



# News Release

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## **Agencies and Tribe Announce the Availability for Public Review of a draft Revised Plan for Recovering Arizona State Fish**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is revising its plan of action for recovering the threatened Apache trout, the Arizona state fish and welcomes comments. The recovery plan identifies actions to bolster populations in the wild, establishes benchmarks for measuring the progress of recovery, and estimates the costs of recovery. The Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service, and the White Mountain Apache Tribe are partners in the recovery of Apache trout and in the preparation of this draft plan.

The Apache trout's scientific Genus name *Oncorhynchus* means "hook snout" referring to the hooked jaw of a breeding male in the Genus, while the specific epithet *apache* refers to the Native American Apache Tribes that live in the trout's range. The golden-colored trout, with black spots is endemic to the White Mountains in East-Central Arizona.

The species was restricted to 13 known populations by the 1950s, all on lands administered by the White Mountain Apache Tribe. However, due to on-going recovery actions over the past six decades, the species is now found in 25 populations on the Tribe's Fort Apache Indian Reservation and the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

"Apache trout are making good progress and this plan lays out a blueprint for recovery," said Benjamin N. Tuggle, PhD, director of the Service's Southwest Region. "We appreciate the many groups that work together to reduce threats and secure a better future for this native."

The public will have until September 25 to provide comments. The draft recovery plan and other documents pertaining to Apache trout biology and management are available on the internet at [www.fws.gov/endangered](http://www.fws.gov/endangered). You may also request a copy from the Arizona Fishery Resources Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 39, Pintop, Arizona, 85935 or call 928-338-4288. Comments may be mailed to that address or sent by facsimile to 928-338-4763, or sent by email to [Stewart\\_Jacks@fws.gov](mailto:Stewart_Jacks@fws.gov).

The main threats to the species are adverse land use practices resulting in habitat destruction and negative interactions (predation, hybridization, and competition) with introduced nonnative species.

The plan sets the benchmarks to achieving full recovery success under the Endangered Species Act. The goal is to establish at least 30 self-sustaining populations within its historic range and to minimize or reduce threats to the point that the populations are self-sustaining. At that point, the fish can be safely removed from Endangered Species Act protection.

The revised recovery plan calls for the continued protection, management and monitoring of existing Apache trout populations and habitat and establishing and maintaining new wild populations. The species is also under propagation by State and Federal fish hatcheries for assisting in the recovery of wild populations, providing recreational fishery opportunities or restoring populations that may be lost due to catastrophes.

The Service has been conducting a review of the status of the Apache trout to determine whether its current listing of threatened under the Endangered Species Act is accurate. The review, begun in 2006, will also consider any new information received during the public comment period for the draft revised recovery plan. If the Service recommends that the Apache trout should be reclassified under the Endangered Species Act or removed from the list of threatened and endangered species, we will undergo a separate rule-making process to do so, during which the public will have another opportunity to participate.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.