

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:
5-YEAR STATUS REVIEW OF KLAMATH SUCKER POPULATIONS**

Q – Why did the Service conduct a five-year review for the Klamath suckers?

A – The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires a five-year review for all listed species. The Lost River and shortnose suckers were listed in 1988. Research and monitoring programs and conservation actions have been carried out and are ongoing by Federal as well as State, private, and tribal entities. As a result, new information is available.

Q – What decision did the Fish and Wildlife Service reach?

A – The Service decided that shortnose sucker should remain as endangered. The Service has recommended that Lost River sucker should be reclassified as threatened. Both will continue to be protected under the ESA.

Q – What did the five-year review entail?

A – The review considered information that has become available since the original listing determination's last status review, such as population trend data; effects of threats on long-term survival, adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms and conservation measures; and management and conservation planning information.

Q – Who was responsible for doing a five-year review?

A – The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce are ultimately responsible for conducting the five-year reviews of listed species. This responsibility has been delegated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA-Fisheries to assess the species for which they have jurisdiction. Klamath suckers are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Q – Why did the five-year review take more than two years to complete?

A – In 2004, the Service published a notice for the five-year review in the Federal Register asking for anyone with additional information to come forward. When no one did, the Service organized an independent science review panel to look at information regarding the two fish species. The panel members examined data on taxonomy, genetics, population dynamics, water quality, threats, and restoration efforts. Based on their interpretation of this information, each member of the panel prepared a written opinion of the current status of the two species. Later that same year, a panel of Service scientists and managers met to assess the status of the Klamath sucker species. In January 2007, the Service received new information from U.S. Geologic Survey on sucker survival rates. Based on the new survival rate information, together with knowledge of threats to the species and restoration efforts in the Klamath Basin, the Service determined that the shortnose suckers should remain listed as endangered and the Lost River sucker should be reclassified to threatened.

|

Q – How does the Service determine whether a species is endangered or threatened?

A – Under the ESA, the term “endangered species” means any species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. The term “threatened species” means any species that is at risk of becoming an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range. Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA establishes that one or more of the following five factors determine whether a species is endangered or threatened.

- (1) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range;
- (2) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
- (3) Disease or predation;
- (4) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or
- (5) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

The Service’s assessment of these factors is required, under section 4(b)(1) of the Endangered Species Act to be based on the best scientific and commercial data available.

Q Haven’t the two sucker species showed strong recovery in the past decade?

A – In the early 1990s the suckers showed evidence of a significant population increase, but later that decade the populations declined sharply as a result of die-offs linked to poor water quality. Because the population size is relatively small, the suckers are vulnerable to additional die offs due to water quality issues. Continuing efforts to improve water quality may not lead to results for several decades.

Q. What is the Service doing to restore the suckers?

A – The Service, other agencies, the Klamath Tribes, and other stakeholders are taking many actions to assist the recovery of the two suckers. In 2003, a fish screen was installed at the A-Canal, the largest water diversion on Upper Klamath Lake. In 2004, a fish ladder was installed allowing suckers that have been swept downstream below the lake to return. Considerable habitat restoration is also occurring throughout the species range. Efforts are also underway to improve passage at the Chiloquin Dam on the Sprague River, because it is believed that the dam limits upstream migrations to spawning areas.

Q. Why were the suckers originally listed as endangered?

A – The two species were Federally listed as endangered in 1988, after their populations showed evidence of severe declines. At the time of listing, perceived threats to the species included: 1) drastically reduced adult populations and lack of significant recruitment, 2) over-harvesting by sport and commercial fishing, 3) potential competition with introduced exotic fishes, 4) lack of regulatory protection from Federal actions that might adversely affect or jeopardize the species, 5) hybridization with the other two sucker species native to the Klamath Basin, and 6) summer fish kills caused by declines in water quality.

|

Q. Is it possible that the suckers will never be delisted?

A – The goal of the ESA is to prevent extinction of species and to recover them to a point where they can be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species. When threats to the suckers have been sufficiently reduced and populations have recovered to a point where they are capable of long-term survival, they no longer need the protection provided by the ESA and can be removed from the list.

Q. Considering that many efforts that are now underway to recover the suckers, when will they be recovered?

A – Fish passage improvements and wetland restoration have recently occurred and are reducing some of the habitat threats for this species. Additional passage improvement and wetland restoration are planned. These restoration efforts have not yet resulted in significant changes in population numbers, but it is hoped that as work continues, population increases will be seen. Unfortunately, species recovery can be slow and there is no way to predict how long this might take.