

Corps of Engineers Projects Threaten America's Fish and Game

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Crouching in an Arkansas River duck blind. Casting for salmon pulsing up the Columbia River. Peering through binoculars to watch swallows migrate along the Mississippi Flyway. Angling for shoal bass on the Apalachicola. Trolling for muskellunge on the St. Lawrence. Whatever the outdoor passion you pursue, Corps of Engineers' water projects could dramatically affect the fish and wildlife you treasure.



Throughout its history, the Corps has channeled, diked and dammed this country's rivers, lakes and streams. Too often, the agency works against natural systems, rather than with them, and damages wetlands, rivers,



streams and estuaries that are havens for fish and wildlife as a result.

"One of the greatest threats to the great outdoors used by hunters and anglers is the unabashed practice of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of changing our rivers, lakes, streams and lands from natural resources to industrial resources."

David Carruth, Board Member, National Wildlife Federation

Across the country, many of the Corps' water projects are taking a serious toll on the wildlife prized by America's hunters, anglers and birdwatchers...

NORTHWEST

SALMON AND STEELHEAD

Northwesterners treasure the wild salmon and steelhead of Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Yet, the Corps operates four expensive and unnecessary dams on the Lower Snake River to create a navigation channel to Lewiston, Idaho and generate just three to five percent of the region's power. The dams cut off the salmon and steelhead from critical spawning habitat and harm or kill young fish as they attempt to migrate back to the ocean. The federal Columbia River Basin salmon "restoration" plan wasted \$1.5 billion between 1997 and 2001 on failing attempts to save the salmon and steelhead.



Instead of spending billions to provide cheap transportation to a port 500 miles inland at Lewiston, Idaho, the Corps should remove the four dams and pursue alternatives to barge transportation, including upgrading the existing rail system that runs parallel to the rivers. Taxpayer dollars currently spent on trucking salmon around the dams could be redirected to offset modest increases in rail rates for agriculture. This alternative would save American tax dollars, help restore salmon and provide local communities with an improved transportation system.

DUNGENESS CRAB

The Dungeness crab fishery is worth between \$31.7 and \$84.4 million to Pacific Northwest coastal communities in Washington and Oregon. Yet, the Corps risks the crabs and the local economy with its proposal to deepen the Columbia River in the hopes of attracting more container traffic to the Port of Portland. Dumping the more than 100 million cubic yards of dredge spoils that will be generated by the deepening over the next 20 years offshore would smother essential crab habitat. Before moving forward with the \$148.4 million deepening, the Corps must determine whether the project is truly needed, given the capacities of other ports that already exist in the region.



"It would be one of the biggest environmental tragedies in the history of the Northwest if Snake River salmon were allowed to disappear. For 25 years, we've spent billions of dollars ignoring the needs of the fish in our quest to save the dams."
Jim Martin, NWF Board Member

MIDWEST

WHITE-FRONTED GEESE, TUNDRA SWANS, PINTAILS, PLOVERS, SWALLOWS AND WARBLERS



Dredge Oregon at Harrington

The Corps has spent years manipulating economic mod-

els to justify a \$2.3 billion navigation lock expansion on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Both rivers are central to the Mississippi Flyway, which is the longest bird migration route in North America and supports more than 40 percent of

the continent's migratory birds. The Corps continues to use outdated, discredited models to justify extension or new construction of seven or 12 nearly 1,200 foot locks. The Corps claims that the project is needed to accommodate additional barges, even though waterway traffic has not increased in more than two decades. Constrained by levees and impounded by 37 locks and dams, scientists say the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers are already barreling toward ecological collapse as their side channels and sloughs fill with silt and sediment. The Corps must halt its plans to expand this navigation system, which would further threaten fish, endanger mussels and jeopardize birds on the Mississippi Flyway.

"The Corps' poor management of the Missouri River has led to unstable and ill-timed water levels that threaten our region's prized game fish. These lost fishing opportunities are straining local economies and sending anglers elsewhere."

