

# ALGER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Mary Ann Froberg, Clerk  
101 COURT STREET, MUNISING, MI 49862

## **RESOLUTION #2018-08** **Supports the Cormorant Control Act**

**WHEREAS**, State and Federal natural resource agencies tracked migratory bird populations in the Great Lakes area beginning in the 1900's and annual bird counts documented that the number of Double-crested cormorants (cormorants) appeared to have peaked in the 1940s, with about 6,000 birds. By the mid-1970's there was concern over the decline of most migratory birds in the Great Lakes region due to the effects of contamination (I.e., DDT), and cormorant numbers were estimated to be less than 100 birds; and

**WHEREAS**, Cormorants migrate from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes region for the breeding season, spending approximately 150 days along the coastal island areas such as provided by Saginaw Bay. The diet of cormorants is almost exclusively fish and they depend on their surrounding waters to sustain both the breeding adults and their young once they hatch. An adult cormorant will eat 1.3 pounds of fish each day;

**WHEREAS**, throughout the 1980-1990's protections were afforded to migratory birds and their numbers began to increase, persistent chemicals were banned, and extensive environmental clean-up projects were undertaken. During this same period, state, federal and tribal fisheries managers instituted extensive fish stocking programs to restore a better balance to the Great Lakes food web; and

**WHEREAS**, today the Great Lakes supports several important fisheries including commercial, recreational, and tribal, which are collectively valued at more than \$7 billion annually and support more than 75,000 jobs. Yellow perch in particular is a key staple of the cormorant diet but also the centerpiece of Michigan's recreational fishery, Friday dinner fish fry's and an important economic draw; and

**WHEREAS**, Resource managers in the Great Lakes now estimate that cormorant numbers have peaked at about 115,000 breeding pair and at these numbers their fish consumption is estimated 77 million pounds each year. In conjunction, there has also been a drastic decline in yellow perch harvest from a high of 375,000 fish to just 695 fish by the year 2000. Bait shops, fishing resorts, and fishing related service industries declined or closed in some communities by up to 40%; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1998 and again in 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed orders to allow for state level management of cormorant populations for the benefit of fish, and when implemented, the numbers of yellow perch and other game fish rebounded.

However, the orders were rescinded in 2016 by the U.S. District Court until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can reissue an Environmental Assessment to show the effect of the orders allowing lethal control on cormorant populations. In Saginaw Bay the effect of two years without any cormorant control was easily seen last summer when the sky was blackened by high numbers of the distinctive birds flying over the horizon in miles and miles of lines of cormorants; and

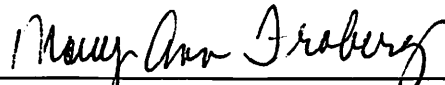
**WHEREAS**, the State of Michigan has gone on record in support of U.S. House Bill 4429 for reinstating effective cormorant management, applied in the same collaboratively way that we use to protect our other natural resources, to support our important Great Lakes fisheries valued at more than \$7 billion annually and more than 75,00 jobs.

**THEREFORE**, be it that the Alger County Board of Commissioners hereby supports the "Cormorant Control Act" House Bill 4429 directing the reissuance of a rule relating to extension of the expiration dates for double-crested cormorant depredation orders.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the above is a true copy of a Resolution adopted by the Alger County Board of Commissioners at the time, date, and place specified above pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Ann Froberg, Alger County Clerk



Dated: May 21, 2018