

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
134 Union Boulevard  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

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Contacts: Kevin McAbee 801-975-3330 ext. 143  
Diane Katzenberger 303-236-4578

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Determines Northern Leatherside Chub Does Not Warrant Protection Under the Endangered Species Act**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that it has completed a status review, also known as a 12-month finding, of the northern leatherside chub, and concluded it does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We made this finding after a thorough review of all the available scientific and commercial information regarding the status of the northern leatherside chub and threats to the species.

The northern leatherside chub (*Lepidomeda copei*) is a small desert fish in the minnow family that occurs in northern Utah and Nevada, southern and eastern Idaho, and western Wyoming. Current populations are found in the Bear, Snake, and Green River drainages. Its common name comes from the leathery appearance created by small scales on a trim, tapering body. Northern leatherside chub occur in small desert streams between elevations of approximately 4,100 and 9,000 feet, with low to moderate velocities. They have relatively broad diets, eating items in both the stream drift and the substrate, with insects comprising a large portion of diet.

We analyzed potential factors that may affect the habitat or range of the northern leatherside chub including livestock grazing, oil and gas development, mining, water development, water quality, fragmentation and isolation of populations, overutilization, disease, predation, inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, hybridization, and climate change.

We found no information to indicate that these impacts are significantly negatively affecting the current status of the northern leatherside chub or will do so in the foreseeable future. We concluded that the size, connectedness, and stability of the Bear River populations are sufficient to ensure the long term persistence of the species as a whole. While some populations are impacted by one or more factors (water quality, nonnative fish species, and isolation), we concluded that these threats do not currently or in the foreseeable future pose a substantial risk to the species range wide.

Based on a thorough review of the best available scientific information, we have determined that the northern leatherside chub is not in danger of extinction or likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. Despite not being warranted for listing as endangered or threatened, in making this finding we recognize that the northern leatherside chub may benefit from increased management emphasis due to its current fragmented distribution and its

susceptibility to nonnative fish species. We recommend and encourage additional research to improve the understanding of the species and precautionary measures to protect the species.

This finding responds to a petition from Forest Guardians (now WildEarth Guardians) requesting that we consider listing all full species in our Mountain Prairie Region ranked as G1 or G1G2 by the organization NatureServe as endangered or threatened. The northern leatherside chub was included in this list of 206 species. We published the results of our review of the petition, also called a 90-day finding, on August 18, 2009, indicating that the petition presented substantial information that listing of the northern leatherside chub may be warranted. We commenced a status review of the northern leatherside chub at that time.

To assist in monitoring the northern leatherside chub, we ask the public to submit any new information on its status or impacts. Please submit your comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Utah Ecological Services Field Office, 2369 West Orton Circle, Suite 50, West Valley City, UT 84119.

Our priority is to make implementation of the ESA less complex, less contentious and more effective. We seek to accelerate recovery of threatened and endangered species across the nation, while making it easier for people to coexist with these species.

A copy of the 12-month finding and other information about northern leatherside chub is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/fish/leatherside/index.html>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/usfws](http://www.facebook.com/usfws), follow our tweets at [www.twitter.com/usfwshq](http://www.twitter.com/usfwshq), watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>

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