



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Portland District

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

### **Double-crested Cormorant Management Plan to Reduce Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River Estuary Clatsop County, Oregon**

CENWP-PM-E-14-08

Issue Date: June 12, 2014

Expiration Date: August 4, 2014

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District is seeking public comment on the *Double-crested Cormorant Management Plan to Reduce Predation of Juvenile Salmonids in the Columbia River Estuary* draft EIS. The Corps is evaluating several alternatives in the draft EIS outlining management strategies to reduce double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) predation impacts on juvenile salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.) and steelhead (*O. mykiss*) in the Columbia River Estuary. The draft EIS is available on the Corps website at: [www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS](http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS). Email the Corps at [cormorant-eis@usace.army.mil](mailto:cormorant-eis@usace.army.mil) to request a paper copy.

Development and implementation of a management plan is a requirement under the Corps' Endangered Species Act consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the operation of the hydropower dams that make up the Federal Columbia River Power System. Double-crested cormorants are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and are native to the Columbia River Estuary. Over the last decade, a large colony nesting on East Sand Island near the mouth of the Columbia River has consumed approximately 11 million juvenile salmonids per year. In recent years (2011-2013) consumption has averaged 18.5 million per year.

The Corps is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife are cooperating agencies to the EIS.

The proposed alternatives consider implementing non-lethal and lethal actions to reduce the colony size on East Sand Island and limit their dispersal within the Columbia River Estuary. Non-lethal methods considered include various hazing techniques to reduce colony size and conducting hazing activities off East Sand Island if new colonies establish throughout the Columbia River Estuary. Lethal methods considered include take of eggs and shooting individual double-crested cormorants. Monitoring would occur to assess effectiveness of management actions and the impacts of the proposed action to the western population of double-crested cormorants. Field techniques and timing of actions could vary from year to year under an adaptive framework.

As a part of long term management, once the target colony size is attained, the Corps is proposing to modify the terrain of East Sand Island to inundate nesting habitat for double-crested cormorants. This would occur by excavating sand on the western portion of the island and placing rock armor along the northern shore to ensure stabilization of the island. Placement of rock armor below high tide line would constitute a fill under the Clean Water Act. Disposal locations for the excavated sand (dredged material) would occur on the island, either along the shoreline and/or in upland areas where feasible to avoid impacts to delineated wetlands on the island. Some delineated tidal estuarine wetlands on the eastern

portion of the island may be filled. The draft EIS provides more information on the proposed quantities of fill, excavation and disposal as well as information on waters of the U.S. present on the island and the impacts on those waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

**Public comment:** The public comment period is intended to provide those interested in or affected by this action, an opportunity to make their concerns known. Specifically the Corps is seeking input that can inform our decision or analysis. After receiving public comments, the Corps and cooperating agencies will address substantive comments and incorporating them into a final EIS which will be made available to the public. Any person who has an interest which may be affected by the disposal of dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest which may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by the activity. Please note that the Corps will hold public meetings, as described below.

**Public meetings:** The Corps will host two open house public meetings and two public webinar/conference calls in July during the comment period.

Public meetings:

**July 10 - Portland, Ore., 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

Matt Dishman Community Center,  
77 N.E. Knott St., Portland, Ore.

**July 24 - Astoria, Ore., 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Best Western Lincoln Inn  
555 Hamburg Ave., Astoria, Ore.

Public webinar / conference calls:

July 15, 9:30 a.m.

July 21, 1:30 p.m.

For webinar connection information, visit

[www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS.aspx](http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS.aspx)

**Comment timeframe:** Comments on the draft EIS will be accepted for 45 days from publication of the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Publication is anticipated for June 19, 2014; therefore the comment period is expected to extend through Aug. 4, 2014.

**How to comment:** In your comments, please refer to the public notice number (CENWP-PM-E-14-08), title and date. Written comments may be sent electronically to [cormorant-eis@usace.army.mil](mailto:cormorant-eis@usace.army.mil) or by traditional mail to:

Sondra Ruckwardt  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineer District, Portland  
Attn: CENWP-PM-E / Double-crested Cormorant draft EIS  
P.O. Box 2946  
Portland, OR 97208-2946