

Philopatry, roosting and dispersal of Great Egrets from Southern Ontario...with a NY/NJ Connection.

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*Harbor Herons and Waterbirds of Greater
NY/NJ Harbor Working Group*

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Staten Island, NY



Objectives

- To assess long-term philopatry at one colony
- To investigate roosting habits during the post-breeding period
- To demonstrate connectivity among the breeding colony, migratory roosts and wintering grounds
- To announce a NYC-NJ Harbour roost-finding BLITZ in September 2012

Locations of breeding colonies - 2011



240 km

Image NASA
Image IndianaMap Framework Data
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Image © 2008 TerraMetrics

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Wing-tagged Great Egrets



Fig. 4: Percentage of banded GREGs Resighted (during 2004-2011, N=124 Individuals) on Nottawasaga Island by Year of Banding

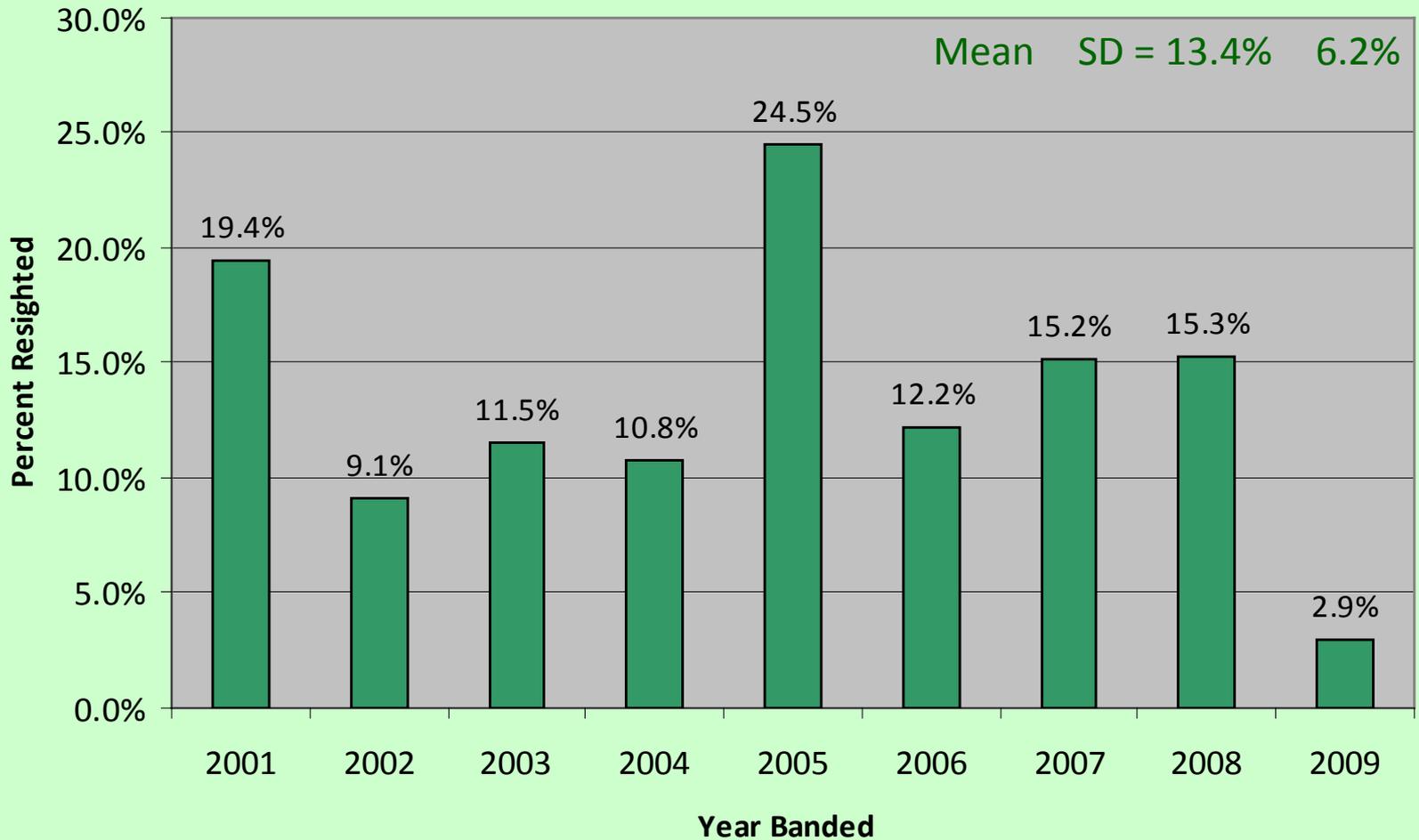
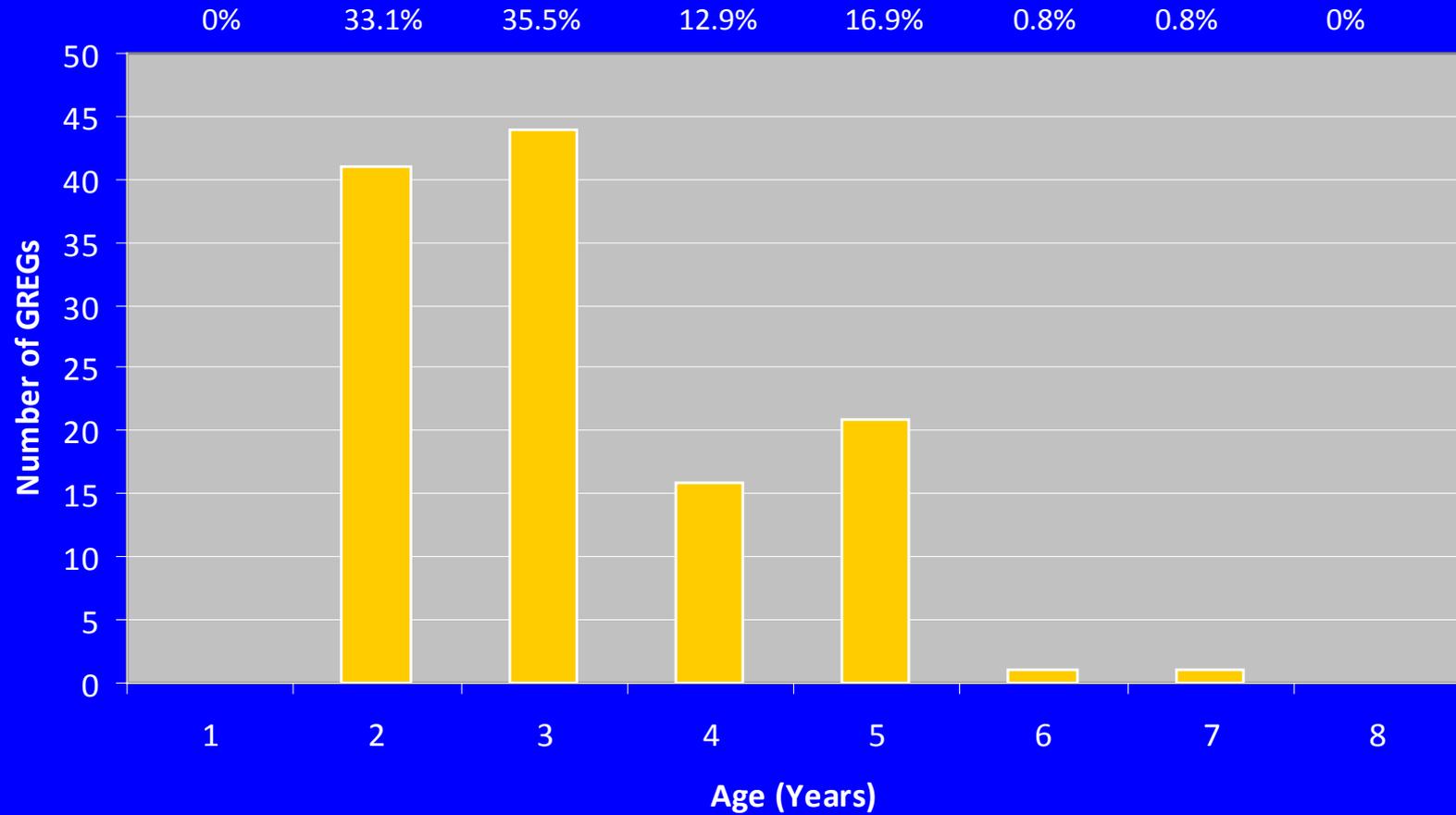


