

# HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 61

Reps. Lower, Eisen and Lightner offered the following resolution:

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

5           Whereas, Michigan is home to an ever-increasing population of  
6 Sandhill cranes. The 2016 Michigan Breeding Waterfowl Survey  
7 estimates 48,900 spring breeding Sandhill cranes, and over the past  
8 10 years, the population has grown an average of 9.4 percent  
9 annually; and

10           Whereas, The increased Sandhill crane population in Michigan  
11 has created a conflict with Michigan farmers as the Sandhill cranes  
12 feed on seeds of germinating corn during their spring migratory



1 season. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to receive  
 2 numerous requests from Michigan farmers for nuisance permits  
 3 allowing them to kill Sandhill cranes that are damaging their  
 4 crops; and

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

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

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

25       Whereas, The Sandhill crane population in Michigan continues  
 26 to grow. However, overpopulation and continued damage to crops are  
 27 real concerns if the species is not properly managed. A hunting  
 28 season will benefit farmers, hunters, and the growing Sandhill  
 29 crane population; now, therefore, be it



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

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

