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February 3, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: Todd Ungerecht, Policy Analyst, Idaho Office

SUBJECT: Feb. 11th Presentation of Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) on efforts to control avian predation impacts on Columbia and Snake River salmon and steelhead

Presenters: Mr. Jaime Pinkham, Executive Director of CRITFC and Mr. Blaine Parker, Fish Management Department of CRITFC

Summary: Mr. Pinkham and Mr. Parker will outline the growing adverse impact of avian predation and tribal cooperative efforts to control avian predation on juvenile salmon and steelhead smolts and Pacific Lamprey in the Columbia, Snake and other tributaries.

Background: Avian predation on out-migrating smolts has been identified as a significant factor limiting juvenile salmonid survival and Pacific Lamprey in the Columbia and Snake River Basins. According to Oregon State University's Dr. Dan Roby, prior to the federal agencies' implementing avian management programs, Caspian terns and double-crested cormorants nesting on East Sand Island consumed up to 25 million smolts every year--roughly 15 percent of the surviving out-migrants to the estuary. Caspian terns nesting on Crescent and Goose islands in the inland Columbia Plateau region consumed between 5 to 30 percent of out-migrating smolts annually, including Endangered Species Act-listed steelhead populations. Addressing avian predation concerns has been a component of Biological Opinions and Reasonable and Prudent Alternatives (RPAs) associated with the management of the Federal

Columbia River Power System, and to meet tribal treaty trust responsibilities.

Since the 1990's CRITFC has cooperated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to address concerns about the impact of avian predation on the survival of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead smolts, including strategies to reduce predation rates on smolts by Caspian terns and double-crested cormorants on East Sand island in the estuary, and Caspian terns on Crescent Island in McNary Reservoir and on Goose Island in Potholes Reservoir.

Amongst concerns that current USFWS and USACE management strategies have not been successful in controlling avian predation in the region, CRITFC is urging USFWS and USACE, through adaptive management, to modify and intensify current federal predator management strategies to reduce avian predation on ESA-listed salmon, steelhead and Pacific Lamprey.

