

Double-crested Cormorants: Overview

Francie Cuthbert

Dept. Fisheries, Wildlife & Conservation Biology
U Minnesota-Twin Cities



- Migrates fall and spring
- Minnesota has both breeding and migrating birds

Public Concerns:

Exclusively eats fish ~(1 lb/day)

Consumes about 1 pound fish/day

Nests/roosts in dense colonies

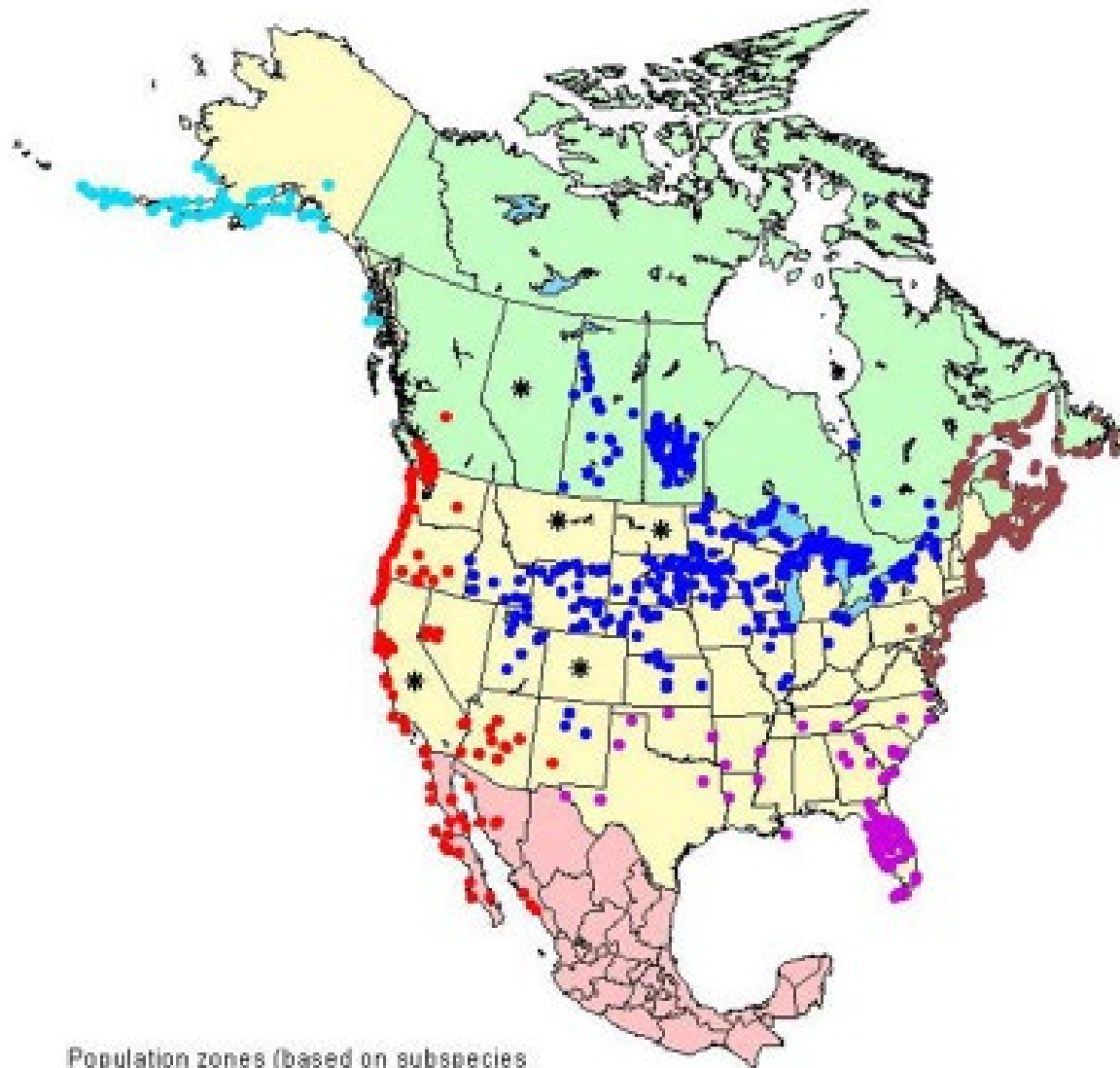
Waste kills vegetation and smells

Physical appearance



May nest on ground or in trees; only roost in trees





Population zones (based on subspecies distribution and geographic boundaries)

