

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Minnesota DNR determines cormorant control on Pelican Lake not currently warranted

Data show walleye gains

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has determined that cormorant population control is not currently warranted at Pelican Lake in Grant County. The decision follows data showing walleye numbers in Pelican Lake improved in 2022 and 2023.

“When the Pelican Lake walleye population declined sharply in 2021, the DNR looked at the cormorant population as a potential factor,” DNR Fisheries Northwest Regional Manager Marc Bacigalupi said. “The good news is that the 2022 and 2023 walleye year-classes appear to be strong. The DNR will survey cormorants and fish in Pelican Lake again in 2024. We have an ongoing commitment to manage these fish and cormorant populations.”

Bacigalupi also thanked everyone who participated in a 2023 public input process on fish and cormorant population management alternatives at Pelican Lake.

The 2023 gillnet catch rate in Pelican Lake rebounded to 7.5 walleyes per net, just below the management plan goal of eight walleyes per net, from 5.3 walleyes per net in 2021.

Cormorants on Egret Island in Pelican Lake were counted in 2022 and 2023. Nest counts are lower than previous counts from 2015 and 2020.

The DNR will be developing an adaptive monitoring and management plan for the Pelican Lake fishery and Egret Island cormorant colony. An adaptive management plan is a process that identifies when management may be warranted, along with an approach to monitor the outcomes of any management.

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