

[Letter to the Editor for Waconia Patriot & Affiliate Area Newspapers]

### **Letter of Urgency Regarding Cormorant Over-Population On Lake Waconia:**

For over 29 years we have lived and run our business on Lake Waconia, in Carver County, Minnesota. We rarely noticed Double Crested Cormorants on the lake until about 5 years ago. Since then, we've witnessed scores of them, flocking here daily. The more that come, the more destruction they wreak, on the privately owned 32 acre "Coney Island" habitat and the lake. When the birds first noticeably increased, we started to pay closer attention. Now any conversation about them is filled with alarm! Lake Waconia's cormorant infestation seems to have no end! We learned quickly that time cannot be wasted when these birds choose your lake to make home!

*This letter is our report, & plea to Minnesota and the USDI Fish & Wildlife Service, to recognize that the current number of cormorants allowed to be annually harvested on Coney Island, is too few to protect the island, its habitat, Lake Waconia & its fishery!*

The metro area's second largest lake is at risk! Flocks of hundreds of visiting juvenile and adult bird "opportunists" join current nesters to feast on Waconia's fish & produce large quantities of highly acidic droppings with an awful odor, which kill the island's native vegetation. Heron, Egrets & other native songbirds are being crowded out of their island home. Their presence has resulted in enough dead trees and plants to become a fire hazard to the remaining island, also dieing at an alarming rate! Adding to the problem, drought conditions are drying up smaller ponds and lakes, forcing more to come.

As of this writing, July 24, 2009, we & other concerned citizens have found NO legal remedy available to discourage them other than that used by the majority landowner of "Coney Island", for two years. He has been Federally permitted to reduce cormorants by having USDA Wildlife Services use "incremental adaptive" management to protect his land from ongoing vegetation damage & help defend the lake. **Since 2007**, we & other concerned citizens have met with the island owner and USDA Wildlife MN staff, to learn how to help. We concluded control numbers Minnesota allowed, are insufficient to keep up with birds arriving by the tens and hundreds daily. Since no other remedies have been found, Lake Waconia Association paid the 2008 and 2009 management fees, to help protect the lake while continuing to seek help and answers.

Lake Waconia residents and users have a long history of protecting its water quality and fishery. Most recently, in the 1980's we petitioned to protect and enhance our Walleye fishery. The petition was successful & we now have special regulations & receive regular stocking. Our Lake Association worked tirelessly to educate the public about exotic species [milfoil etc] at both state and local level. They also worked with Carver County & City services to ensure surface water run-off is environmentally handled. Lake Waconia is often used as an example of water quality & a diverse abundant fishery. The **ONLY** presently known enemy unresolved, is the cormorant.

Minnesota, Carver County & surrounding communities have invested greatly in Lake Waconia by funding access, fish stocking, trails, fishing piers, and parks. The public's investment, private surrounding land values and area economy are in jeopardy of loss & face reduced tourism and recreation revenue & depleted fishery because of the infestation.

This issue is *not specific* to Lake Waconia in Minnesota. Others in jeopardy from south to north include: Wells Island in Wells, Minnesota, [near Faribault MN] has NO Living vegetation left [after failed attempts of “incremental adaptive” management]; Pigeon Island's “Scenic Overlook” [near Hutchinson, Minnesota] now views a dusty, barren island of mud, covered by scores of cormorants; Leech Lake has been in the news constantly, and continues to need ongoing control; Lake of the Woods is also lobbying for help as we write this letter! With help, we can quash the crisis before it gets worse!

We understand that the Department of Natural Resources has authority to address this problem in our state, as allowed by US Department of Interior. As an “action agency”, we ask that MN DNR Commissioner Holsten, **help us find a way to fund and step-up bird control here! What else can be done to save this lake, NOW?**

**Witnesses have seen many flocks of cormorants with hundreds in each flock, feeding throughout the lake, sometimes totaling up to a thousand or more birds at any given time. ONE Cormorant's normal diet is approximately ONE POUND of fish DAILY! PLEASE HELP stop the destruction! We have a SMALL window of time.**

We ask fellow concerned citizens, local governments, organizations and businesses to make your voices heard and join us in finding a solution to defend Lake Waconia, its island habitat, fishery and area economy from this infestation. Please visit our website at [www.InTowneMarina.com](http://www.InTowneMarina.com) where you can find information to contact authority agencies, or print out a petition to sign, with instructions to help gather names. Also, we will have a petition available to sign at our bait shop. Thank you.

Jim, Cindy, Ben & Jimmy Mase Owner/Operators for 29 years of:  
In Towne Marina, 8 East Lake Street, Waconia, MN 55387 [952-442-2096]

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TWO Minnesota “ACTION” Agencies listed below that have Authority to Help:

1. **Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources**  
**MN Authority, which establishes MN Rules in response to citizens**  
**Or natural Resources being harmed by a species**

**MN DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten**  
500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-259-5027 Fax: 651-296-4799  
DNR West Metro Fisheries E-mail: [info@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:info@dnr.state.mn.us)

2. **The U.S. Department of Agriculture is a Federal *Non-Regulatory*, Rule**  
**“Implementation” Unit [Carries out MN & Federal Rules] in Minnesota:**

**U.S. Dept of Agriculture, MN State Director & Wildlife Biologist:**  
Gary A Nohrenberg @:  
St. Paul Downtown Airport  
644 Bayfield St., Suite 215, St Paul, MN 55107

Phone: 651-224-6027 Fax: 651-224-4271  
E-mail: [Gary.Nohrenberg@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Gary.Nohrenberg@aphis.usda.gov)

*Also, to reach the MN Regional Contact of the U.S. Department of Interior [which makes the Federal laws that the above agencies must comply with] regarding cormorant management & to protect citizens from harm caused by them.*

*Minnesota is within the Midwest Region Migratory Bird Office.*

*To comment or learn about these Federal rules & regulations:*

**U.S. Dept of Interior Fish & Wildlife Service**

**Midwest Migratory Bird U.S. Fish & Wildlife Regional Office**

Midwest Chief, Division of Migratory Birds  
Jane [Noll] West  
Federal Building  
1 Federal Dr, Ft Snelling, MN 55111-4056

Phone: 612-713-5480 Fax: 612-713-5393