



GREAT LAKES
CORMORANTS

Statement on the importance of protecting Double-crested cormorants

Whereas:

- Double-crested cormorants (DCCOs) are a colonial waterbird native to North America;
- All native migratory birds, including DCCOs, should be listed on and protected by the *Migratory Bird Convention Act*;
- After almost being wiped out twice, the return of DCCOs to the Great Lakes Basin is a conservation success story;
- Like beaver and bison, DCCOs are ecosystem engineers for species that congregate and nest on headlands, peninsulas and islands;
- DCCOs share nesting habitat with other colonial waterbirds, such as herons, egrets and pelicans;
- For thousands of years DCCOs have lived with many species of fauna and flora;
- DCCOs inhabit only a tiny percentage of headlands, peninsulas and islands in the Great Lakes Basin;
- DCCOs are an important source of prey for recovering Bald Eagle populations;
- DCCOs are major predators of invasive fish species, including round gobies and alewives, thus benefitting native fish communities;
- Scientific studies show that DCCOs rarely have an effect on wild commercial and sport-fish populations *;
- DCCO populations are relatively stable and some regional populations are decreasing in size **;
- DCCO population numbers are dependent on the amount of food close to nesting sites;
- DCCOs and other colonial waterbird colonies provide wildlife observation opportunities for birders, hikers and boaters;
- DCCO colonies and populations are vulnerable to disturbance, harassment and killing because they congregate and nest in open, localized environments;
- DCCO breeding and nesting colonies are vulnerable to killing due to their strong fidelity to nesting sites; and
- DCCOs have been scapegoated for a range of problems caused by humans.

We, the undersigned, recognize that Double-crested cormorants are vital to the health and ecological integrity of the environments in which they live. Therefore, they should be protected by law from persecution, recreational killing, or organized culling.

* Please see this study by the American Ornithological Union (now known as the American Ornithological Society) pages 10-15, <http://www.torontobirding.ca/toc-docs/CormorantsAOU07ConservationAddn5.pdf>

** Note: The Breeding Bird Atlas is expected out in 2026 with new population surveys.