



Resolution

for managing Great Cormorant populations at the European level

Resolution 1/2012. (VII.23.)

The European Anglers Federation (EAF), represents 10 European Union Member States⁽¹⁾ and close to 5 million European recreational fishermen. Since its inception, the Federation has been particularly concerned by the increase of the European population of the Great Cormorant (estimated at 600,000 in 1990, the population has grown to over 1,500,000 in 2010) and therefore proposes a new resolution.

At the community level, the Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) is protected by the November 30, 2009 Directive 2009/147/CE on the conservation of wild birds. In application of this directive, Member states are required to take protective measures for this species, and to ensure that the following are prohibited:

- Deliberate killing or capture by any method
- Deliberate destruction of, or damage to, their nests and eggs or removal of their nests
- Taking their eggs in the wild and keeping these eggs even if empty
- deliberate disturbance of these birds particularly during the period of breeding and rearing, in so far as disturbance would be significant having regard to the objectives of this Directive
- Keeping birds of species the hunting and capture of which is prohibited

The European Anglers Federation notes the following:

- That the Cormorant constitutes a genuine threat to the biodiversity represented by fish populations indigenous to the coastlines and continental plateau that issue from rivers and watercourses. Cormorants have an estimated daily need of 400-600g of fish per individual, and therefore capture more than 300,000 tonnes of fish in European waters annually.
- That permit shooting of Cormorants does not seem sufficiently effective in the absence of complementary population management measures (particularly on dormitories). Also, the cost-benefit ratio seems disproportionate to the results achieved.
- That it appears that permit shooting as a population management method has a negligible impact on bird populations at the European level, and no impact on the damage to fish stock. In fact, if we refer to biological indicators for fish species, there will necessarily be consequences to the objective for ecologically sound waters in 2012, required by Europe (Water Framework Directive).
- That permit shooting is burdensome, financially (4.5 million €), socially (discouragement and disgust on the part of volunteer managers of associations) and ecologically (pressure on certain endangered species and biological imbalance).
- That losses are particularly worrisome for already endangered species such as the Eel, classified as critically endangered and listed on the IUCN red list, that are also threatened by numerous anthropogenic activities. The threat to graylings, common nase and other cyprinids, as well as the Atlantic Salmon smolts is also significant. In fact, a number of species that have a high halieutic and ecological heritage value are subject to extensive predation, which can have a significant impact on fishing activities and on overall biodiversity.



The European Anglers Federation requests the following from the European institutions:

- The implementation of a Cormorant population management plan, that ensures the conservation of the species, the preservation of aquatic biodiversity, and the protection of halieutic interests.
- That, in respecting member state governance, the Commission confirms that regulating the Great Cormorant remains the Member State's responsibility, whilst defining a common shared framework that can provide clearer guidelines to Member States on modalities required to regulate Cormorant populations. These actions will have to be undertaken in the context of the Bird Directive.
- That Great Cormorant population managing methods **priorities interventions during the reproductive phase in nesting zones to reduce population growth.**

The European Anglers Federation (EAF) is ready to cooperate in full in order to achieve these objectives.

Budapest, 23 July 2012.

European Anglers Federation

References:

November 30, 2009 Directive 2009/147/CE of the European Parliament and Council for the conservation of wild birds, (JOUE L207 du 26/01/2010).

Heinz Kindermann Report, European Parliament Fishing Commission, June 27, 2008, Working report on the adoption of a European Cormorant Management plan to minimise the increasing impact of Cormorants on fish stocks, fishing and aquaculture.

(1) Austria – Belgium – Croatia – Czech Republic – France – Germany – Hungary – Italy – Poland – Slovakia.