



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South

St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5505

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<http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>

F/SER31:NB

Mr. James A. Thomas
Manager, Electric Utilities Environmental Services
Enercon
5100 East Skelly Drive, Suite 450
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135

JUN 14 2011

Dear Mr. Thomas:

This is in response to your letter, received by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on March 4, 2011, regarding the operating license renewal for the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station near Port Gibson, Mississippi. The current 40-year operating license expires in 2024. Enercon is gathering information on Entergy's behalf relative to this license renewal project.

The Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) was listed jointly by NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as threatened on September 30, 1991 (56 FR 49653). Gulf sturgeon are known to inhabit the Mississippi River and have been collected upstream of the project site in the region of Vicksburg, Mississippi¹. The project area is not within designated Gulf sturgeon critical habitat (50 CFR 226.214).

Pursuant to the jurisdictional responsibilities outlined in the final rule designating Gulf sturgeon critical habitat (68 FR 13400), the USFWS would be the lead agency for activities on the Mississippi River. Therefore, consultation regarding potential impacts to Gulf sturgeon from the license renewal of the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station should be coordinated with Karen Harrington, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1601 Balboa Avenue, Panama City, Florida 32405-3721 (tel:850/769-0552).



Thank you for providing the opportunity to provide comments on the project. We look forward to further cooperation with you on other projects to ensure the conservation of our threatened and endangered marine species and designated critical habitat. If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Bailey, ESA Consultant, at (727) 824-5336, or by e-mail at Nicole.Bailey@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Bernhart", written in a cursive style.

David Bernhart
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Protected Resources

File: 1514-22.m

Ref: T/SER/2011/01889

¹ Ross, S.T. 2001. The Inland Fishes of Mississippi. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson.