



The Double-Crested Cormorant: Symbol of Ecological Conflict

Dennis Wild

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This is the story of the survival, recovery, astonishing success, and controversial status of the double-crested cormorant. After surviving near extinction driven by DDT and other contaminants from the 1940s through the early 1970s, the cormorant has made an unprecedented comeback from mere dozens to a population in the millions, bringing the bird again into direct conflict with humans. Hated for its colonial nesting behavior; the changes it brings to landscapes; and especially its competition with commercial and sports fishers, fisheries, and fish farmers throughout the Great Lakes and Mississippi Delta regions, the cormorant continues to be persecuted by various means, including the shotgun.

In *The Double-Crested Cormorant*, Dennis Wild brings together the biological, social, legal, and international aspects of the cormorant's world to give a complete and balanced view of one of the Great Lakes' and perhaps North America's most misunderstood species. In addition to taking a detailed look at the complex natural history of the cormorant, the book explores the implications of congressional acts and international treaties, the workings and philosophies of state and federal wildlife agencies, the unrelenting efforts of aquaculture and fishing interests to "cull" cormorant numbers to "acceptable" levels, and the reactions and visions of conservation groups. Wild examines both popular preconceptions about cormorants (what kinds of fish they eat and how much) and the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to control the cormorant population. Finally, the book delves into the question of climate and terrain changes, their consequences for cormorants, the new territories to which the birds must adapt, and the conflicts this species is likely to face going forward.

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