



# News Release

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[www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/)

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## Fish and Wildlife Service to Conduct Status Review of Roundtail Chub

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces that it will conduct a status review for the roundtail chub in the lower Colorado River basin. The assessment will inform the Service's determination of whether the roundtail chub in the lower basin qualifies as a distinct population and warrants protection under the Endangered Species Act.

To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from state, federal and tribal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the roundtail chub and its habitat. Based on the status review, the Service will make one of three possible determinations:

- 1) Protection under the ESA is not warranted, in which case no further action will be taken.
- 2) Protection under the ESA as threatened or endangered is warranted. In this case, the Service will publish a proposal to add the roundtail chub to the list of ESA-protected species, solicit independent scientific peer review of the proposal, seek input from the public, and consider the input before a final decision about listing the species is made. In general, there is a one-year period between the time a species is proposed and the final decision.
- 3) Protection under the ESA is warranted but precluded by other, higher priority activities. This means the species is added to the Federal list of candidate species, and the proposal to list is deferred while the Service works on listing proposals for other species that are at greater risk. A warranted but precluded finding requires subsequent annual reviews of the finding until such time as either a listing proposal is published, or a "not warranted" finding is made based on new information.

The Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the Service to list the roundtail chub in 2003, singling out the lower basin – Arizona and New Mexico – population for protection as a Distinct Population Segment under the ESA. In 2006, after review of all available scientific and commercial information, the Service found that the roundtail chub in the Lower Colorado River basin is not discernable from the upper basin population and therefore did not qualify as a Distinct Population Segment under the ESA and policies. The Center challenged the finding and in a settlement agreement the Service agreed to conduct a new status review and find whether listing is warranted by June 30, 2009.

The 9- to 14-inch roundtail chub (also known as the Verde trout and *Gila robusta*) is an olive-gray to silver minnow with a lighter belly. The species was historically considered common in deep pools and eddies of large streams throughout its range in the upper and lower Colorado River basins in Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. Today the roundtail chub occupies about 18 percent of its historical range in the lower Colorado River basin and is limited to Arizona's Little Colorado, Bill Williams, Salt, San Carlos, and Verde river drainages and Eagle and Aravaipa creeks, and New Mexico's upper Gila River.

Information regarding the status of, and any potential threat to, the roundtail chub may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2009-0004; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

To allow adequate time to conduct this review, information should be submitted on or before April 2, 2009. Previously submitted roundtail chub information need not be resubmitted. For further information, contact Steve Spangle, Field Supervisor, Arizona Ecological Services Office, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951; telephone 602-242-0210.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photographs of the roundtail chub are available by contacting Jeff Humphrey (602-242-0210 or [jeff\\_humphrey@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_humphrey@fws.gov)) or at [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/).