

Senators Stamas, Allen, Van Woerkom, Cropsey, Jelinek, Gilbert, Barcia, Prusi, Garcia and Birkholz offered the following resolution:

**Senate Resolution No. 103.**

A resolution to urge the Department of Natural Resources to work with the federal government and neighboring states 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 along 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 of fish per day, 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 percent 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; and

Whereas, The Michigan Department of Natural Resources expects results of the initial control programs to be available in the Spring of 2006. Using data obtained from initial programs, the DNR can set goals, coordinate control, and assess the progress of cormorant control efforts. The department needs to move quickly to assure full control programs are in place before further damage is done to fish populations and native vegetation. Additionally, the DNR is in need of funding for increased involvement in the planning, control, and assessment of the abundant double-crested cormorant population; and

Whereas, The cormorant problem is not limited to Michigan. Twenty-three other states have approval of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to carry out control programs. Michigan cormorants migrate each winter to Southeastern states and the Gulf of Mexico. For this reason, involving other states in control strategies will increase the efficiency of Michigan control programs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, That we urge the Department of Natural Resources to work with the federal government and neighboring states 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.