



News Bulletin

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Lower Colorado River Conservation Program to Assist Threatened Snake

PHOENIX – The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program ([LCR-MSCP](#)) has added the threatened [northern Mexican gartersnake](#) to the list of species it will conserve.

The LCR-MSCP is a long-term program created in 2005 to minimize and mitigate impacts that water delivery and power generation along the lower Colorado River may have on fish and wildlife. With the addition of the gartersnake, the LCR-MSCP now aids 27 fish and wildlife species, including seven species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). LCR-MSCP is responsible for creating, replacing, and managing habitat for these species and operates under an ESA permit.

In the early 2000s, when the LCR-MSCP was conceived, the largely aquatic, northern Mexican gartersnake was long-thought to have been extirpated from the lower Colorado River floodplain and it was not included the wildlife to be aided by the LCR-MSCP. In 2014, the subspecies was added to the list of threatened animals protected under the ESA and in 2015 LCR-MSCP’s contracted biologists rediscovered the snake in its historical Colorado River range at Havasu National Wildlife Refuge’s Beal Lake.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed an [Environment Assessment](#) of adding the northern Mexican gartersnake as a species covered under the LCR-MSCP and its ESA permit. We have issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to support our decision to issue the permit. Formally including the subspecies in the program’s plan will aid the LCR-MSCP in continuing to manage habitat to accommodate the snake’s return to its historical range while providing the program with ESA compliance.

The Bureau of Reclamation has also issued a FONSI for their action of implementing the amended LCR-MSCP. The FONSI is available at: www.usbr.gov/lc/region/g2000/envdocs.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.

Note to editors: Photo support is available by contacting Jeff Humphrey at 602-242-0210 (jeff_humphrey@fws.gov) or visiting <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Reptiles.htm> .

This story was more completely detailed in a Nov. 28, 2017, [FWS News Release](#).