Avian Predation

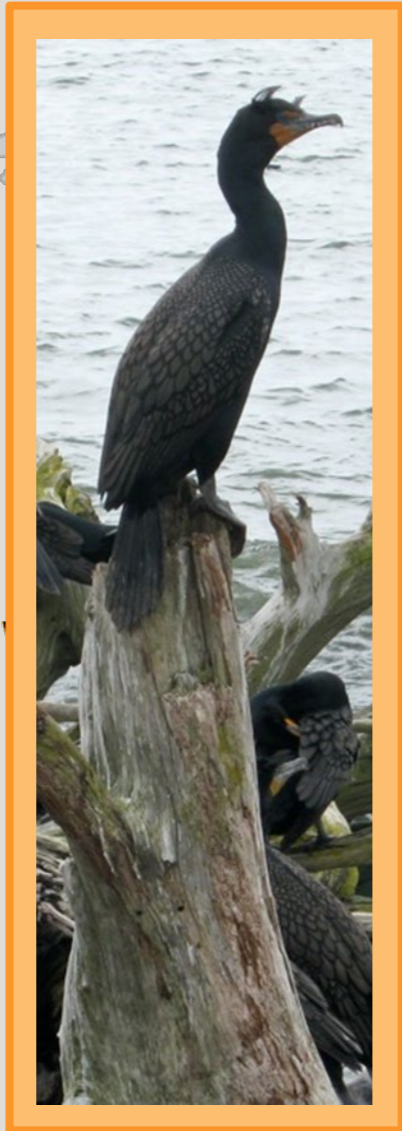
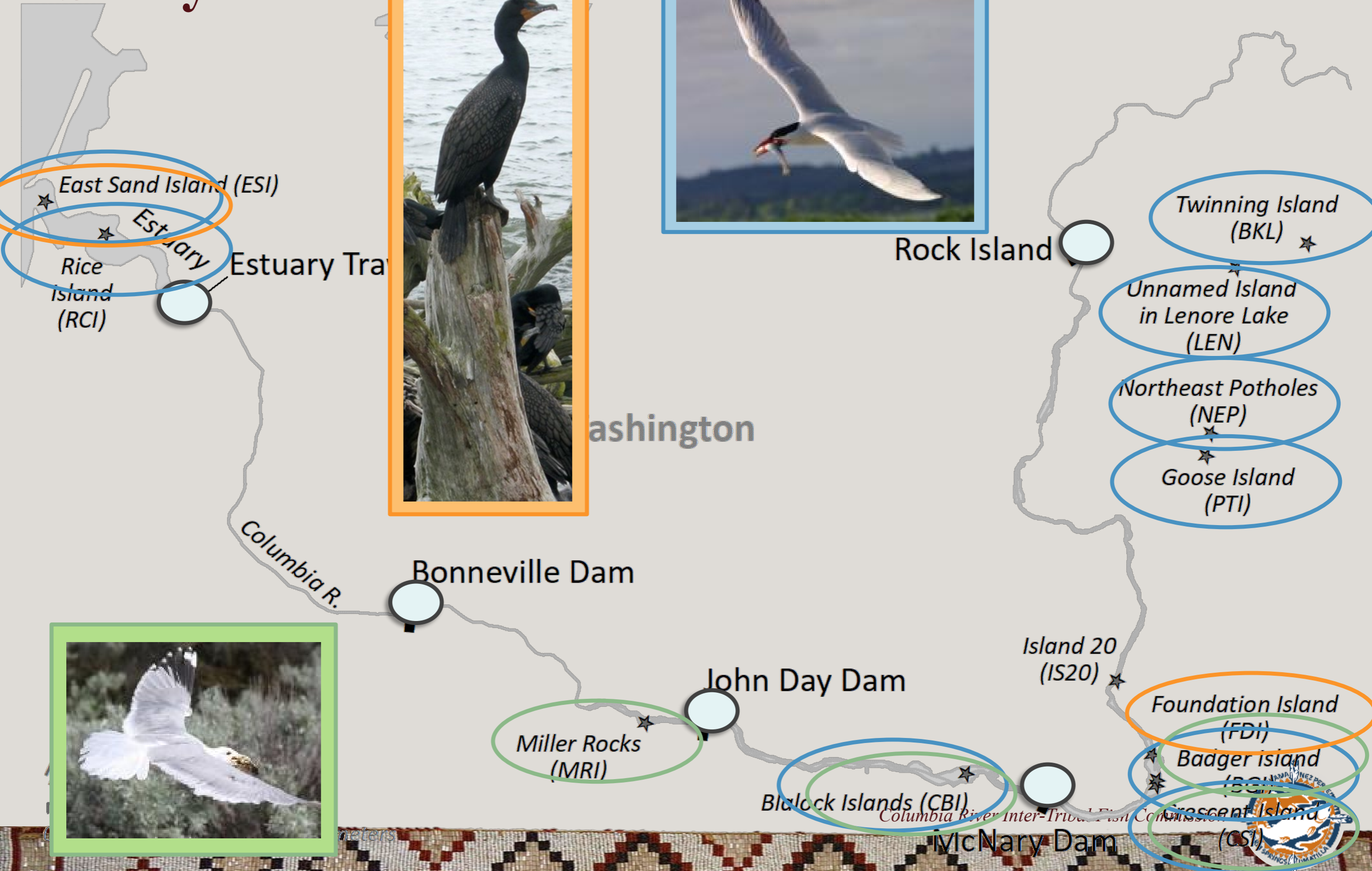
Jaime A. Pinkham, Executive Director

