

Hunting season for double - crested cormorants WHY NOT WEIGH IN ON GOVERNMENT CORMORANTS PROPOSAL



*Ontario government is looking for input:
We all have until January 3, 2019 to comment!*

The province of Ontario is considering controlling the double-crested cormorant by creating a hunting season for it. The proposal is called the Ontario Environment Registry, which is worth looking at. Here is the link:

<https://ero.ontario.ca>.

Also, Wolfe Lake has seen an increase of cormorants. We usually see them on rock formations in front of Duck Island. We have heard that these birds have been destroying trees, since their feces are quite acidic. They eat lots of fish.



Cormorants in front of Duck Island



Cormorant up close, eating a fish.

The request for the provincial government is not only for the hunters amongst us! Also, environmentalist, anglers, users of lakes and rivers and people who are enjoying the provinces lakes and waters are invited to weigh in. You can find on line many opinions for and against this proposal, just google 'cormorants hunting proposal; a slew of information will come up.

The public has until **Jan 3, 2019 to comment**. You can do this on line or by phone:

<https://ero.ontario.ca/user/login?action=comment&destination=/comment/reply/node/493/comment>

If you are interested to read more details, please scroll down to the next pages.

Proposal content

Ontario is proposing to list the double-crested cormorant as a game bird, create a hunting season in Ontario for population management and make related changes. This proposal would be implemented through a series of regulatory and legislative amendments.

Double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) populations declined significantly in the Great Lakes from the 1950s to the 1970s primarily due to environmental contaminants affecting reproduction. Their numbers began to increase rapidly from the 1970s to the early 2000s, with the latest information indicating Great Lakes populations have since stabilized or declined slightly.

There continues to be concerns expressed by some groups (commercial fishing industry, property owners) and individuals that cormorants have been detrimental to fish populations, island forest habitats, other species and aesthetics.

To respond to these concerns, the Ministry is proposing to create a hunting season for double-crested cormorants in Ontario. This new population management tool would allow persons who hold a small game licence to hunt these birds.

You can find more details here: <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4124>

The following regulatory changes are being proposed to create a hunting season for double-crested cormorants beginning in 2019:

List the double-crested cormorant as a “Game Bird”. Hunters would be required to have an outdoors card and small game licence to hunt double-crested cormorants, similar to other species of game birds.

Create an open hunting season for double-crested cormorant from March 15 to December 31 each year across the province.

Create an exemption allowing small game licences to be valid for double-crested cormorant hunting in central and northern Ontario from June 16 to August 31 each year.

Establish a bag limit of 50 cormorants/day with no possession limit.

Prescribe shotgun and shot size/type requirements consistent with migratory bird hunting regulations outlined in the federal Migratory Birds Regulations. This would include use of shotguns that are not larger than 10 gauge, that cannot hold more than three shells and use non-toxic shot as described in the migratory bird regulations.

Allow hunting from a stationary motorboat.

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act currently prohibits anyone who kills game wildlife (including game birds), or who possesses game wildlife killed by hunting, from allowing that meat to spoil. Via this posting, the Ministry is also consulting on a proposal to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act to add provisions so hunters could allow cormorant to spoil. This proposal would add provisions to the Act, so that persons who lawfully hunt (or

possess) cormorants could be exempt from this requirement and would be subject to conditions that require the person to retrieve and dispose of the carcass. Should this proposal proceed, it may be accompanied by regulations to implement the exemption and requirements.

To accompany the proposed hunting seasons, the Ministry will implement a cormorant monitoring program to assess population status and trends. Monitoring of cormorants will allow the Ministry to assess the impacts of the hunting season and to adjust cormorant hunting regulations if necessary, to address any concerns about population sustainability.

The Ministry intends to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act and supporting regulations (including Ontario Regulation 670/98 Open Seasons, Ontario Regulation 665/98 Hunting) to implement the proposal should it proceed. No additional opportunity for comments will be provided.

Public consultation opportunities

To comment on the proposal, please submit your comments online by clicking the 'Submit a comment' button, or by reaching out to the contact(s) listed. The Ministry may notify some groups that otherwise are unlikely to become aware of the proposal.

Regulatory impact statement

The anticipated environmental consequences of the proposal are expected to be neutral. The double-crested cormorant is abundant in Ontario and anticipated levels of harvest aren't expected to affect sustainability. Hunters will continue to be reminded to properly identify their targets to avoid conflicts with migratory game birds and other water birds. Monitoring of cormorant populations will allow adjustments in cormorant hunting regulations as necessary.

The anticipated social consequences are both positive and negative. Those interested in hunting cormorants or who believe cormorants are having detrimental impacts will likely support the proposed changes. Individuals and groups opposing cormorant hunting or hunting during summer months will likely oppose the proposed changes.

The anticipated economic consequences of the proposal are expected to be neutral but depend on levels of hunter participation.

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