- Zone 1: Alaska (*P.a. cinctatus*)
- Zone 2: Pacific Coast (*P.a. albociliatus*)
- Zone 3: Interior U.S. and Canada (*P.a. auritus*)
- Zone 4: Southern U.S. (*P.a. floridanus*)
- Zone 5: Northeast Atlantic (*P.a. auritus*)
- ★ Colony locations not available

**Breeding
Distribution of
DCCO in North
America, 1970-
2000, Wires et
al. 2001**

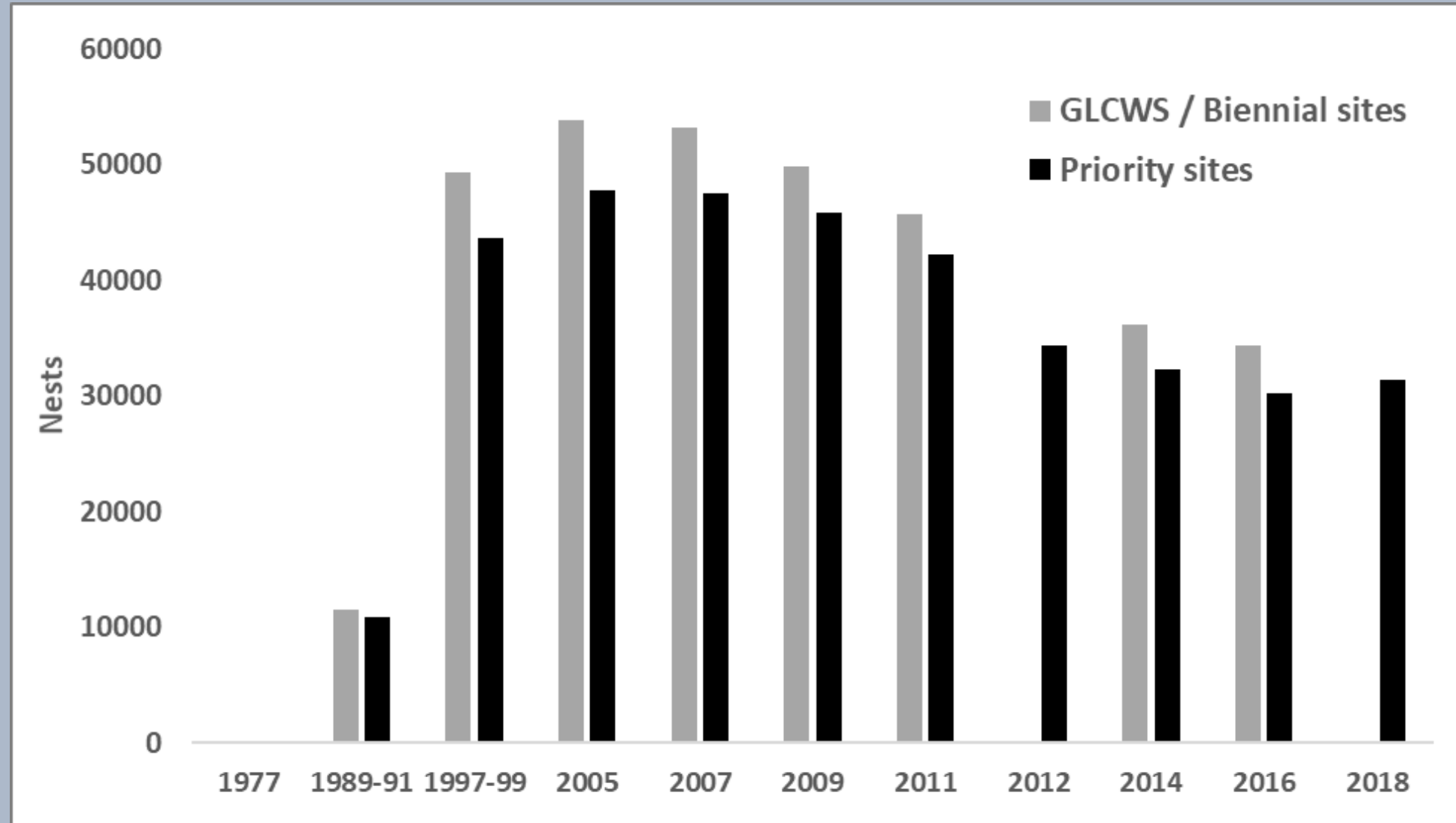
Methods: Ground Counts



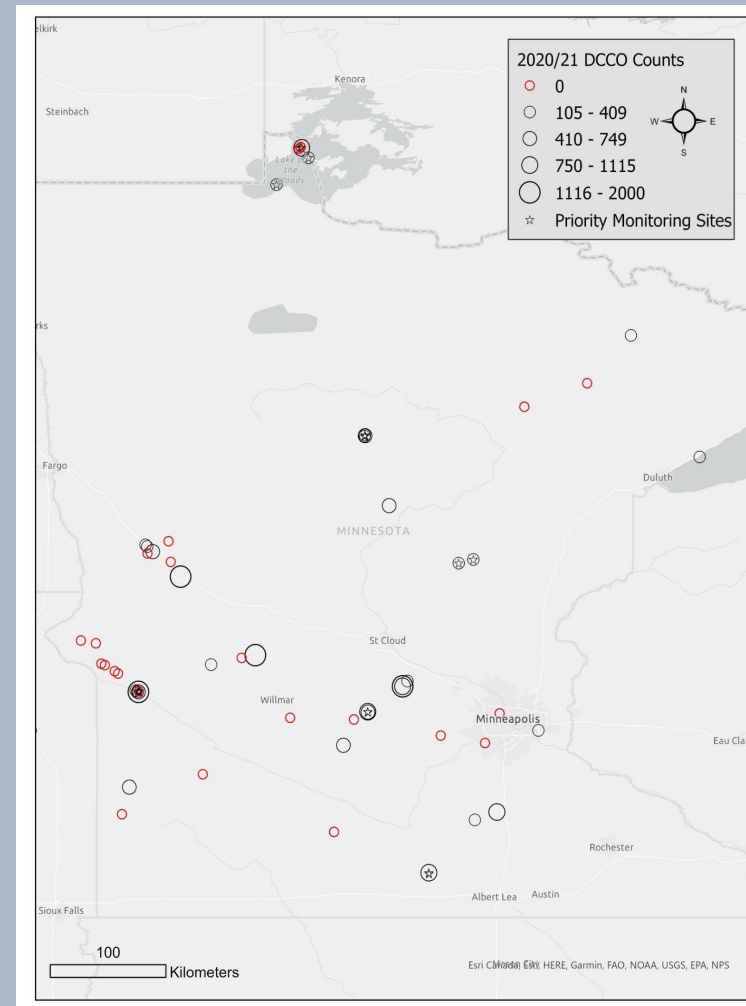
Aerial estimates of nesting cormorants can be made from small aircraft and also using drones