Blaine L. Parker, Avian Predation Coordinator

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission



Study Area



meters

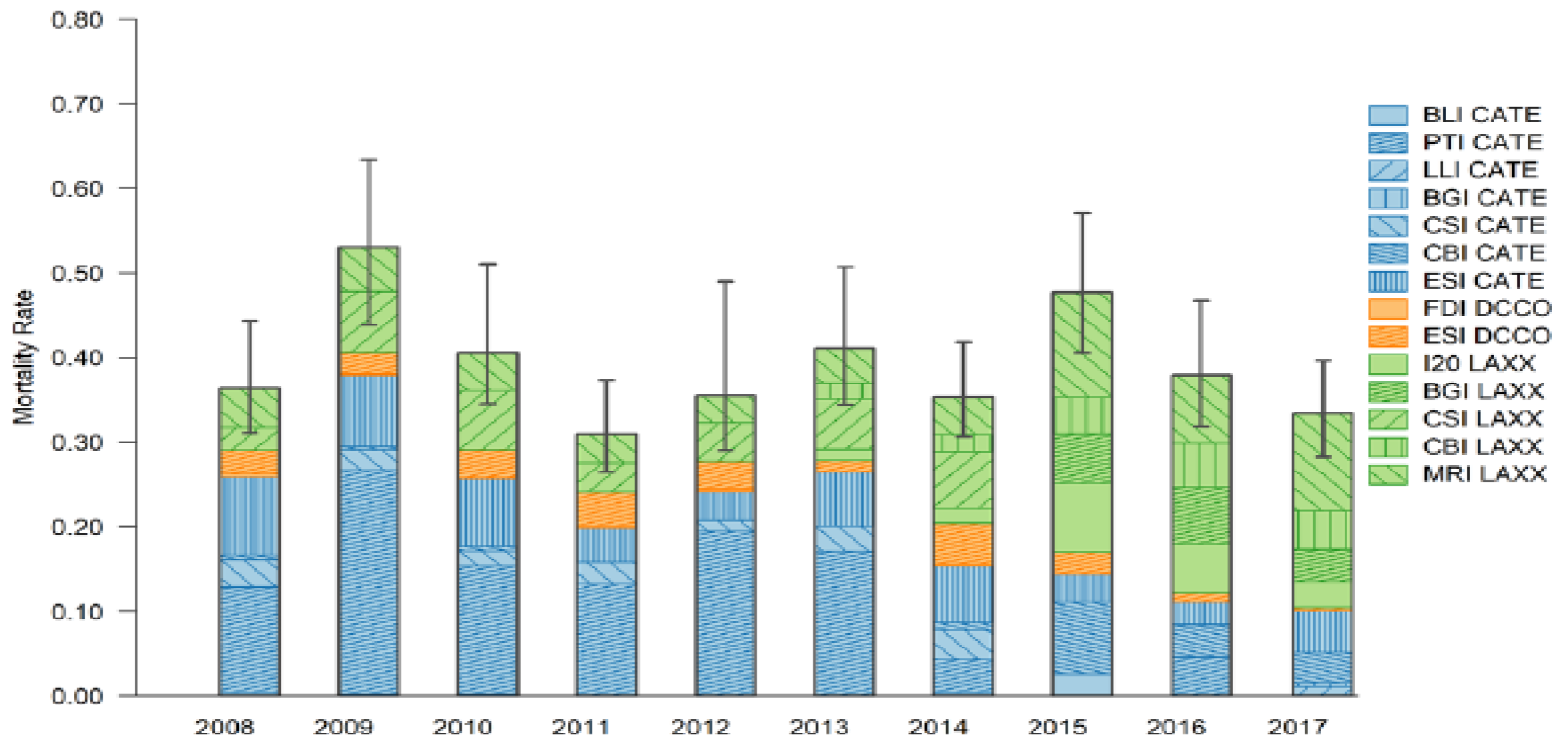
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission



System-wide Avian Predation on Upper Columbia River Steelhead

Roby and Evans, NPCC Meeting 9-5-19

Cumulative Predation (Rock Island Dam to Pacific Ocean)



Tribal and CRITFC Avian Predation Involvement

- CRITFC & OSU initiated early work on CT and DCC's on East Sand Island in 1990's and have remained closely involved through present.
- CRITFC actively participated in numerous aspects of management actions for both Inland and Estuary avian predation efforts.
- Worked closely with Federal partners in legal actions to defend DCC's EIS decision to cull DCC's on East Sand Island.
- CRITFC staff on both CT and DCC Adaptive Management Teams (AMT)'s since their inceptions.
- Working with our tribal partners to create opportunities to protect juvenile salmon & steelhead from avian predators throughout the Basin were possible.



Additional Momentum

- Bird protection is not balanced with salmon restoration: missions and responsibilities need to be aligned and a basin wide strategy is needed.
- Data is making it clear and the region should be made aware of avian predation impacts.
- Ratepayers have invested \$11.8 billion in salmon and steelhead restoration since 1981 and when spill benefits are included, heightened avian predation management protects the investment and elevates impact.
- Other river users are expressing interest in supporting the collaboration of federal, state and tribal agencies and regional partners to seek increased capacity and flexibility.





COLUMBIA RIVER INTER-TRIBAL FISH COMMISSION

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August 8, 2019

Jerome Ford
Assistant Director, Migratory Bird Program
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, Rm #3340
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Management of Piscivorous Water Birds in the Columbia River Basin

Dear Mr. Ford:

We appreciate the time you gave us last month to talk about the challenges with piscivorous bird management in the Columbia River Basin. We need to address enhanced bird populations and their habitats with the consequences of avian predation; one of the serious obstacles in the

Earlier this month our tribal leadership committed to you to explore solutions to this problem in an honest, forthright manner supported by data and sound proposals. CRITFC would be pleased to host a meeting of concerned co-managers this fall. We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to continuing this conversation with you.

MBP administers the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and other federal migratory bird laws, implements and oversees bird management and conservation programs, and coordinates monitoring and assessment of both game and nongame migratory birds.

