

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Evaluating Changes to Mute Swan Management in Etobicoke-Lakeshore

Moved by: Councillor

Morley

Matlow

Seconded by: Councillor

#### SUMMARY:

The City of Toronto contracts the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to operate a Mute Swan Management Program, which is a non-mandatory program under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and TRCA. This population control program involves coating mute swan eggs with oil in the nest, which cuts off oxygen to the cygnets inside preventing them from developing so the eggs do not hatch. Female swans will remain on the nest for longer than the typical incubation period, subjecting them to increased physical stress before they give up on a clutch of eggs.

The rationale for managing the mute swan population in Ontario is based on concerns that mute swans displace other water birds and overgraze aquatic vegetation. However, there is a growing body of scientific research which challenges those concerns and provides evidence that mute swans do not outcompete other waterbirds and do not damage wetland ecosystems by overgrazing.

The most recent Midsummer Mute Swan Survey found that the mute swan population from Humber Bay to Hamilton Harbour has decreased by 81% since 2011 (413 total birds in 2011 to 80 total birds in 2024). Many residents of Etobicoke-Lakeshore get a great deal of joy from the mute swans along our waterfront and waterways. They would like to see mating pairs experience a more natural life cycle where they lay eggs, hatch cygnets, and raise their young; activities which account for approximately 80% of the life of an adult swan.

The recommendations below direct staff to review the non-mandatory Mute Swan Management Program and determine if a scoped adjustment, leaving some number of viable eggs in each nest located within the geographic area of Ward 3, is appropriate. It also requests that Environment Canada and Canadian Wildlife Service consider newer scientific research on the behaviours and environmental impacts of mute swans and re-evaluate the need for population control.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, in consultation with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and relevant conservation groups and stakeholders, to assess the feasibility and effects of amending the Mute Swan Population Management Program in Ward 3, such that where TRCA undertakes egg management in Ward 3 parks and natural areas, some number of viable eggs are left in each impacted Mute Swan nest, and report back to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee in Q1 2027.
2. City Council request that Environment Canada and Canadian Wildlife Service further study the environmental impact of mute swans, including review of scientific research which challenges the basis for population management, and re-evaluate the need for the population control program.

Date: March 25-27