



**Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



Resolution 18-01: Support for Double-Crested Cormorant Management

Whereas over the past three decades Double-Crested Cormorants (cormorants) have proliferated in the Great Lakes Basin due to a lack of management tools as a result of legal protections under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act in the United States, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in Ontario, as well as improved ecological conditions and

Whereas well-designed scientific research has now documented the adverse impact of cormorant predation on selected important fisheries, for example in eastern Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, and northern Lake Huron, correlating cormorant abundance and decline of recreational fishes and fisheries, and

Whereas recent studies by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service note significant economic loss to fisheries because of fish predation; loss of jobs; property damage; and enormous ecological, social, and cultural impacts (see more specifics on impacts and concerns, attached), and

Whereas cormorants migrate widely throughout the Great Lakes basin and the Mississippi migratory flyway, therefore require interjurisdictional and integrated management, and

Whereas the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Public Resource Depredation Order of 2003 empowered 24 northern U.S. states to work with the service on appropriate management of cormorants in the Great Lakes, setting population targets, reducing but not eliminating cormorants in key locations to better balance their predation on sensitive fish populations and rebuild important fisheries was rescinded in May 2016 until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could reissue an environmental assessment that would more adequately take into account the Depredation Order on cormorant populations and vacating the Depredation Order in May 2016 ended collaborative cormorant management, and

Whereas predictive modelling, which forecasted that in the absence of cormorant management, nest numbers would reach former peak abundance in 14 years, has probably underestimated resurgence, given increases observed in northern Lake Huron since the Depredation Order was rescinded and control terminated,

The opinions expressed here are those of the independent committee of advisors and not necessarily those of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives from First Nation, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors and appointed by the Commission. Canadian advisors are nominated by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry and appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Be it resolved that the U.S. and Canadian advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission support, and encourage the Commission to formally endorse the Bergman bill, H.R.4429, introduced November 16, 2017, directing the Secretary of the Interior to reissue a rule relating to extension of the expiration dates for Double-Crested Cormorant Depredation Orders, facilitating co-management of cormorants across the Great Lakes Basin, and

Be it resolved that the U.S. and Canadian advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission support the removal of unnecessary protection afforded to double-crested cormorants under Ontario's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act by adding them to the list of species under Section 5 (2)(a) to better integrate co-operative cormorant management and control across the Great Lakes, and

Be it further resolved that the U.S. and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission urge that the Commission, as an international organization, take a leadership role by urging the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Mississippi Flyway Council, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Council of Lake Committees, and other relevant agencies and organizations to work together in moving forward with prompt and ongoing action to develop an overarching, long-term plan for Great Lakes-wide cormorant control, and

Be it finally resolved that in the logical extension of its role as an advocate for fisheries management issues, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission take a role in advocating and lending long-term support for policies and measurements for the management of Double-Crested Cormorants where numbers are shown to impact the fishery and the ecosystem, with the goal of minimizing the adverse impact of cormorants on the Great Lakes ecosystem, in particular its fish and fisheries.

**Passed by majority with 2 abstentions
Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors
May 9, 2018**