Fig. 3: Age of GREGs at First Observation on Nottawasaga Island (N=124 Individuals)



**Fig. 5: Number of Years Individual GREGs Observed at Nottawasaga
(N=124 Individuals)**

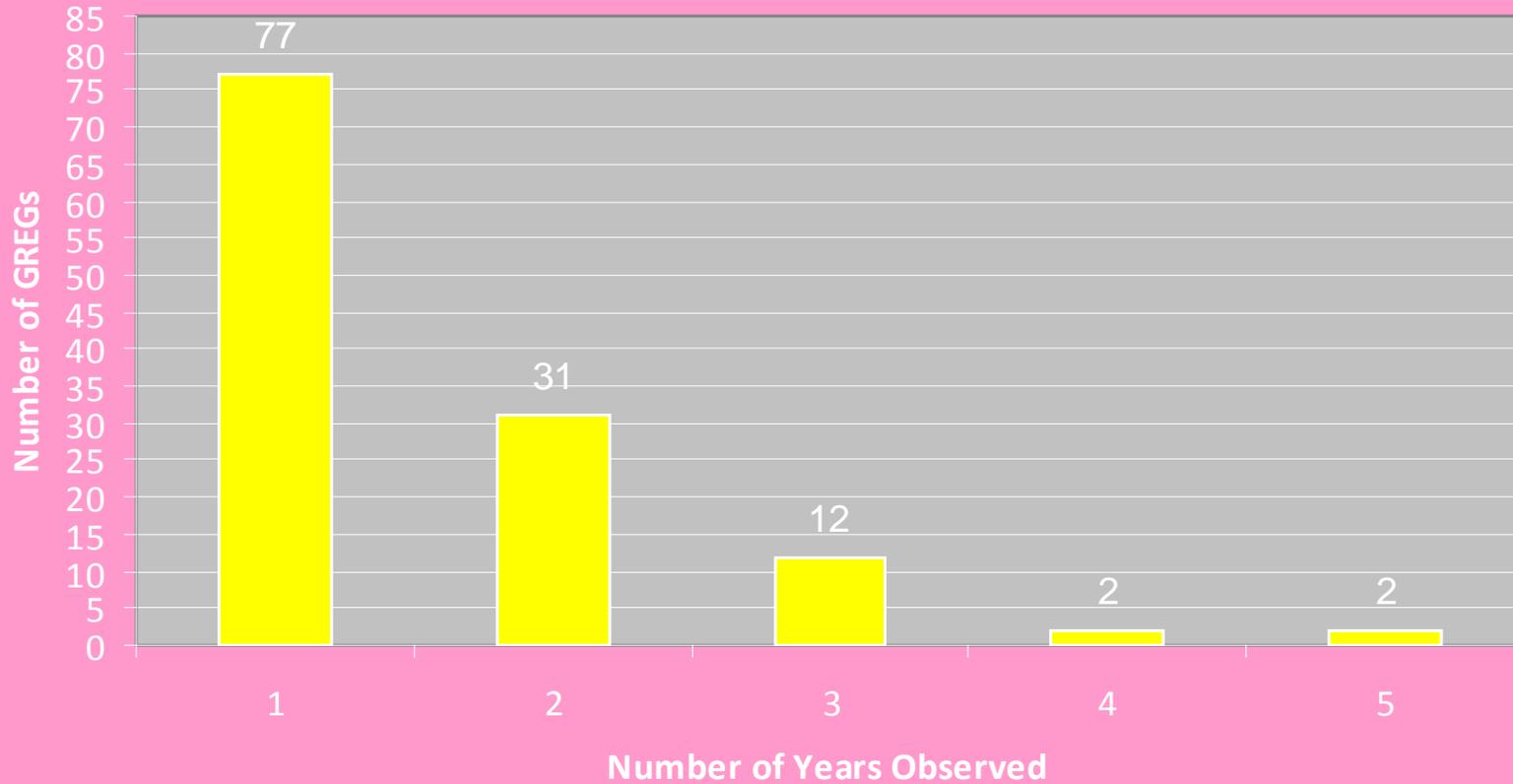
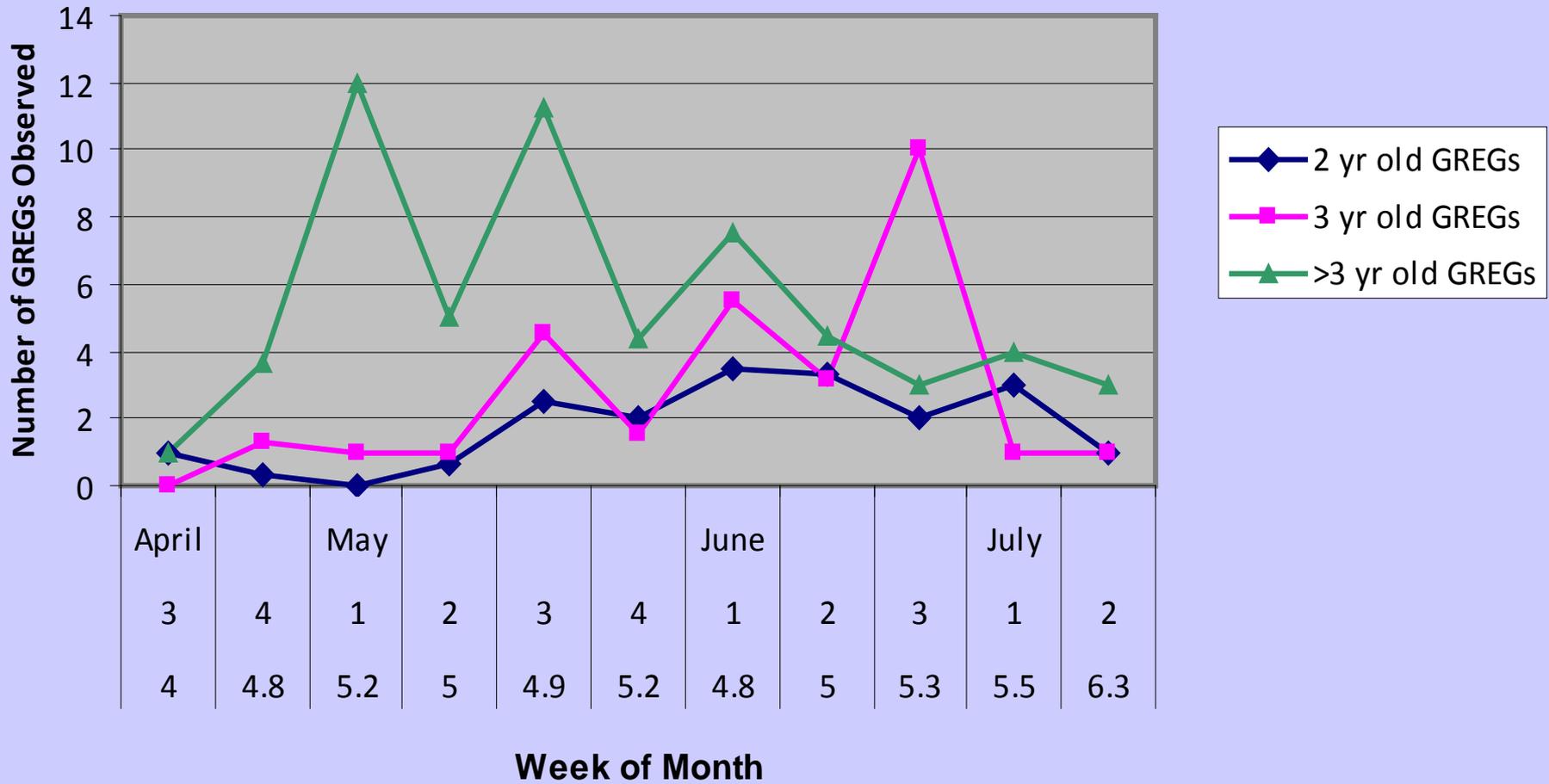
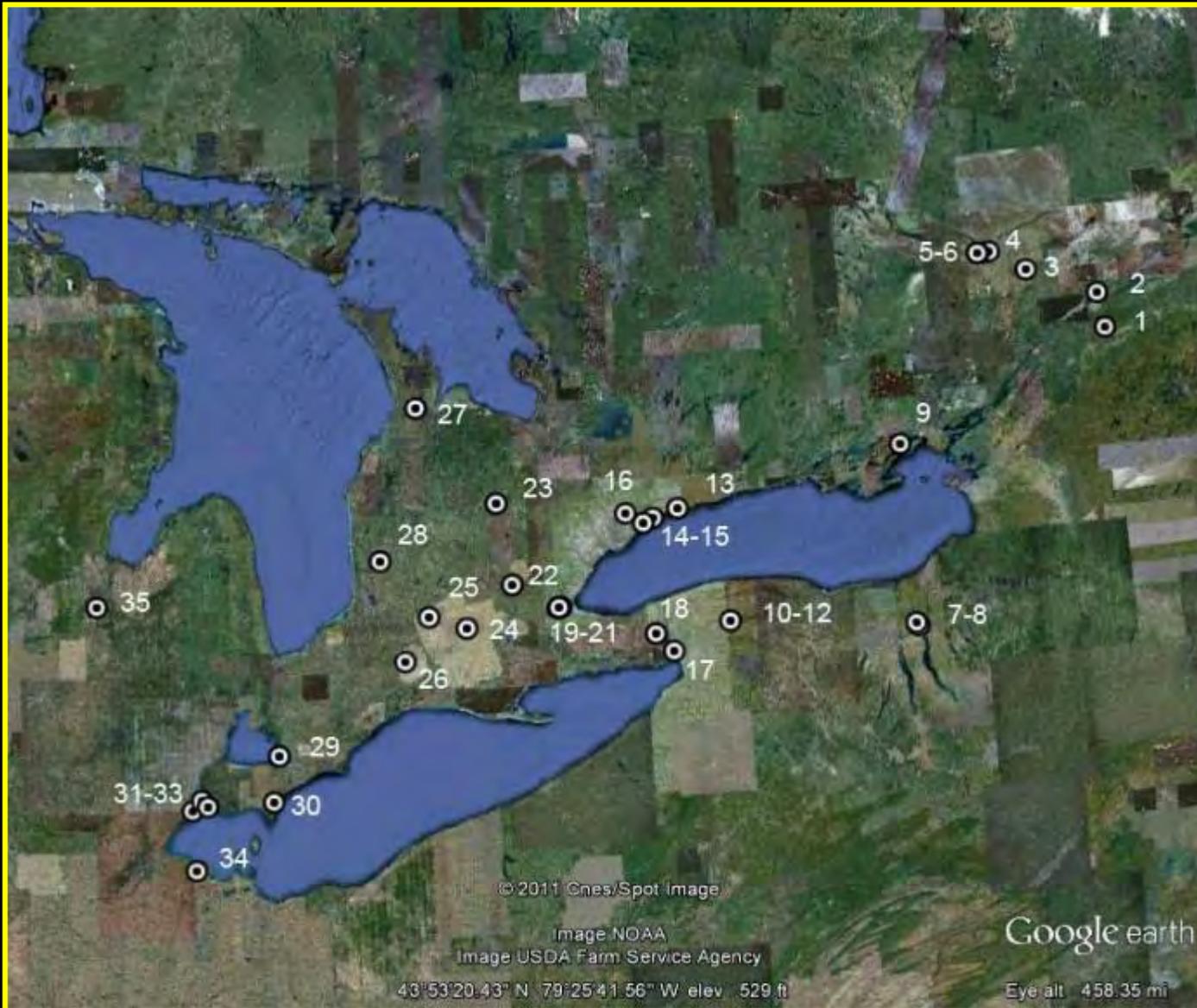


Fig. 6: Average # of Banded GREGs Observed / Day / Week on Nottawasaga Island



Roost locations of Great Egrets in the southern Ontario area



Why are roosts important?

Roosts serve as the communal gathering place for gregarious species outside of the breeding season. A home away from home!