US Great Lakes Double-crested Cormorant Monitoring 1977 – 2018.



Distribution and estimated number of nesting pairs of Double-crested Cormorant (DCCO) across 53 sites surveyed in **Minnesota** in 2020/21



Unknowns about DCCOs and Augusta Lake

Numbers and dates of use
Are they nesting/roosting
Did birds kill trees
Did high water kill trees
How do DCCOs affect water quality
Where do birds go during day

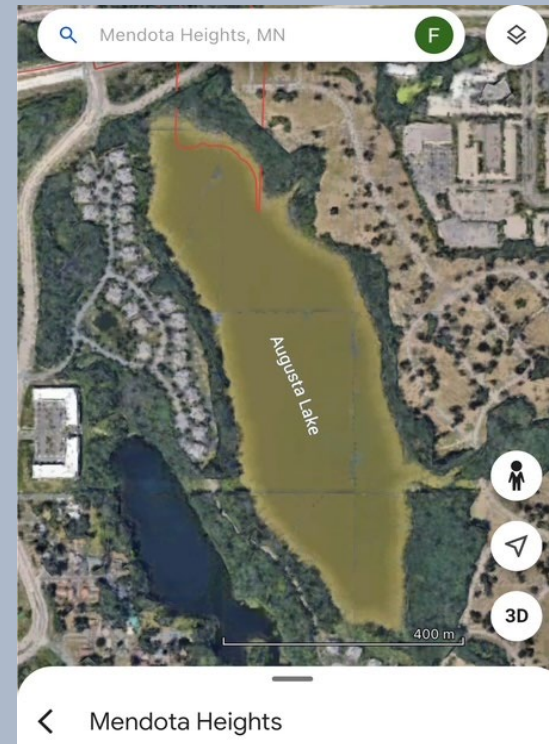


Photo from Google Earth 7/12/24