

# Oppose Cormorant Shoot

BY GARY SCHNEIDER

The Prince Edward Island Fish and Wildlife Division's proposal to allow the shooting of double-crested cormorants is drawing flack from various quarters, especially since copies of Anne Gallant's original report have been obtained. At the May 6 meeting of the Natural History Society, about 40 members voted to go on record as being against the shooting of cormorants (with the exception of nuisance permits for private pond owners and fish hatcheries). Three votes were cast in support of the proposal.

At a special meeting to discuss the issue, held April 22, motions were passed to oppose any control of cormorants at their colonies, seek better enforcement of existing colonial nesting

sites through the addition of part-time conservation officers and to voice our concern over the PEI Wildlife Federation's proposal for a fall hunting season. Letters protesting the Fish and Wildlife Division's proposal were read and both sides of the issue were discussed. A motion that the Natural History Society ask that no hunting be allowed until more information was received drew even support from both sides (6-6) and it was decided to have an open vote at the May meeting.

At the special meeting the following motions were also passed: to ask for a copy of the full report from Fish and Wildlife and Anne Gallant; to ask Fish and Wildlife to obtain and provide more information on the impact of cormorants on trout in freshwater ponds; to ask Fish and Wildlife for more information on total trout harvest, daily bag harvest and population estimates; to seek compulsory fishing licences (maintaining complimentary licences to seniors, young anglers, and farmers and fishermen and their families); to ask for a yearly census of licencees; to seek an incentive program for the provision of buffer strips along ponds and streams.

The Division's decision not to release Anne Gallant's report (they still have only released excerpts) has left a feeling of suspicion among some of those who have managed to get their hands on the full report. Why was the fact that the cormorants collected with trout in their stomachs came from only 7 ponds? Excerpts should not leave out such key information. They should also not be used to bend the facts to suit Fish and Wildlife's wishes.

In the May 7 edition of the Eastern Graphic, Publisher-Editor Jim MacNeill had the following to say: "The controversial stand by the PEI Fish and Wildlife Division to allow the shooting of cormorants isn't supported by the study carried out last year on behalf of the Division."

