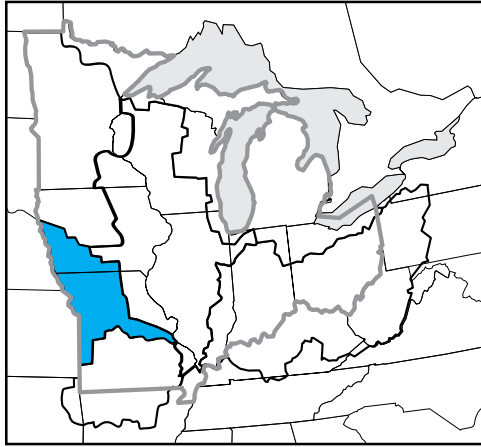




# Lower Missouri River Ecosystem



## USFWS Field Stations

Eight field stations are located within the ecosystem: 5 National Wildlife Refuges; 1 Fishery Resources Office; 1 Law Enforcement Office; and 1 Ecological Services Office.

## Partners

Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S.G.S. Environmental Sciences Center.

## Ecosystem Description

The Lower Missouri River Ecosystem encompasses all of the Missouri River Basin that drains portions of Iowa and Missouri.

The ecosystem includes portions of such contributing drainages as the Little Sioux, Platte, Nishnabotna, Grand, Chariton, Gasconade and Osage Rivers. The flat-to-rolling topography once featured forested uplands, native prairie on deep, loam soils, and floodplains dominated by soft and hardwood forest. Agriculture is the predominant land use in the Lower Missouri River Ecosystem.

Historically, the Missouri River and its floodplain featured a variety of habitats including braided channels, sloughs, islands, sandbars, backwater areas, and other natural floodplain communities. The river and its contributing watersheds supported abundant populations of native river fishes, furbearers and other mammals, waterfowl and a host of wetland and bottomland bird species.

## Landscape Priorities

Two landscape priorities have been identified by the Lower Missouri River Ecosystem team. The priorities center around Regional Resource Conservation Priority species and were developed with a recognition that landscape scale change requires the collaboration of all conservation partners in the ecosystem.

## ■ *Improve Fish and Wildlife Resources on Mainstem Missouri River*

Mainstem channel improvements require an understanding of the history of the Missouri River. Since first described by Lewis and Clark in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the river's braided channel has undergone dramatic change as a commercial waterway for the transportation of industrial and agricultural products. Today's river is a straightened channel paralleled by a network of levees that enhance agricultural and urban floodplain landuse. The team's focus include stream flows that emulate patterns of previously unaltered conditions, sandbar and island replenishment or nourishment, side channel re-connection, shallow backwater restoration, floodplain reforestation and the return of quality water that supports a diverse population of fish and other aquatic life.

## ■ *Improve Fish and Wildlife Resources in Contributing Watersheds*

States and tribes have reviewed water quality information for tributaries within the Missouri River Basin and identified those in immediate need of attention. Most problems result from water quality deterioration due to accelerated sedimentation, high nutrient loading or other non-point source contamination.

The team recognizes the adverse fish and wildlife impacts associated with land uses that result in water quality degradation. Opportunities for improved land stewardship on privately-owned lands is supported by the team through technical and habitat restoration assistance. The team also supports long-term land protection measures.

## Contacts

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## Web Address

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<http://midwest.fws.gov/ecosys/lowmiss>