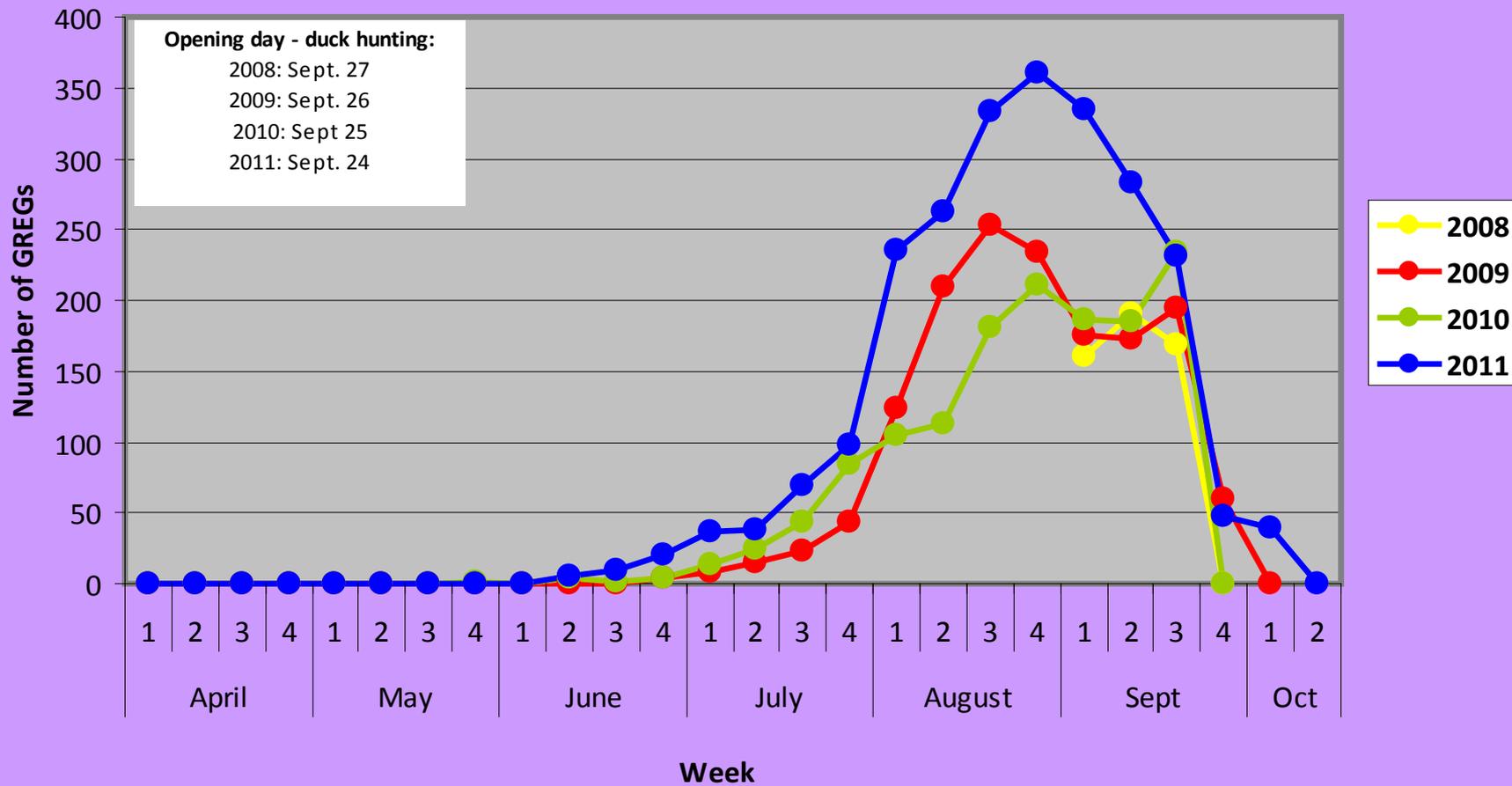
What conservation purpose do they serve?

They are an area which has the right combination of habitat features such that it provides nocturnal refuge for egrets when they are at their most vulnerable time, at night. Hence these areas should be protected.

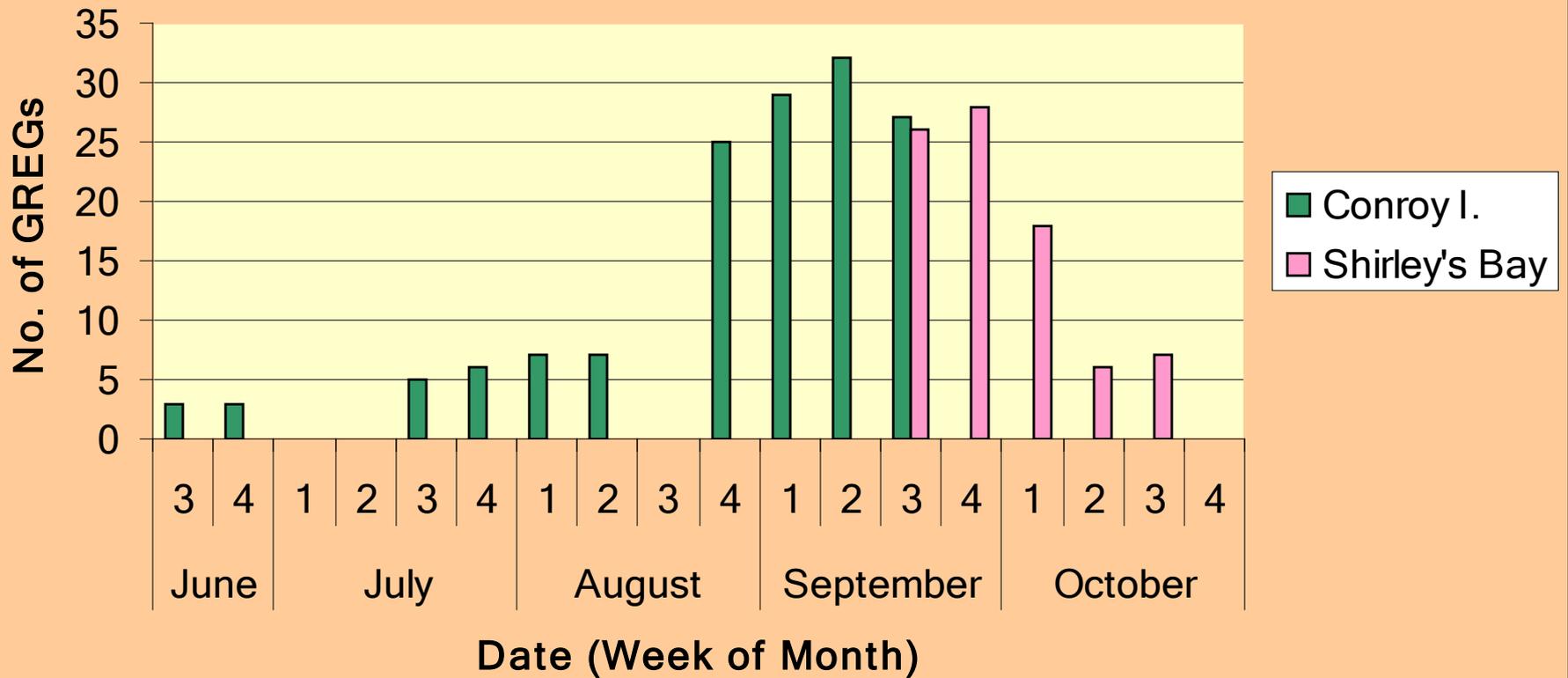
Some Roosting Definitions

- Roosting site: The physical location where egrets roost/sleep overnight.
- Roosting cohort: The egrets which roost at a given site.
- We found 28 cohorts of roosting Great Egrets; they used 40 roosting sites.
- A given cohort of egrets often roost, sequentially, at multiple sites at a given pond or wetland.