Dave Pavlicek, Member, Montana Wildlife Federation

increase economic benefits to the nation and the region. It is time to modernize management of the Missouri River to reflect the region's true needs.

PADDLEFISH, STURGEON, CARP, CATFISH AND CHUB

The Missouri River's navigation, hydropower and flood control system, constructed by the Corps, consists of several upstream dams in Montana, North and South Dakota and a navigation channel between Sioux City, Iowa and St. Louis, Missouri. The Corps' has already altered the Missouri River and eliminated large portions of its side channels and backwaters, which provide important habitat for game fish, as well as many birds including the Least Tern, Piping Plover, Great Blue Heron, Killdeer, Sandpiper and Mountain Plover. The Corps favors operating the dams to maintain static flows to benefit a trickle of commercial barge traffic. Restoring the Missouri River's natural flow regime would benefit fish and wildlife and

GREAT LAKES

LAKE TROUT, WALLEYE, MUSKELLUNGE, SMALL MOUTH BASS AND YELLOW PERCH

Predictions of increased ocean-going shipping through the Great Lakes have never come true. Nevertheless, the Corps is studying a plan to



deepen and widen shipping channels and expand locks to accommodate additional and larger ocean-going ships. The dredging would occur in some of the region's most fragile areas, destroying fish habitat and resuspending PCBs, mercury and other

buried pollutants. Extensive dredging would also lower lake levels, which would also negatively affect fish habitat and recreational boating. Invasive species such as zebra mussels are already a serious problem in the Great Lakes.

Some seventy-two percent of the aquatic invasive species that have entered the Great Lakes since the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway have come through the ballast tanks of ocean-going ships, according to the International Association for Great Lakes Research. Expanding the navigation system will exacerbate this problem, and the Corps must stop pushing the misguided project.

"You can't measure the importance of the Great Lakes to the Midwestern angler. The beauty of these bodies of water, the serenity of a day spent fishing on them, the abundance of life they sustain, not to mention the economic benefits these lakes provide this region of the country. The Great Lakes Navigation Project, in essence, robs us of the Great Lakes experience."

Jean Flemma,
Executive Director,
Prairie Rivers
Network



USACE

Great Lakes Navigation Project

NEW ENGLAND

ATLANTIC SALMON AND TROUT

Old and outdated Corps dams that sit on the West River, a tributary to the Connecticut River, threaten many coldwater fish in New England with erratic streamflow and increased water temperatures. The Connecticut and West Rivers are strategically important to the federal Atlantic salmon recovery program and provide important habitat for other sport fish, including brook trout, rainbow trout, and brown trout. Unfortunately, the Corps' dams lack modern equipment and operating plans that would allow the incremental changes to water flow, temperatures and water quality needed to replicate the natural seasonal water flow variations that the fish require. The dams also allow the water flow to scour and erode river banks and beds. Too much sediment from erosion destroys fish habitat, damages gills on fish and aquatic insects, and smothers eggs in spawning grounds. The Corps must modernize its dam operations and restore the natural water flow necessary for New England game and fish species.



\$208,000 per farmer. By pumping water out of the White River, the project would threaten the extraordinary White River and Cache River

National Wildlife Refuges, which create habitat for the largest concentration of wintering mallard ducks in North America. The result would hurt the region's multi-million dollar hunting, recreation and eco-tourism

industry. Congress must deauthorize the Grand Prairie Demonstration Project and push the Corps to pursue alternatives that are better for the environment and taxpayers.



"Hunters and anglers do a great service to the economy. In Arkansas, a duck hunter

needs about \$1,100 worth of equipment for his sport. A deer hunter spends about \$828 before he goes out. Some competitive bass fishers have \$1,000 invested in tackle and bait at any given time and a new bass boat costs around \$25,000. Now, what good is all this equipment and this investment if there isn't any game to hunt or fish to catch?"

