



Flint River Valley Chapter Michigan Steelheader's

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Dear Great Lakes Enthusiast,

Recently the Flint River Valley Chapter of Michigan Steelheaders took a major step forward at preserving our Great Lakes sport fishery and inland lake sport fishery here in Michigan.

We have established a *Cormorant Control & Research Fund* where the money raised will go directly to cormorant control and research here in the State of Michigan. When you or your group makes a donation you can be assured that each dollar raised will go directly to the United States Department of Agriculture-Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) which is the organization in charge of research & control of this migratory bird for the past several years. We have spent several months working with the USDA-WS in registering our Chapter with this Department of the Federal Government and the final approval was recently given.

As you know, there are major declines in the salmon population in Lake Huron. With what salmon are caught and observed in creel studies, the salmon are also very much underweight with many mature Chinook (king) salmon not even weighing 10 pounds.

It has also been proven that many king salmon planted in Lake Huron are being caught by anglers in Lake Michigan. The theory behind this is that the salmon are seeking their preferred forage, baitfish.

The main reason why there are underweight and very few salmon in Lake Huron is the absence of smaller baitfish such as alewives and smelt which are the salmon's and other game fish primary food source.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources claims the reasons for the lack of baitfish are zebra mussel and other invasive species that has tipped the food chain out of balance. Another reason for the lack of baitfish can be directly linked to the cormorant population explosion that has occurred over the past several years.

One cormorant consumes roughly 1.5 pounds of food per day and there are 500,000 plus (a conservative number) cormorants in Michigan after their Spring migration back to the Great Lakes. Think about those numbers, 500,000 cormorants consumes 1.5 pounds of **LIVE FISH** per day. That equals to 750,000 pounds of fish per day. That's everyday for roughly 5-6 months until they migrate South to their wintering grounds.

Cormorants are not picky when it comes to their diets. Stomach studies on cormorants have shown that they will eat not only the smaller baitfish but salmon up to 16 inches, pike, walleye, bass and perch.

In other studies, cormorants have been fitted with radio tracking devices where it has been documented that cormorants will fly 25 miles daily searching for food before returning to their roost for the evening.

We, the Flint Chapter of Michigan Steelheaders believes that more research and more importantly, additional cormorant control is needed to help insure that our Great Lakes remains a valuable resource for everyone to enjoy and benefit from.

Please show your support for this worthwhile cause by making a contribution. Perch fishing in Lake Huron is starting to make a comeback in certain areas where cormorant control has been implemented for the past few years. Hopefully in the upcoming years we can enjoy a strong healthy salmon fishery once again as well.

Control efforts are currently being discussed for Lake Michigan where the cormorant population has exploded in recent years. Can you imagine Lake Michigan becoming what Lake Huron is now? The earlier we act, the quicker the solution. Make checks payable to **Flint River Valley Steelheaders**.

Please send donations to:

**Flint River Valley Steelheaders
Cormorant Control & Research
PO Box 320303
Flint, Michigan 48532**

Thank you and good fishing

Sincerely,

The Flint River Valley Steelheaders