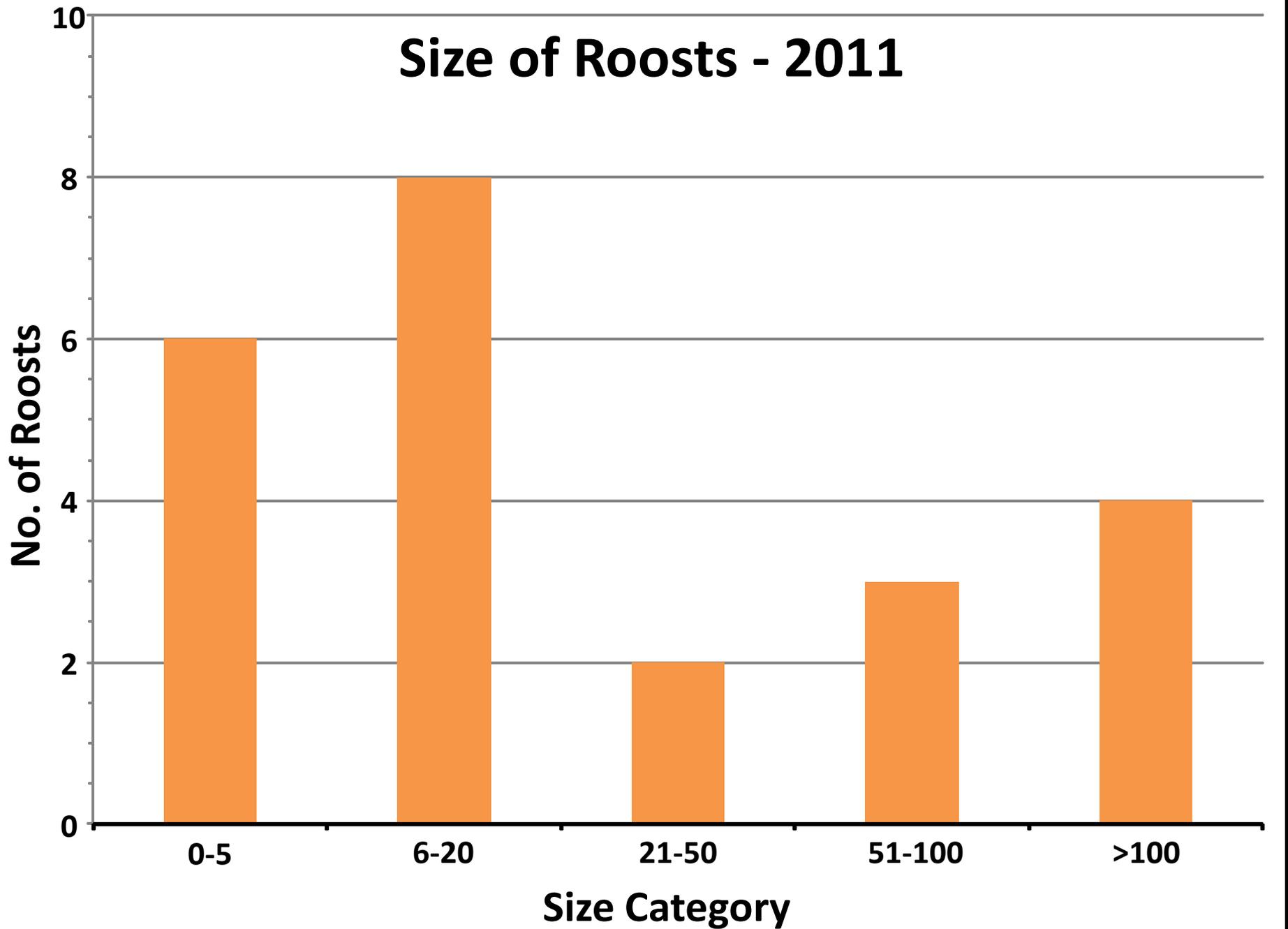
**Fig. 8: Weekly Numbers of GREGs Roosting at Luther Marsh
(2008-2011)**



