



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Oneida Lake Cormorant Management

2018 Review and Plans for 2019

May 1, 2019

Cormorant Management

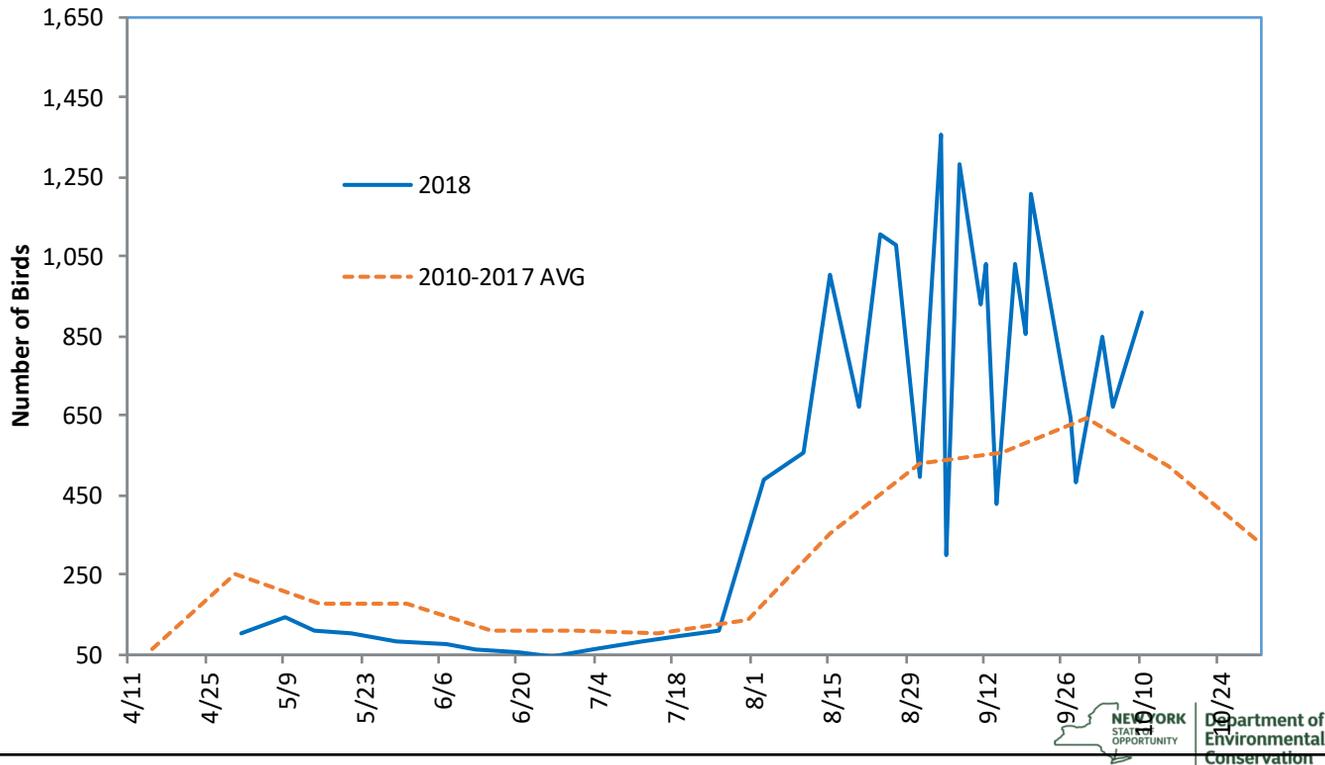
In 2016, USFWS Depredation Order Challenged in Court by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) which resulted in loss of ability to conduct lethal control activities for most purposes in 2016

- In 2017 the Department requested and received a Scientific Collectors Permit from the USFWS to collect up to 220 cormorants/year as part of a long-term diet study with Cornell – Permit good through 2019
- For 2018 the USFWS issued a new depredation order that authorizes lethal control for aquaculture facilities, protections of habitat and endangered and threatened species, but not for protection of wild fish stocks
- USFWS is still preparing an Environmental Assessment related to cormorant impacts on wild fish stocks. Will not be complete for 2019 and we do not know what it will allow
- DEC will apply for a new Scientific Collectors Permit from USFWS later this year to continue the diet study



2018 Count Summary

Comparison of DCC Numbers on Oneida Lake 2010-2018



2018 Cormorant Diets

Cormorant Diets (by number; n = 220 birds):

Round goby – 48% (12% in 2017)
Gizzard Shad – 26% (47% in 2017)
Yellow Perch – 13%
Emerald shiner – 6%
Walleye - 3%

29 walleye total

By weight:

Yellow perch – 36%
Walleye – 19%
Gizzard shad – 17%
Round goby – 17%



2019 Cormorant Management Plan

Late April – July:

One day per week ($\frac{1}{2}$ day count, $\frac{1}{2}$ day hazing) provided numbers stay at or near the target population level of 100 cormorants on the lake. Increase effort to two days per week if population exceeds target by more than ~50%.

August - September:

Two - Three days per week. Counts to be conducted Monday mornings and hazing only the remainder of the week.

October:

Counts one day per week. Hazing, if necessary.

November:

Weather permitting, counts and hazing if late migrants show up again as in 2018

Region 7 Fisheries Activities

Access Initiatives:

Cleveland Dock – work to stabilize docks expected to occur this year

Boat launch site developments:

Cayuga Lake at Mud Lock – reconstruction complete and site open

Otisco Lake – construction expected to begin late summer / early fall

Onondaga Lake – construction expected late spring / early summer

Seneca River – construction expected within weeks

Cayuga Inlet Fishway Operations:

This spring staff passed more than 800 rainbow trout at the Fishway – one of the highest total since 1996.

Sea Lamprey Control at Cayuga Lake:

Fisheries staff will be assessing larval lamprey densities in Cayuga Inlet and making a determination about whether application of lampricide (TFM) is necessary.

