

Reps. Booher, Accavitti, Ball, Brandenburg, Brown, Casperson, Caswell, Caul, Clack, Farhat, Farrah, Garfield, Gillard, Gleason, Hansen, Hildenbrand, Huizenga, Hummel, Jones, LaJoy, Marleau, McDowell, Meyer, Moore, Newell, Nitz, Palsrok, Pastor, Pavlov, Pearce, Proos, Sak, Shaffer, Sheltroun, Stahl, Vander Veen, Walker and Zelenko offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 185.

A resolution to urge the Department of Natural Resources to work with the federal government to implement the most aggressive means of controlling the double-crested cormorant population pursuant to authority extended by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Whereas, The populations of double-crested cormorants have exceeded acceptable levels and are disrupting the ecosystem in many areas of the Great Lakes region and beyond. Once an uncommon species, the birds can now be found throughout the Great Lakes. In this area, the double-crested cormorant's numbers are at historic highs with an estimated 30,000 nesting pairs in Michigan in 2001; and

Whereas, The return of the double-crested cormorants to such high numbers has brought significant problems, especially to commercial fishing and the Michigan economy. The double-crested cormorant, which can go under water for its food, feeds on small fish, including fry. The cormorant population has caused significant devastation to Michigan's Les Cheneaux Islands, destroying vegetation and depleting the yellow perch population. Due to the decline in recreational fishing opportunities, several businesses have had to close, causing undue hardship on the local economy; and

Whereas, There is a large and growing population of double-crested cormorants in the Ludington area of Lake Michigan. The Little Manistee, Manistee, and Pere Marquette Rivers all enter Lake Michigan in this area. These rivers provide some of the best steelhead, salmon, and walleye spawning rivers in Northern Michigan. Each adult cormorant can consume 1.0 to 1.5 pounds per day of fish including small steelhead, salmon, and walleye. Cormorants have established a nesting ground on the Consumers Energy Ludington Pump Storage Facility breakwall, causing environmental damage and depleting the local fish population; and

Whereas, The United States Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services has undertaken limited pilot projects in the Les Cheneaux Islands, Brevoort Lake, and Drummond Island. While these initial control programs have shown some success in controlling cormorants, the nonlethal controls used in these projects just touch the surface of the cormorant problem in Michigan. The Les Cheneaux pilot project called for killing just 15% of the nesting adult birds. Adult cormorants typically lay three to six eggs each year. The public has grown impatient for some form of control.

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Natural Resources should be fully involved in setting goals, coordinating control, and assessing the progress of cormorant control efforts. Funding for increased involvement in the planning, control, and assessment of the abundant double-crested cormorant population is sorely needed; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Department of Natural Resources to work with the federal government to implement the most aggressive means of controlling the double-crested cormorant population pursuant to authority extended by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Governor of Michigan, and the head of the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services.