

Rep. Lower offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 154.

A resolution to encourage the Natural Resources Commission to add Sandhill cranes to the game species list and seek U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval to establish a Sandhill crane hunting season.

Whereas, Michigan is home to an ever increasing population of Sandhill cranes. An estimated 23,082 Sandhill cranes were reported in Michigan's 2015 population survey, and over the past 10 years, the population has grown an average of 9.4 percent annually; and

Whereas, The increased Sandhill crane population in Michigan has created a conflict with Michigan farmers as the Sandhill cranes feed on seeds of germinating corn during their spring migratory season. The number of nuisance permits issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to farmers in Michigan to eradicate Sandhill cranes that are damaging their crops has increased from 13 in 2006 to 85 in 2013. Just half of the 2,002 Sandhill cranes authorized for killing in 2013 were taken; and

Whereas, Sandhill cranes killed under nuisance permits are a wasted resource as the meat is not harvested. Hunting Sandhill cranes would both help control the damage caused by cranes and offer Michigan residents an opportunity to harvest exceptional game meat; and

Whereas, Sandhill cranes are already hunted in Minnesota, Tennessee, and Kentucky when they migrate beyond Michigan's borders. They are classified as a game species under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1916; and

Whereas, Hunting seasons are strictly regulated by the Mississippi Flyway Council and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that the Sandhill crane population remains robust. Under the *Eastern Population Crane Management Plan*, states may only receive approval for a hunting season after submitting pertinent information to the Mississippi Flyway Council, including an estimate of the peak number of Sandhill cranes and time of migration over a five-year period, proposed number of permits to be issued, and proposed season dates. States with hunting seasons are required to gather information from hunters and track the Sandhill crane population; and

Whereas, The Sandhill crane population in Michigan continues to grow even as the number of nuisance permits issued increases. However, overpopulation and continued damage to crops is a real concern if the species is not properly managed. A hunting season will benefit farmers, hunters, and the growing Sandhill crane population; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we encourage the Natural Resources Commission to add Sandhill cranes to the game species list and seek U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval to establish a Sandhill crane hunting season; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the members of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, the Director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the Governor of Michigan.