

**LOACH MINNOW**  
*(Tiaroga cobitis)*

**STATUS:** Endangered with critical habitat ([77 FR 10810](#), February 23, 2012).

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** A small (less than 3 inches (8 cm) long), slender, elongated fish. Olive colored, with darker, irregular spotting along sides and dull white spots at the base of the dorsal and caudal fins. Breeding males develop vivid red-orange markings.

**HABITAT:** Bottom dweller of small to large perennial creeks and rivers, typically in shallow turbulent riffles with cobble substrate, swift currents, and filamentous algae. Found below 8,000 feet (2,438 m) elevation. Recurrent flooding is instrumental in maintenance of quality habitat.

**RANGE: Historical:** Once common throughout much of the Gila River system including portions of the Gila, Blue, Tularosa, White, Verde, Salt, San Pedro, and San Francisco rivers in Arizona and New Mexico, as well as some of their tributaries.

**Current:** Present populations are geographically isolated and inhabit the upstream ends of their historical range. The species persists in Arizona in limited reaches in the mainstem White River and East Fork of the White River (Navajo County), North Fork East Fork Black River and Boneyard Creek (Apache County), Aravaipa Creek, Deer Creek, and Turkey Creek (Graham and Pinal counties), San Francisco and Blue rivers, and Eagle, Campbell Blue, and Little Blue creeks (Greenlee County). In New Mexico, the species is found in the Gila River and its tributaries including the West, Middle, and East forks of the Gila River, and Mangas and Bear creeks (Catron, Grant, and Hidalgo counties), the San Francisco River and its tributaries Tularosa River and Whitewater creeks, and Negrito Creek (tributary to the Tularosa) (Catron County); and the Blue River and its tributaries Campbell Blue, Dry Blue, Pace, and Frieborn creeks (Catron County).

**Potential:** Undiscovered populations may exist in unsampled Gila basin streams. In addition, loach minnow have been translocated into Fossil Creek (Gila County), Hot Springs and Redfield canyons (Cochise and Graham counties) in 2007, and in Bonita Creek (Graham County) in 2008. Insufficient time has elapsed to determine whether these restoration projects will be successful.

**REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY:** Habitat destruction due to damming, channel alteration, riparian zone modification and destruction, channel down-cutting, water diversion and groundwater pumping; and the introduction and spread of competitive and/or predatory fish species.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** In Arizona: U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State, Tribal, and private. In New Mexico: U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State and private.

**NOTES:** A Recovery Plan was completed in September 1991. A copy of the recovery plan and other relevant documents are available online at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Documents/RecoveryPlans/LoachMinnowRP.PDF> A new Recovery Team has been convened and we anticipate publication of a new recovery plan by 2015. Also, in 2007, we initiated a five-year review and anticipate completion by 2012.