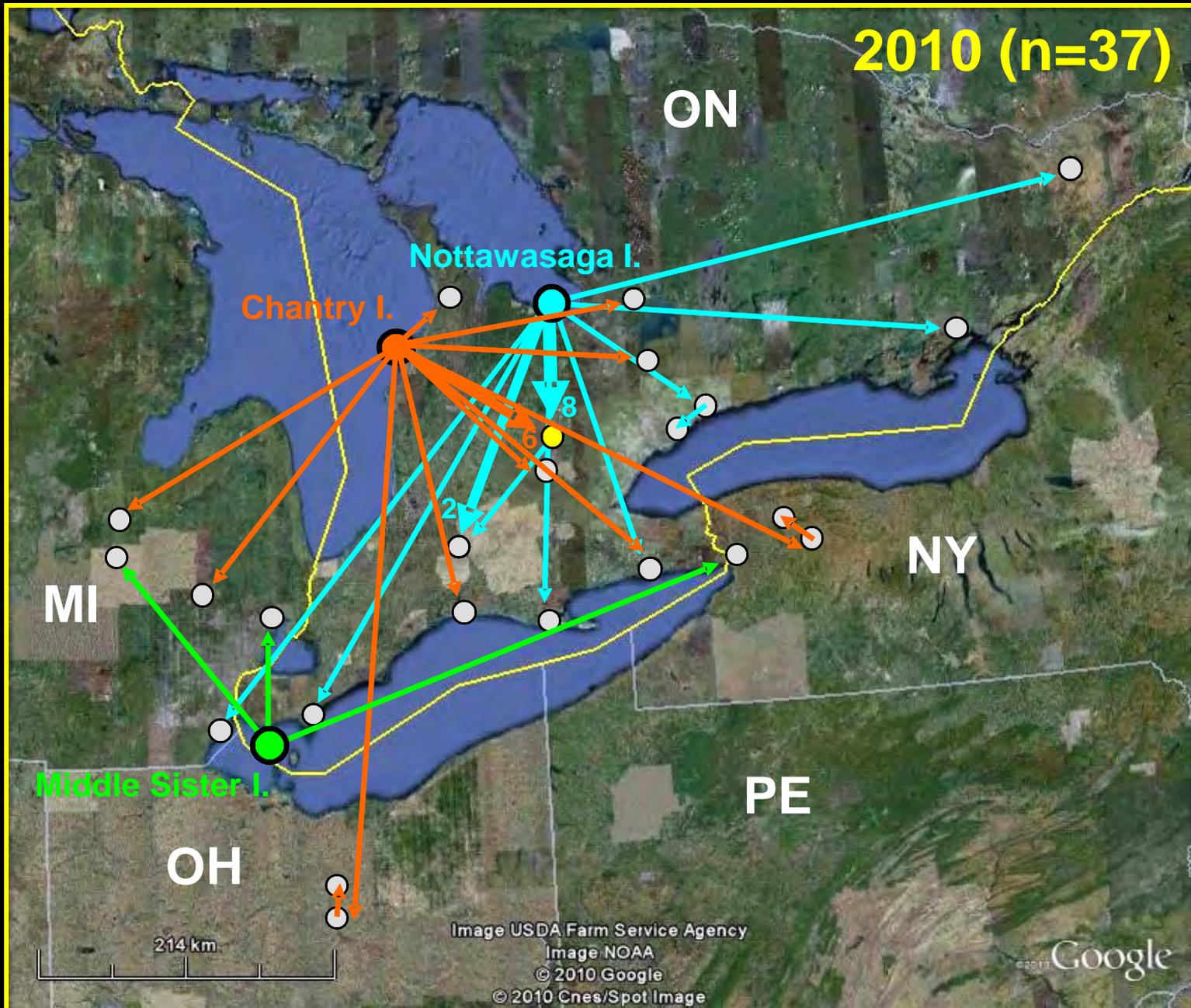
Number of GREGs roosting at Conroy Island and Shirley's Bay Mudflats in Ottawa/Hull



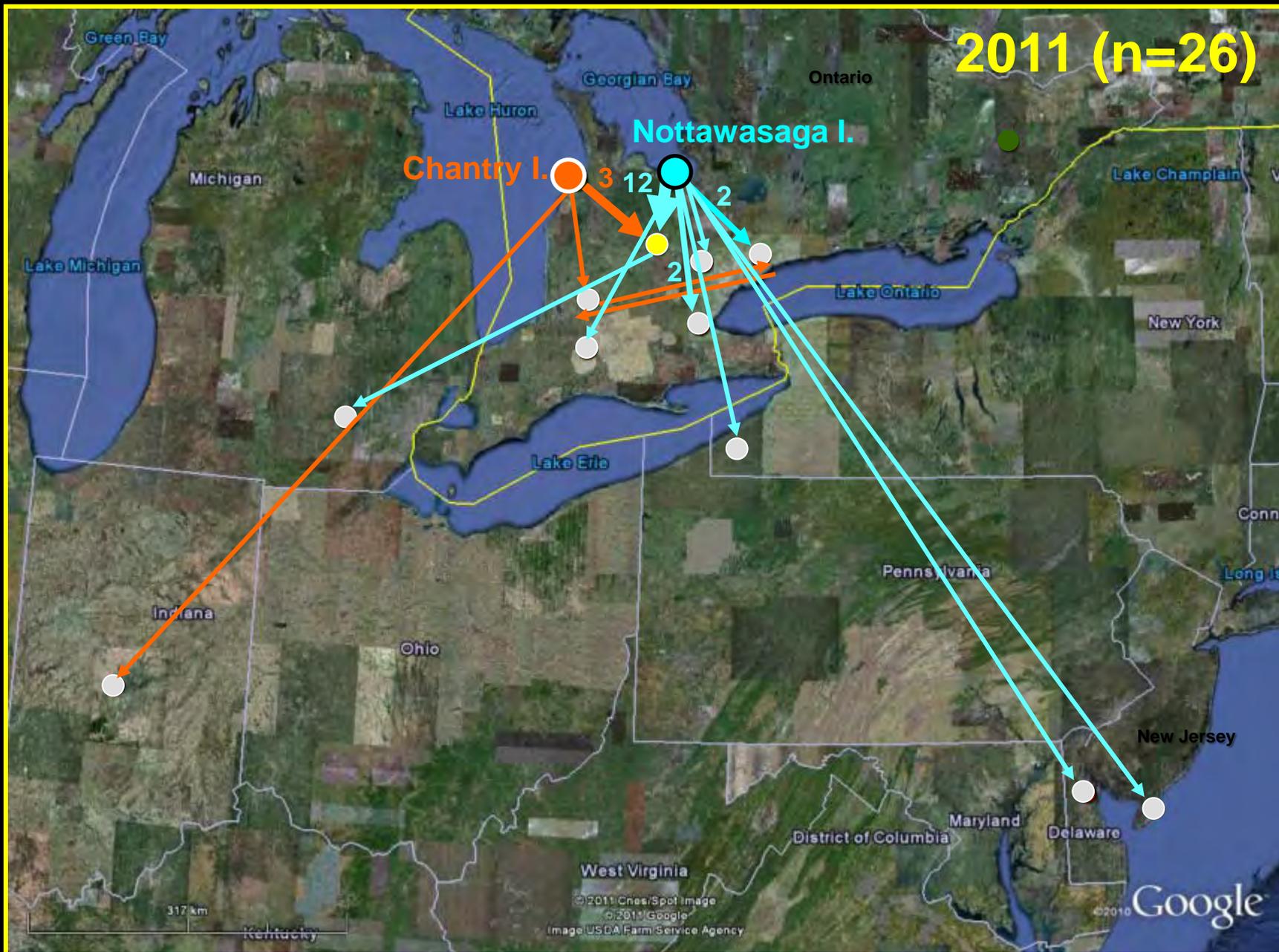
Size of Roosts - 2011

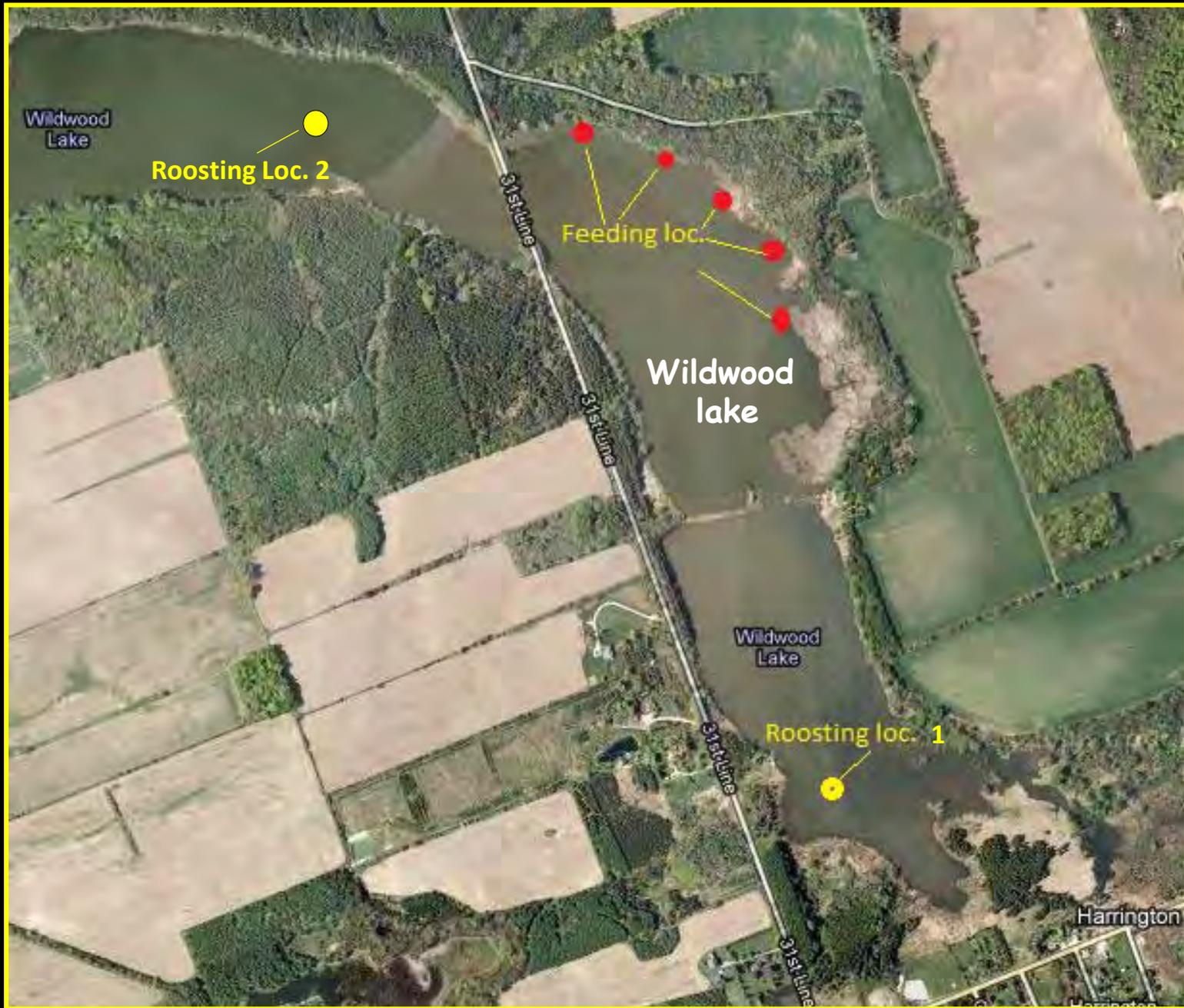


Re-sightings of wing-tagged YOY GREGs



Re-sightings of wing-tagged YOY GREGs





Wildwood Lake, near St. Mary's, ON



Metcalf, ON



Richmond Road, Cornwall, ON



Rouge River mouth at Lake Ontario, Toronto, ON



Oshawa 2nd marsh



Richmond Road, Cornwall, ON



Brittania Park, Ottawa River , Ottawa, ON



Shirley's Bay, Ottawa River , Ottawa, ON



Tonawanda, NY



Mohawk Pond, Iroquois NWR, near Waterloo, NY



Hespler Mill Pond, near Cambridge, ON



Ratt Island

Hickory Island

Carroll's Point

MAP KEY

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| RBO Properties | Washrooms | Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail |
| Roads | Wheelchair Access | Lookout |
| Rail Lines | Trail Heads | The Parkway |
| Gravel or Paved Trails | Parking | Canoe Launch |
| Dirt Trails | Pay and Display Parking | Boardwalks |

