



News Release

**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Missouri River Region
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OMAHA -- The Army Corps of Engineers announced today it is extending the comment period on the draft biological opinion prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service until Tuesday, October 10.

Originally slated to end September 29, the extension was granted by Dr. Joseph Westphal, Assistant Secretary of the Army, following requests by the governors of Missouri and Iowa and numerous other interest groups and individuals.

The draft opinion is posted on the Corps' Northwestern Division homepage at www.nwd.usace.army.mil. It is also available on compact disk. Comments are being accepted by mail or via the Internet.

The Service prepared the draft opinion as part of its section 7 Endangered Species Act consultations with the Corps. The document covers the current operations of the Missouri River main stem dams and reservoirs, the bank stabilization and navigation channel from Sioux City, Iowa, to the mouth, and the Corps' operation of its dams on the Kansas River.

The opinion describes actions the Corps must take to avoid jeopardizing the continued existence of three species of fish and shorebirds listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. These actions concentrate on the regulation of river flows, adaptive management efforts, reservoir storage, and habitat restoration initiatives.

Comments dealing with the biology contained in the draft will be provided to the Service for consideration as it proceeds with preparation of the final biological opinion that is due in early November. This opinion will provide significant input for the development of a preferred alternative for the revised draft environmental impact statement on the operation of the Missouri River dams.

The draft opinion is available at www.nwd.usace.arm.mil. For a free compact disk or to comment on the draft, please write to: Project Manager, Master Water Control Manual Review and Update, Northwestern Division, 12565 West Center Road, Omaha, NE 68144.