



# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service – Region 2 Southwest Region Fisheries Program

## Apache Trout Recovery: History in the Making Arizona Fishery Resources Office

### Issue:

The Apache trout *Oncorhynchus apache* is one of only three trout species native to the southwestern United States and is found only in the White Mountains of eastern Arizona on lands managed by the White Mountain Apache Tribe and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The Apache trout has been protected as threatened under the Endangered Species Act since 1973. Threats include habitat loss, hybridization with non-native rainbow trout, and competition with non-native brown and brook trout. However, because of the dedication, hard work, and accomplishments of Federal, Tribal, State, and non-governmental partners, Apache trout is poised to make history as the first fish species to be recovered and removed from the endangered species list.



Federally threatened Apache trout.

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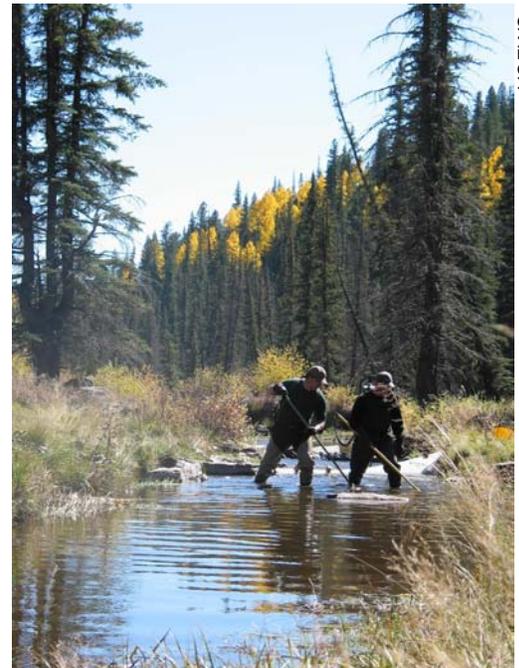
The Arizona Fishery Resources Office (AZFRO) is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's lead station responsible for the recovery of Apache trout. In cooperation with the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, and numerous other non-governmental organizations, AZFRO has made significant strides toward recovering Apache trout by installing barriers to protect populations, restoring streams and habitat, replicating pure populations, and providing Apache trout as a sport fish. Although significant accomplishments leading toward the recovery of Apache trout have already been made, numerous recovery actions still need to be completed before Apache trout is proposed for delisting.

### Accomplishments:

In FY 2003, AZFRO assisted the White Mountain Apache Tribe's Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division with the reconstruction of two gabion barriers, which were made possible through a Partners for Fish and Wildlife grant awarded to the White Mountain Apache Tribe. In addition, AZFRO and the Tribe completed habitat and Apache trout surveys of five streams, evaluated the condition of existing barriers on five streams, and replicated two extant Apache trout populations into restored habitats. AZFRO also assisted the Arizona Game and Fish Department in renovating two streams on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest for future introductions of Apache trout. AZFRO coordinated the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Apache Trout Work Week where personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, White Mountain Apache Tribe, and Arizona Game and Fish Department completed 6 miles of fish surveys on the West Fork Black River. In support of Apache trout sport fishing, AZFRO, in cooperation with Alchey-Williams Creek National Fish Hatchery, coordinated the stocking of approximately 127,000 Apache trout into White Mountain Apache Reservation waters.

### Future Outlook:

For the dream of recovering Apache trout to become a reality, focused efforts need to continue to be dedicated to this cause. Before Apache trout can be proposed for delisting, several activities need to be completed and include: completion of the NEPA process for activities on U.S. Forest Service lands, construction of seven new and reconstruction of three existing barriers, removal of non-native brown trout from 12 streams, reintroduction of 10 Apache trout populations into candidate streams, and continued monitoring of habitat and fish populations in 26 streams.



Apache trout surveys on a beautiful fall day in the White Mountains of AZ.

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