

News Release

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Syncrude pleads guilty to great blue heron deaths, ordered to pay \$2.75 million

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For immediate release.

Fort McMurray, Alberta (January 2, 2019)...Syncrude has been ordered to pay \$2.75 million in federal and provincial penalties for the deaths of 31 great blue herons found at the Mildred Lake oil sands mine north of Fort McMurray in August 2015.

The company pleaded guilty in provincial court to one charge under Alberta's [Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act \(EPEA\)](#) and were assessed a provincial penalty of \$975 000. The AER had laid the charges against Syncrude under *EPEA* in August 2017.

The birds died because they became oiled in an abandoned sump. The sump was built to collect process-affected water containing residual bitumen from a storage site at the mine. Syncrude has since taken the sump out of service, which AER staff have confirmed was done in compliance with requirements.

The provincial penalty of \$975 000 under *EPEA* includes a fine of \$25 000. The remaining amount will be directed through [creative sentencing](#) projects that will support biodiversity, habitat, and migratory pathways for birds and other wildlife in Alberta. To identify these projects, the AER will accept requests for proposal through the Government of Alberta's [purchasing connection](#) website.

The court order and agreed statements of facts, which include more information about the incident and penalties, are available on the AER's [Compliance Dashboard](#).

For information on charges under the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, contact Environment and Climate Change Canada.

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For more information, please contact

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