Jim Wood, Director At-Large, Executive Board of the Arkansas Wildlife Federation, Former Corps of Engineers Employee and current Greening the Corps Activist

SOUTH

MALLARDS

The Corps' Grand Prairie Irrigation Demonstration project would have the capacity to divert more than 100 billion gallons of White River water annually for irrigation in Arkansas' Grand Prairie region at a cost to taxpayers of



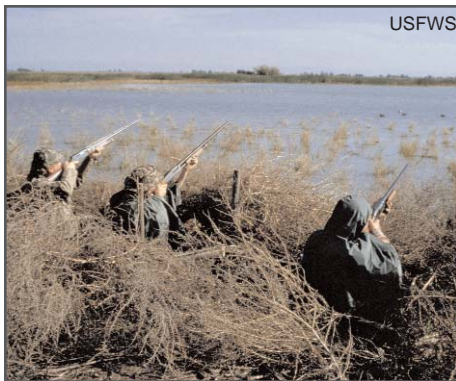
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SHOAL BASS

Although the Apalachicola River in the panhandle of Florida is rarely used for barge traffic, the Corps spends \$10 million annually to maintain it for that purpose. During the last full year that barging took place, each barge trip down the ten mile channel cost taxpayers between \$30,000 and \$60,000. Decrying this subsidy, Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO) remarked that it would be cheaper to ship the cargo by limousine. Since 2002, there has been virtually no traffic on the river, making the Apalachicola River America's most wasteful waterway. Yet, the Corps continues to dredge and dispose of spoils along the river's banks, smothering biologically rich wetlands and natural bank habitat with mountains of sand. Game fish populations near the Corps' disposal sites have declined by 50 percent to 75 percent.

"Wetlands such as the Apalachicola River floodplain are critical to our wildlife. The Corps simply must do a better job of protecting these wetlands for wildlife habitat."

Manley K. Fuller III
President, Executive Director
Florida Wildlife Federation



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WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

The National Wildlife Federation works to protect people and wildlife that depend on our country's water resources by challenging environmentally damaging and economically unsound Corps projects. In addition, NWF supports Corps activities that benefit the environment and pursues policies that will steer the Corps toward science-based environmentally sustainable projects that make sense for taxpayers. Reforming the Corps must include four elements.

● ACCOUNTABILITY

The Corps must be held accountable to make sure its forecasts of project benefits, costs and impact estimates are accurate and projects the Corps builds are truly in the public's best interests.

● MODERNIZATION

The Corps must modernize its priorities and approach to water resources to reflect the value society places on a healthy environment

● PRIORITIZATION

The Administration and Congress must set clear priorities for the Corps.

● EQUITY

Beneficiaries of Corps projects must pay their fair share to better protect taxpayers.

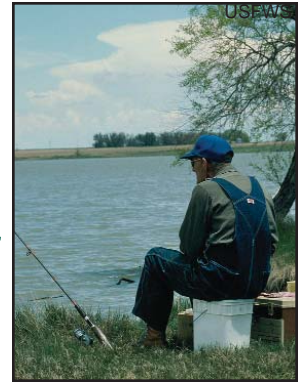
FOR MORE INFORMATION

visit our website at
www.nwf.org
or contact **Kate Costenbader**,
NWF's aquatic habitat
restoration coordinator at
202-797-6869.
<http://www.nwf.org/resourcelibrary>

"I wish we had more anglers in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Taking my child fishing, I inevitably face the issue of having to say 'that stream use to be a great fishery, but the water has been diverted or contaminated.'"

Dr. Steve
Torbit,

Director, Rocky Mountain Natural
Resource Center National Wildlife
Federation



TAKE ACTION

The only way to reform the Corps is for the public to demand change. Let the Corps know that sportsmen and women want to reform the Corps for the benefit of all who enjoy the outdoors.

What Can You Do?

Engage Elected Officials

Contact your local and federal representatives to let them know that the Corps should be reformed to operate under the principles of accountability, modernization, prioritization and equity.

Stay Informed

Go to www.nwf.org under "action" to join the Corps to receive action alerts and updates.

Get Your Organization Involved

Encourage your organization to join the Corps Reform Network. If your state, local or national organization is interested in working with others committed to Corps reform, joining the Corps Reform Network is a great opportunity to get information and tools to help make a difference.