

Media Release



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To All Media

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M.N.R. drags its heels on Lake Huron's cormorant crisis

Why is the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources dragging its heels on a major environmental crisis?

Despite five full years of scientific study that unequivocally confirms that a cull of cormorants on Lake Huron's North Shore is years over due, the Ontario Government is once again procrastinating. Recently, the M.N.R. announced its intentions on the Environmental Bill of Rights to conduct another cormorant study on Lake Huron – a study that, as far as the O.F.A.H. is concerned, is absolutely unnecessary.

"It is simply irresponsible for the Ontario Government to turn its back on our fisheries resources. Despite the clear scientific need for cormorant control and fisheries management, the government continues to procrastinate and neglect what must be done to protect our natural resources," said Dr. Terry Quinney, Provincial Manager of Fish and Wildlife Services for the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters -- the renowned 81,000 member conservation organization that has, for the past 12 years, taken the lead in demanding effective cormorant management.

"The Ontario Government already has ample scientific support, and it has absolutely no excuse for letting another breeding season go by without using every available tool to achieve a drastic immediate reduction in cormorants along the shores of Manitoulin Island," he said adding that the O.F.A.H., along with many MPPs, are lobbying to have double-crested cormorants removed from Ontario's protected species list.

According to the government's own scientists, cormorants consume nearly 100 percent of the eastern Georgian Bay and North Channel inshore fish production. A severe overpopulation of these birds on the Great Lakes are destroying shoreline trees, flora and fauna, and decimating the forage base for top predators such as trout and salmon. Now, cormorants are moving inland and devastating highly sensitive lakes such as Lake Couchiching, Lake Nipissing and Lake Opeongo in Algonquin Park.

The cull of cormorants at Presqu'île Provincial Park in Brighton, now being carried out by the Ministry of Natural Resources, is a wildlife population management tool that needs to be applied in many locations across the province.

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