

Fish and Wildlife  
Policy Branch  
300 Water Street  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor N  
Peterborough ON K9J 3C7

Direction des politiques relatives au  
poisson et à la faune  
300, rue Water  
5<sup>e</sup> étage Nord  
Peterborough (Ontario) K9J 3C7

July 31, 2020

**SUBJECT: Decision on double-crested cormorant hunting season**

Greetings,

I am writing to share information on the recent decision to create a fall hunting season for double-crested cormorants.

On November 20, 2018 the ministry wrote to your community/organization seeking input on a proposal to create a hunting season for double-crested cormorant. The ministry heard back from a few Indigenous communities, who expressed support for the hunt but expressed concern over the proposed high harvest limit of 50 birds and allowing hunting during the spring and summer. Similar concerns were heard from others who provided feedback on the proposal. In response to these concerns, the ministry has reduced the harvest limit from 50 birds to 15 birds per day and reduced the season length to only occur during the fall from September 15 to December 31.

Amendments have been made to regulations under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997* (FWCA) to create a fall hunting season for double-crested cormorants in Ontario. Provincially licensed hunters may hunt cormorants under the authority of an Outdoors Card and Small Game Licence in accordance with the FWCA and small game hunting requirements. The following additional rules apply:

1. Open season: September 15 to December 31 in all Wildlife Management Units.
2. Harvest limit: 15 birds per day.
3. Firearms: Shotguns (including muzzle-loading shotguns) not larger than 10 gauge with non-toxic ammunition. Shotgun cannot be loaded with a shell containing a single projectile.
4. Use of vehicles: Hunters are permitted to hunt double-crested cormorant from a stationary motorboat (motorboat is not in motion and the power to the motor has been turned off).
5. Hunter orange: Hunters are exempt from the requirement to wear hunter orange during the open season for deer, elk or moose, which is consistent with hunting migratory game birds (other than woodcock).
6. Retrieval and disposal: Hunters must:
  - have adequate means of retrieving any bird that is shot, and
  - immediately retrieve the bird, dispatch the bird if it is alive when retrieved, and include it in their bag limit.

If hunters choose to not use the birds they harvest, they must dispose of the birds by either:

- delivering it to an approved waste disposal site that permits the disposal of dead animals.

- delivering it to a disposal facility, or using the services of a licensed collector, under the Disposal of Deadstock Regulation (Ontario Regulation 105/09) made under the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001.
- burying it on private land owned by the hunter, or on private land occupied by the hunter with consent of the land owner.

All other relevant federal, provincial, and municipal laws/rules related to hunting apply (e.g. trespassing, municipal discharge of firearms by-laws, federal firearm licensing requirements, etc.).

To support the hunting season, the ministry has initiated a cormorant monitoring program to assess population status and trends.

Additional information is provided in the decision notice (<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/013-4124>) and will be available on the Ontario.ca hunting notices and updates page (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/hunting-notices-and-updates>).

Ontario continues to respect the Aboriginal and treaty rights of Aboriginal communities and remains committed to meeting any constitutional obligations in respect of Aboriginal peoples.

If you have any questions, please contact [wildlifepolicy@ontario.ca](mailto:wildlifepolicy@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

*Jamie Stewart* **FOR**

Christie Curley  
A/Director, Fish and Wildlife Policy Branch

Christie Curley | A/Director | Fish & Wildlife Policy Branch | Policy Division | Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry | 300 Water St, 5th Floor North Tower, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 8M5 | ph: 705-875-8236 |

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