

## NEWS RELEASE

### U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region 134 Union Boulevard

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#### Listing of the Least chub Under the ESA Is Warranted

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that it has determined that listing the least chub, a member of the minnow family endemic to the Bonneville Basin in Utah, as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is warranted, but that listing the fish is precluded by the need to complete other listing actions of a higher priority. The least chub will be classified as a candidate species until a listing proposal can be prepared. Candidate species do not receive statutory protection under the ESA and remain state-managed species.

In response to a petition filed in June 2007 by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, the Great Basin Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Service initiated and completed a comprehensive review – known as a 12-month finding – and determined that listing the least chub as threatened or endangered is warranted due to impacts associated with livestock grazing and groundwater withdrawals; predation and competition from nonnative fish, particularly mosquitofish; inadequate regulatory mechanisms controlling groundwater withdrawals; and the cumulative effects of drought, current and future groundwater withdrawals, and climate change.

The least chub is a small minnow, with a maximum size of less than 2.5 inches. The least chub is a colorful species with a gold stripe along blue sides with white to yellow fins. It eats primarily algae and small invertebrates and is considered a slow-growing species that rarely lives beyond 3 years of age. The least chub is native to the Bonneville Basin of Utah where it was once widely distributed throughout a variety of habitats, including rivers, streams, springs, ponds, marshes, and swamps.

Currently, only five wild populations of least chub remain. Three populations are in Snake Valley in Utah's West Desert. They include the Leland Harris Spring Complex, Gandy Salt Marsh, and Bishop Spring Complex. The remaining two wild populations are located on the eastern border of the native range near the Wasatch Front. Those populations in the Mills Valley and Clear Lake are in the Sevier River drainage. A functionally extirpated site exists at Mona Springs in the Utah Lake drainage.

For more information, please visit the Service's web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/fish/leastchub>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.