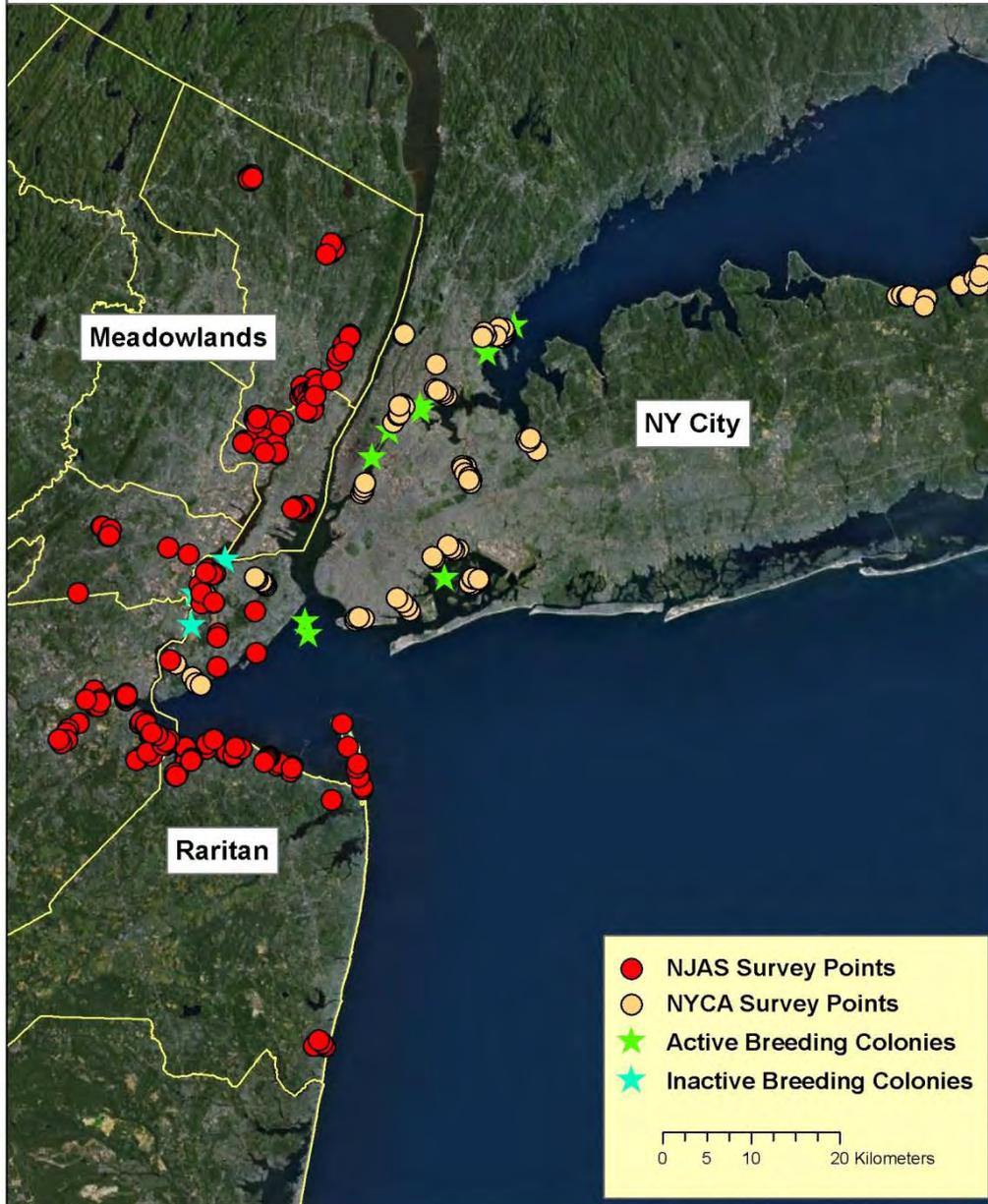


Cootes Paradise, Hamilton Harbour, ON

The NY/NJ Harbor GREG Roost-finding BLITZ

- Early September 2012
- The Meadowlands, Jamaica Bay and Raritan.
- Sunset and Sunrise observations at previous GREG foraging observation sites.
- Organizers: Chip, Nellie and Susan.

Harbor Heron Survey Points and Breeding Colonies



Survey Sites

NJA (2008-2010)

- 43 Sites
- 217 Points

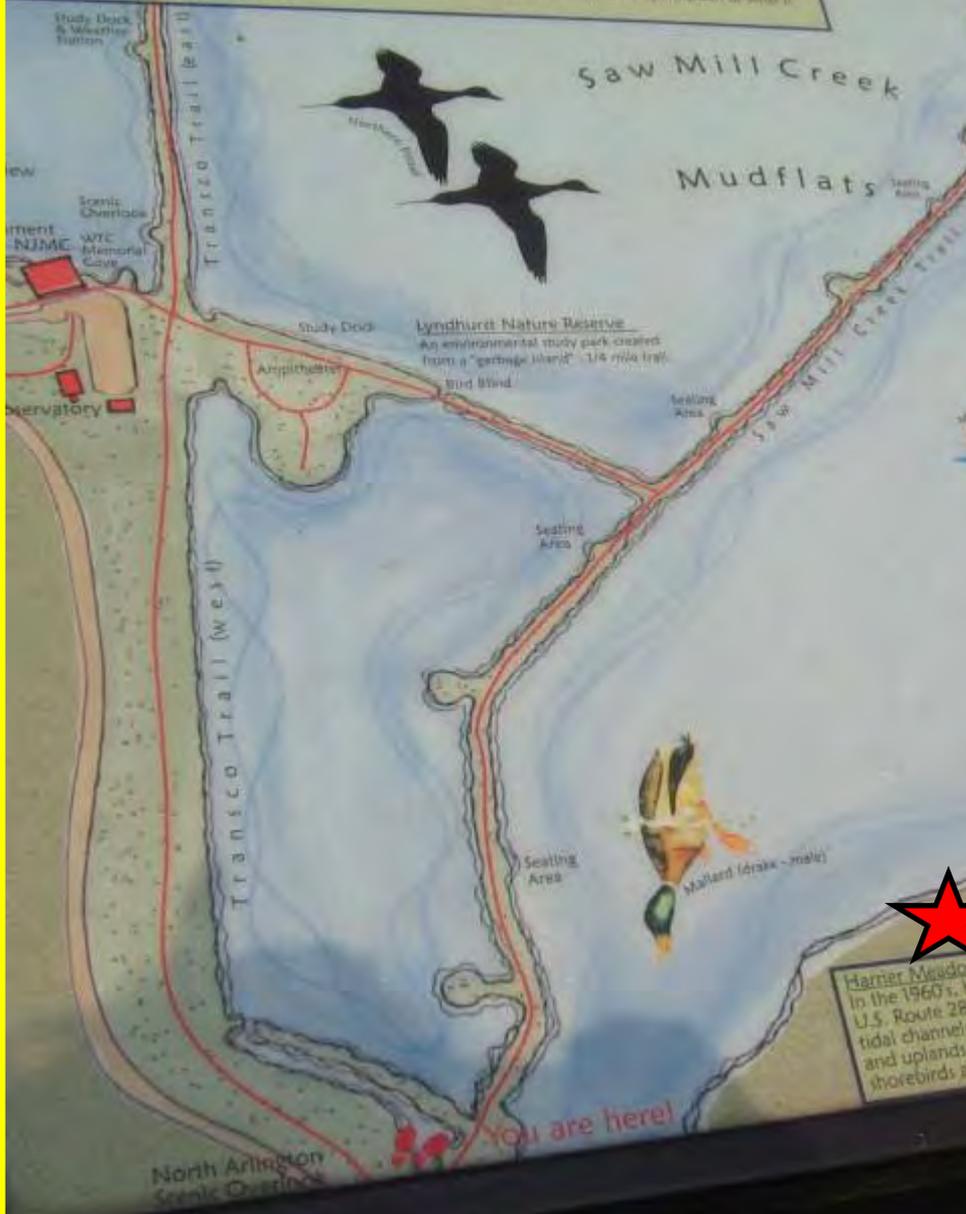
NYCA (2009-2010)

- 20 Sites
- > 110 Points





Richard W. DeKorte Park Saw Mill Creek Trail



This 1-mile trail, adjacent to the Saw Mill Creek mudflats, sits atop a dike originally built as a PSE&C service road in the 1920s. By the 1990s, the dike had eroded to the point where it became impassable. Using 30,000 tons of stone, the trail elevation was raised 2 1/2 feet to accommodate pedestrians and service vehicles. Surrounded by 400 acres of tidal wetlands, the trail provides spectacular opportunities for bird watching and wildlife observation and has become popular with joggers. The trail forms the southern-most segment of Meadows Path, a proposed 25-mile pedestrian gateway spanning Bergen and Hudson Counties.

During the winter months, the brackish water flanking the trail freezes slowly, giving hungry waterfowl the longest aquatic invertebrates such as crayfish. At this time of year, look for Green-winged Teal migration.

In the spring and summer, you can see Mallard (female), Duck, Black Duck and Goldeneye. In the fall, you can see Wood Duck and Common Goldeneye. The resident, the Mallard, is the most common on the trail.

Trail Length: 1 Mile



Harrier Meadow - A 77-acre wetland enhancement project. In the 1960s, Harrier Meadow was the disposal site for rock excavated from the construction of U.S. Route 280. In late 1999, wetland enhancement activities occurred on the site. The existing tidal channels were widened, shallow open pools of water and nesting islands were created, and uplands planted. Today as a result of these activities, we see hundreds of dabbling ducks, shorebirds and wading birds.



Richard W. DeKorte Park, New Jersey Meadowlands



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