

**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM  
FY 2006 ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT**

**RECOVERY PROGRAM  
PROJECT NUMBER: 121b**

I. Project Title: **Evaluation of Stocked Razorback Sucker and Colorado Pikeminnow in the Gunnison River**

II. Principal Investigator(s): Chuck McAda, Project Leader  
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III. Project Summary:

The purpose of this project is to determine 1) stocking success of domestic-reared razorback sucker and domestic-reared Colorado pikeminnow in the Gunnison River, particularly fish stocked in 2002, 2003, and 2004, and 2) the post-stocking distribution of domestic-reared razorback sucker and domestic-reared Colorado pikeminnow in the Gunnison River.

Two adult razorback sucker previously stocked in the Gunnison River were captured during May and 45 razorback sucker recently stocked in August 2006 were captured in late-September. Two wild adult Colorado pikeminnow were captured during the July sampling trip. Nonnative fish of interest that were collected and removed during the three sampling trips included 136 green sunfish, 2 largemouth bass, and 2 grass carp. No smallmouth bass were seen or collected.

IV. Study Schedule:

- a. initial year: 2006
- b. final year: 2008

V. Relationship to RIPRAP:

IV. Manage Genetic Integrity and Augment or Restore Populations (Stocking Endangered Fishes)

- IV.A.3. Razorback sucker
- IV.A.3.b. Evaluate stocking success as identified in monitoring plans for stocked fish
- IV.A.4. Colorado pikeminnow
- IV.A.4.c. Evaluate stocking success as identified in monitoring plans for stocked fish

VI. Accomplishment of FY 2006 Tasks and Deliverables, Discussion of Initial Findings and Shortcomings:

A. FY-2006 Tasks and Deliverables:

Task 1. Electrofish all possible riverine habitats.

Task completed.

Task 2. Analyze data; prepare annual RP report.

Task completed.

Task 3. Prepare draft and final project reports.

B. Findings (2006 Highlights)

General

1. Three sampling trips were performed during 2006, one during mid-May, one during mid-July, and the third in late-September. Sampling was accomplished with electrofishing rafts and aluminum electrofishing boats. During the mid-May trip, two adult razorback sucker (484 & 530 mm) were captured. No PIT tag could be read in one razorback sucker so it could not be determined when and where this fish was stocked. The second razorback sucker had been stocked at river mile 57.1 in the Gunnison River in June 2001 and had been at large for nearly 5 years. No Colorado pikeminnow were seen or collected during this first trip. Other "fishes of interest" that were collected and removed were 26 green sunfish, 1 largemouth bass, and 1 adult grass carp. No smallmouth bass were collected.
2. During the mid-July trip, Colorado Division of Wildlife personnel from the Montrose and Grand Junction offices accompanied us and provided an aluminum electrofishing boat in an attempt to increase our catches. During the July trip, two wild adult Colorado pikeminnow (541 & 672 mm) were collected. One pikeminnow had moved through the Redlands fishway in July 2002. This fish was captured 22 miles upstream. The second pikeminnow had originally been captured in April 1993 in the Lower Gunnison River at river mile 1.1. At that time, this fish was implanted with a radiotag, translocated via stocking truck, and released in the Gunnison River at river mile 42.7. It was tracked in 1993 and 1994 and was one of five radiotagged fish that aggregated during late-July of those two years at river mile 32.5 in the Gunnison River. During July 2006, it was captured at river mile 32.3 in nearly the same location that it was found during the suspected spawning aggregation in 1993 and 1994. This fish still displayed the incision and suture scars of the radiotag implantation. No razorback suckers were seen or collected during this trip. Other "fishes of interest" that were collected and

removed were 93 green sunfish and 1 adult grass carp. No smallmouth bass were collected.

3. During the late-September trip, 45 razorback sucker (mean=327, range: 228–362 mm; s.d.: 29.6) were collected. These razorback sucker had recently (August 2006) been stocked in the Gunnison River at river mile 57.1. The capture of these fish indicated that they had survived at least 1 month following stocking and had dispersed as far down river as river mile 7.6. No Colorado pikeminnow were seen or collected. Other “fishes of interest” that were collected and removed included 17 green sunfish and 1 largemouth bass. No smallmouth bass were collected.
4. No ripe or tuberculate razorback sucker nor aggregation of razorback sucker were located during the May sampling trip.

VII. Recommendations:

- A. For 2007, three sampling trips are planned for the Gunnison River. We also plan to sample the 3-mile segment from Hartland Diversion Dam (river mile 60) to Confluence Park boat landing, if access across private land can be obtained.

VIII. Project Status:

- A. “On track and ongoing”.

IX. FY 2006 Budget Status

- A. Funds Provided: \$ 58,300
- B. Funds Expended: \$ 58,300
- C. Difference: \$ -0-
- D. Percent of the FY 2006 work completed, and projected costs to complete: 100%.  
Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: \$ -0-

- X. Status of Data Submission (Where applicable): The two Colorado pikeminnow and 47 razorback sucker captured during 2006 were checked for a PIT tag. Both adult Colorado pikeminnow and both adult razorback sucker were implanted with new 134 Khz PIT tags. The following data were collected from all T & E fish prior to their being released: total length (mm), weight (g), reproductive condition, and date and location of capture. These data have been computerized. These completed, computerized data will be provided to the UCRB database coordinator upon his request.

- XI. Signed: Bob D. Burdick                      10/25/2006  
Principal Investigator                      Date