

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS STUDIED IN NEW REPORT

The ecological impacts of the current trend toward greater use of coal as an energy source for power production are discussed in a new 261-page report announced today by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The technical report, "Impacts of Coal-Fired Power Plants on Fish, Wildlife, and their Habitats," covers the environmental impacts associated with the operation of a power facility from the time at which coal is delivered to the site through the final disposal of waste products.

The rapid rise in oil prices coupled with the national emphasis on future energy planning and development has made coal one of the cheapest and most abundant sources of energy for electric power production.

The Fish and Wildlife Service's National Power Plant Team contracted for the report because this increase in the use of coal can harm fish and wildlife through the discharge of waste materials from coal-fired power plants.

The report contains current information on the potential impacts on plant and animal communities and their habitats from the operation of coal-fired electric generating facilities and steps that can be taken to minimize these impacts. Also discussed are the impacts associated with oil- and gas-fired stations that have been converted to coal.

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Included in the report is an outline and discussion of research needed to more effectively predict and minimize impacts along with extensive reference listings at the end of each major section of the report.

"Impacts of Coal-Fired Power Plants on Fish, Wildlife, and their Habitats" is the first of two major publications prepared by the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory under an interagency agreement between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Energy. The second--a field manual entitled "A Biologist's Manual for the Evaluation of Impacts of Coal-Fired Power Plants on Fish, Wildlife, and their Habitats"--will be published this month.

The National Power Plant Team, headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a part of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Services Program. It provides the Program's scientific and technical expertise regarding the impacts of power plants and energy development on fish and wildlife resources and arranges for contract studies with States, universities, and consulting firms.

"Impacts of Coal-Fired Power Plants on Fish, Wildlife, and their Habitats" can be purchased for \$4.50 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, stock number 024-010-00458-4.