

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

H.C.R. 23
By: Clark (Haywood)
Natural Resources
4/27/1999
Engrossed

DIGEST

Over the last three decades, the double-crested cormorant (cormorant) population has increased exponentially. Cormorants nest as far north as Alaska and as far east as the Atlantic Coast, then come to the Gulf of Mexico for the winter and return home in April. Cormorants have a documented reputation as being voracious eaters of commercially valuable fish such as bass, catfish, shad, and bluegill, and these birds are suspected of threatening the economic well-being of sport fishing in Texas, which sustains over 50,000 jobs and is a 2 billion dollar industry. Trapping and shooting cormorants is currently illegal because they are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. H.C.R. 23 requests the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to include the economic impact of cormorants on sport fishing, and seeks the removal of this bird from the protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

PURPOSE

As proposed, H.C.R. 23 submits the following resolutions:

That the 76th legislature request the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to include the economic impact of the cormorant on sport fishing in its ongoing evaluation of the double-crested cormorant, and that USFWS create a contingency plan for addressing site-specific cormorant problems.

That USFWS consider removing the double-crested cormorant from Migratory Bird Treaty Act protection if severe control methods are warranted by economic losses.

That the secretary of state forward an official copy of this resolution to the director of US fauna.