

FEAP Resolution on the great cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis* to be a huntable species

Background

Aquaculture and fisheries sectors as well as open water systems (rivers, lakes and wetlands) have been suffering from depredations by cormorants on a pan-European scale for the last 40-50 years. The cormorant population has increased throughout this period significantly, estimated at more than 2 million individuals and consuming more than 1,000 tons of fish a day currently¹.

The cormorant clearly fulfils the definition of invasive species, causing significant economic damage (both direct and indirect), mainly at carp ponds, which have suffered millions of losses, both fish and Euros. Their activities pose a threat for the sustainability of the freshwater aquaculture sector, ecosystem services provided by ponds, lakes and wetlands and rural livelihoods.

In addition, cormorants are responsible for a steep decrease of water biodiversity (e.g. loss of brown trout, grayling and other rheophiles), whilst also transmitting diseases and parasites. Their faeces contribute to water eutrophication by phosphorus/nitrogen load and have a herbicidal effect on vegetation close to the nesting sites.

Though the cormorant has received lower level of protection in some EU member states in recent years, licences for the derogation system under Art. 9(1) of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC have to be issued locally/regionally, incurring all the administrative burdens and restrictions demanded by the local/regional nature protection authority.

¹ European Parliament forum: "Cormorant: management needed across the borders"