

SALMON ADVISORY SUBPANEL REPORT ON THE COLUMBIA RIVER CORMORANT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) met via webinar with the Salmon Technical Team and members of the Lower Columbia River Natural Coho Workgroup (LRC Workgroup) on Thursday, June 12, 2014. The SAS received a presentation from Ms. Joyce Casey, the Environmental Chief of the Portland District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The SAS had a good discussion of the issue despite the later than anticipated release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement the morning of the webinar.

The SAS supports efforts to reduce predation on salmonids by double-crested cormorants and recommends that the Council send a letter to the USACE in favor of Alternative C: Lethal Focus. The SAS believes that this alternative is the most effective way to achieve the goals of the current Biological Opinion on Columbia River salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act. The SAS does not support non-lethal alternatives because birds often become acclimated to hazing efforts and, when effective, hazing simply displaces birds, creating predation problems in other parts of the Columbia River Basin or in other river systems.

The SAS would like to stress that achieving the target level of 5,380 to 5,939 nesting pairs through Alternative C and lethal methods is a good first step towards addressing the avian predation problem and should be considered a minimal effort. At this level of nesting, cormorants will continue to present a formidable challenge to salmon survival in the estuary, particularly when combined with avian predation from other bird species.

PFMC
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