



RECOVERY PROGRAM FOR THE ENDANGERED FISHES OF THE UPPER COLORADO

John Hamill,
Program Director

Ralph Morgenweck,
Implementation
Committee Chairman

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • P.O. Box 25486 • Denver Federal Center • Denver, Colorado 80225 • (303) 236-2985

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A. Population Status: No notable change in population status since September 1994.

Species	River		Colorado
	Green	Yampa	
Colorado squawfish	Stable/Increasing?	Stable	Decreasing?/Small
Humpback chub	Stable?/ Small	Stable?/ Small	Healthy
Razorback sucker	Critical--Few adults--Little/No Recruitment--All Rivers		
Bonytail chub	Critical--Very rare -- No Recruitment -- All Rivers		

B. Program Management

Goal: Ensure effective implementation and coordination of the Recovery Program

- Status:**
- * FY 95 work plan is being implemented; approximately \$500,000 of Reclamation's capital funding has been lost because of budget recisions.
 - * Active discussions are continuing on strategies to provide long-term funding for the Program.
 - * \$6.3 M and \$.6M are included in the Presidents FY 96 budget for Reclamation and FWS, respectively. Reclamation is developing a cost sharing proposal for FY 97.
 - * The Recovery Action Plan (RIPRAP) has been revised to based on results of FY 94 work activities.
 - * Guidance for the FY 96 work plan has been developed.

C. Habitat Management (Instream Flows)

Goal: To protect sufficient instream flows to support self-sustaining populations of the fishes

- Status:**
- o The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) filed to acquire 300 cfs of unclaimed irrigation return flows in the 15-mile reach of the Colorado River
 - o The State of Utah finalized a policy legally protecting summer-fall flows in the Green River from Flaming Gorge dam to the confluence of the Duchesne River.
 - o The change in the Steamboat Lake (Yampa River) decree to allow for reservoir releases for instream flows is progressing through water court.
 - o Active discussions have been occurring to resolve the challenge to the CWCB's application for a 581 cfs instream flow right in the 15-Mile Reach (July-September).
 - o The CWCB has held a series of meetings to implement its policy regarding the appropriation of instream flows for the endangered fish.
 - o The FWS, BR and CWCB are close to agreement on a contract to legally protect research flows from the Aspinall Unit.

D. Habitat Development and Maintenance

Goal: To provide or enhance habitat for the rare fishes through habitat development or management measures such as:

- o fish passageways
- o restoration of flooded bottomland habitats.

- Status:**
- o A draft Environmental Assessment for the fish passageway at Redlands Dam (Gunnison River) has been completed. Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall of 1995 and completed in the Spring of 1996.
 - o The FY 95 scope of work for the Flooded Bottomlands Restoration Project was approved by the Management Committee in February 1995. Seven sites were selected for restoration. A facilitated meeting will be held this spring to address issues related to nonnative fish use of flooded bottomlands.

E. Stocking Native Fishes

- Goal:**
- A. Produce a sufficient supply of hatchery reared fish to support research and recovery activities.
 - B. Conserve the genetic diversity present in the wild.

- Status:**
- o 7 of the 40 adult razorbacks that were implanted with radio tags and stocked in the Upper Colorado River and the Gunnison River survived.

- o The Service's hatchery/research facility at Ouray, Utah, is being expanded.
- o Design of additional refuge ponds at Craig, Colorado and the Waweap State fish hatchery are nearing completion.
- o The Genetics Management Plan is for the endangered fishes was finalized.

F. Nonnative Fishes and Sportfishing

Goal: Minimize the impacts of nonnative fishes and incidental take associated with sport fishing on the endangered fishes.

- Status: *
- Interim Procedures for Stocking of Nonnative Fishes continue to be evaluated by the Service and the States. Proposed changes to allow stocking of certain species in the 50-year floodplain are being discussed.
 - o The proposed effort to remove northern pike from the Yampa River has been delayed a year to allow for refinement of the scope of work and public involvement.

G. Information and Education

Goal: To promote public understanding, appreciation, and support for efforts to recover the endangered fish.

- Status: o additional public meetings were held in the Gunnison River Basin to identify public concerns related to Aspinall releases, the Redlands fish ladder and flow protection in the Gunnison River.

H. Section 7 Consultation

Goal: To allow water development to proceed in the Upper Colorado River Basin in compliance with the ESA.

- Status: *
- FWS has determined that the Recovery Program has continued to make sufficient progress to serve as the reasonable and prudent alternative for depletion projects less than 3,000 acre feet.
 - * Approximately 194 projects with a potential to deplete about 186,500 acre feet have received favorable biological opinions since the inception of the Recovery Program in 1988.