

**Washington Island Sportsman and Conservation Club**  
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Diane:

The Washington Island Sportsman and Conservation Club believes it's time for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) to become engaged in the Northern Door County cormorant debacle. As the DNR's Administrator of the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Parks it is imperative that protections be implemented for Wisconsin's assets in Door County. There are many reasons for the DNR to step in:

1. Cormorants highly concentrated in the Northern Door County Area. Sixty three percent of all cormorants in Wisconsin are concentrated on Spider and Pilot Islands. These are Refuge properties that FWS protects and will not apply or perform any management controls...yet they are the largest threat to Wisconsin's environment.
2. Pelican populations are growing and their impacts to the Door County environments and fisheries are just compounding the cormorant damage in the area. The Pelicans need to be controlled now before they become the next debacle.
3. Experiencing rapidly declining fish populations in the area (perch, whitefish, brown trout, sturgeon, walleye and pike). Reduction or loss of spawning environments has occurred in areas such as Detroit Harbor on Washington Island, Waters surrounding Pilot Island, West Harbor, and Jackson Harbor and areas East of Rock Island. You need to read the following online article on Cormorants: [The rise of double-crested cormorants: Too much of a good thing? - The Wildlife Society](#). Diet studies are often used to justify cormorants have no impact on the fish populations. A diet study cannot determine the impact on fish populations, there is simply no correlation between the two. For example of a cormorant eats a lot of Gobies and not perch, does that affect the perch's food supply?
4. Environmental devastation such as loss of trees and foliage caused by excessive bird guano occurs where ever the cormorants and pelicans roost. The trees on Pilot Island died within two years of Cormorants roosting on the Island. Today the Island is basically denuded of most if not all foliage, leaving the soil more exposed for runoff.
5. Water pollution with ultra high E.Coli content occurs in rookery shorelines. The shorelines are controlled by the state not FWS and are not closed to the public. Based on actual water test samples taken in very dry conditions from the Pilot Islands shoreline, the area is unsafe for swimming or any outdoor water activities. The guano is also a contributor to potential algae blooms in the area.

6. Boats touring around any rookery depending on wind and weather conditions may be subject to airborne diseases from the guano: such as histoplasmosis (which occurred on Hat Island). Divers diving off the Pilot Island shipwrecks have experience ear infections after the dive.
7. Pilot Island is the only Island we are aware of, that has historic maritime cultural resources and is being used as rookery. FWS has over the last 13-14 years neglected an important Wisconsin asset, the lighthouse on Pilot Island. Whether the neglect occurred from deferred maintenance or inattention, they have put this Wisconsin asset in jeopardy, which we believe will ultimately end up in its demise. Losing this historic asset which resides on the National Register of Historic Places (#83004279 Pilot Island Lighthouse, added to NRHP November 21, 1983)"at the state level." The lighthouse is still used today as an active navigational aid, since it was built in 1858. This is a piece of history that needs to be taken care of and restored not only for historical purposes, but to safely support the maritime traffic through Death's Door Passage. It's continued use as a navigational aid is a testament to its value to the area, and not something Wisconsin wants to see end from neglect.
8. Pilot Island is an asset that needs to benefit the residents of Wisconsin, culturally, educational, environmentally, historically and economically. In its current state, FWS's use of Pilot Island does not achieve any of those purposes. The Island is basically useless to the public.

Our desire is not to annihilate every cormorant or pelican in Wisconsin or the world for that matter. Our desire is to see the cormorant and pelican populations managed at a level where they can live in harmony with native vegetation, other wildlife, and humans competing for the same resources. Today the birds are given priority over everything without regard to public resources destroyed.

We know it is hard to bite the hand that feeds you, especially when a federal agency provides funds in excess of \$35 million dollars to the DNR. We also know the DNR's has a strong desire to protect the states assets and meet the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act and Clean Water Act and provide a much healthier environment for residents. We are asking for you to step in and help us save our fisheries, ecology, water, air, and Pilot Island.

Respectfully,



Martin Andersen, President

Washington Island Sportsman and Conservation Club