviews the occurrence of Tallgrass Prairie and Savannah in Ontario, describes the gap analysis, summarizes natural features and species by site, and includes checksheets and mapping of candidate ANSIs, is nearing completion.

A Conservation Blueprint for Terrestrial Biodiversity in the Great Lakes

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Abstract

The Canadian portion of the Great Lakes ecoregion contains some of the largest and most intact natural landscapes in the ecoregion, although the southern Ontario portion has some of the most dramatically altered of Great Lakes landscapes. Some of the continent's most significant forests, alvars, cliffs, talus, fens and bogs are located here. The Great Lakes ecoregion is also one of the few areas of species endemism in glaciated North America. Significantly, there is no basin-wide, site-specific overview on the variety and extent of natural heritage resources in this important area, or an analysis of the geography of its biodiversity and its conservation priorities. The Nature Conservancy of Canada has partnered with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to analyse biodiversity across a number of spatial scales. A GIS-based analysis was undertaken to identify areas on the landscape to fill the gaps in representation of ecological systems and rare species of the current protected areas network in the province.