



# *Oneida Lake Association, Inc.*

Oneida Lake Association, Inc., P.O. Box 3536, Syracuse, NY 13220

## **Oneida Lake Association**

### **Board of Director's Position Statement**

#### **Regarding: Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) on Oneida Lake**

The presence of Double Crested Cormorants has been extremely detrimental to island and shoreline habitat and to the well being of other species on Oneida Lake, particularly the Common Tern. We also feel that ongoing research verifies that Cormorant predation has been the dominant force behind the critical decline of Yellow Perch and Walleye population numbers. We feel that this has occurred since the birds arrival and its logarithmic expansion, which basically began on Oneida in the mid-eighties. Previously, Cormorants were only rare visitors to the lake.

We ask that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation reduce the presence of Cormorants on the lake at all times of the year, more so than what was done in 2002, using any means the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will currently permit. For example, we recommend that beginning in April of 2003, and in subsequent springs, all small islands on the lake be gridded, and that harassment techniques be implemented on the large islands and along shore, to prevent Cormorant roosting. We recommend that fall harassment needs to begin earlier, as migrant Cormorants arrive, and that buffer zones be created around habitat used by other colonial water birds and waterfowl, in order to prevent disturbance from harassment activities. If in the future, regulation change occurs that allows other effective methods of reducing Cormorant numbers on the lake, we ask the State to utilize them. Reduction efforts should be carried out as soon as possible, by animal control professionals at public expense.

Although our Board recognizes the importance of having diverse species on the lake, we feel it is imperative that Cormorant predation needs to be reduced so dramatically that there is no measurable impact on Oneida Lake's habitat, other species, and fish populations.

The Association is committed to a policy that reduction efforts on Oneida Lake does not just chase birds to some other vulnerable and relatively small body of water. We ask that funding resources be brought to bear to determine the movement of birds once they have left Oneida Lake, and that those funding resources be utilized to prevent simple relocation.

Modified March 18, 2003

***"It's Your Lake, Help To Preserve It"***