



Joint Agency Fact Sheet: Inland Avian Predation Management Plan



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Redistributing Caspian terns in the mid-Columbia River

Caspian terns at seasonal nesting sites on Goose Island in Potholes Reservoir in Grant County, Washington, and Crescent Island in McNary Reservoir on the Columbia River in Walla Walla County, Washington, are major contributors to avian predation on Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed Columbia and Snake River salmon and steelhead during the spring juvenile outmigration through the mid-Columbia River.

Joint agency efforts led to development of Inland Avian Predation Management Plan

In 2008, the National Marine Fisheries Service issued a Biological Opinion (BiOp) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)—collectively referred to as the federal “Action Agencies”—for operation of the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) through 2018. As part of a broad suite of actions identified in the BiOp, the Action Agencies were advised to further evaluate the impacts of piscivorous or “fish-eating” birds on outmigrating juvenile salmon and steelhead through the mid-Columbia River, develop a management plan to decrease predation rates, and implement the plan if warranted.

As a result, the Corps and Reclamation developed an Inland Avian Predation Management Plan (Plan, or IAPMP) to address the effects Caspian terns nesting at these sites have on ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. The Plan, developed using the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, aims to redistribute Caspian terns from Goose and Crescent Island nesting colonies to other nesting sites in the western U.S. to reduce impacts on Columbia and Snake River ESA-listed salmon and steelhead. Implementation of the Plan began in 2014 at Goose Island and at Crescent Island in 2015, and has resulted in reduced predation on ESA-listed salmon and steelhead by terns nesting at these two islands.

The Plan includes attraction measures at alternative nesting habitat and dissuasion of Caspian terns from Goose and Crescent islands. Long-term dissuasion of Caspian terns from these two sites will be implemented through passive measures including installation of rope and flagging, plus planting of native vegetation. Additional active dissuasion measures including bird hazing efforts are anticipated to occur each nesting season through 2018.

Creating alternative Caspian tern nesting habitat at Don Edwards NWR

As part of the Plan, the Corps and Reclamation, in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, created alternative Caspian tern nesting habitat at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in San Francisco Bay in California prior to the spring 2015 Caspian tern nesting season. Creation of this alternative nesting habitat is intended to attract Caspian terns outside of the Columbia River basin to a location where predation on ESA-listed species is known to be lower. This habitat at Don Edwards NWR is now available along with other alternative Caspian tern nesting habitat throughout the western U.S. range of Caspian terns.

More information

The Inland Avian Predation Management Plan is available on the Corps’ Walla Walla District website at <http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/InlandAvianPredationManagementPlan.aspx> and on Reclamation’s website at <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/fcrps/documents/2014fonsiiap.pdf>. See Environmental Assessment “Appendix A” for the Plan.

Goose and Crescent Islands are closed to public access during the Caspian tern nesting season. Goose Island is closed from March 1 through September 15. Crescent Island is closed to public access at all times except for authorized waterfowl hunting seasons.

If you have questions, please contact Reclamation’s natural resource specialist for Goose Island actions at the Ephrata Field Office at 509-754-0205 or the Corps’ Walla Walla District for Crescent Island actions at 509-527-7020.

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