

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Rio Grande Cutthroat

Q – What action is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) taking?

A - The Service is publishing in the *Federal Register* a 12 month finding determination that listing the Rio Grande cutthroat trout under the Endangered Species Act is not warranted at this time. The Service will remove this subspecies from the candidate list.

Q – Why is the Service taking this action?

A - On May 14, 2008, the Service found that the Rio Grande cutthroat trout warranted listing as an endangered and threatened species under the Act based on threats to the subspecies related to population fragmentation and isolation, small population size, nonnative trout, drought, and fire. However, the Service determined that developing a proposed rule to list the Rio Grande cutthroat trout as threatened or endangered at that time was precluded by other, higher priority listing actions. The subspecies became a candidate for listing at that time.

On September 9, 2011, the Service entered into a settlement agreement regarding species on the candidate list in multi-district litigation (Endangered Species Act Section 4 Deadline Litigation, No. 10–377 (EGS), MDL Docket No. 2165 (D.D.C. May 10, 2011)). Per the MDL settlement agreement, the Service is required to submit a proposed rule or a not warranted 12-month finding to the *Federal Register* for Rio Grande cutthroat trout in Fiscal Year 2014, which ends September 30, 2014. This 12-month finding fulfills that requirement of the MDL settlement agreement.

Q – Is this the final action the Service will take for Rio Grande cutthroat trout?

A – Yes, however, the Service is requesting that any new information concerning the status of or threats to, the Rio Grande cutthroat trout be submitted to the New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office whenever it becomes available. New information will help the Service monitor the Rio Grande cutthroat trout and encourage its conservation. If an emergency situation develops for Rio Grande cutthroat trout the Service will consider an appropriate response under the Act.

Q – What is a Rio Grande cutthroat trout?

A – The Rio Grande cutthroat trout (a subspecies of cutthroat trout) inhabit high elevation streams in New Mexico and southern Colorado where they need clear, cold, highly oxygenated water, clean gravel substrates, a network of pools and runs, and an abundance of food (typically aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates).