



# News Release

**Arizona Ecological Services Field Office** <http://arizonaes.fws.gov>

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## **AGENCY RESCUE OF STEHR LAKE FISH CONTINUES**

- LAKE SHRINKS AS FOSSIL CREEK FLOWS ARE RESTORED -

State and federal biologists continue to salvage sport fish and native fish from Stehr Lake. The lake is being drained over the next two weeks as its source flows have been returned to Fossil Creek.

Anglers can continue to fish at Stehr Lake and keep their legal limits. However, anglers are reminded that it is illegal to transport live fish away from the waters where they were caught or to release live fish into a body of water that they did not come from. Fossil Creek has been closed to fishing until the native fishery is able to rebound.

Stehr Lake is an impoundment that was created nearly a century ago to hold reserve water for power generation at the Childs hydroelectric plant. Water used to drive the Childs and Irving hydroelectric plants and fill Stehr Lake has been returned to Fossil Creek. Arizona Public Service has decommissioned the power plants to restore the Fossil Creek and its native fishes.

“Ensuring that Fossil Creek remains free of nonnative fish that can prey upon or compete with the native fish is essential to the restoration effort,” said Fish and Wildlife Service biologist Shaula Hedwall. “Restoring native fish populations in streams in the Verde River basin helps to reverse the decline of native fishes and avert the need to add species to the Endangered Species list, and helps to recover currently listed species.”

“Our hard-fought efforts to restore our native fishery to the Fossil Creek basin can be undone with a single transplant of bait fish or sport fish back into the basin,” said Larry Riley, head of the Arizona Game and Fish Department's fisheries branch.

Nonnative fishes out-compete and prey on the imperiled natives, such as the roundtail chub and endangered razorback sucker, which are uniquely adapted to live in streams of the arid Southwest. Non-native fish were purposely removed from Fossil Creek in late 2004 in anticipation of fully restored stream flows resulting from the decommissioning of Arizona Public Service's Irving and Childs power plants.

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NOTE TO EDITORS – For photos of Fossil Creek native fishes, contact Jeff Humphrey ((602) 242-0210 or [jeff\\_humphrey@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_humphrey@fws.gov)).