



Questions and Answers: Apache Trout Recovery Plan

Arizona Ecological Services Field Office

www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona

Q: What are recovery plans and how are they implemented?

A: The Endangered Species Act mandates that recovery plans be completed and implemented for listed species unless such a plan will not promote the conservation of the species. The ESA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to appoint recovery teams for development of recovery plans. Recovery Plans are to include: (i) a description of site-specific management necessary to achieve the plan's goal for the conservation and survival of the species; (ii) objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would ultimately recover the species so it can be removed from the list; and (iii) estimates of the time required and the cost to carry out those measures needed to achieve the plan's goals and to achieve intermediate steps toward those goals. A recovery plan is not a legal binding document, but a blueprint for actions needed to improve the status of a listed species to the point where it no longer needs the protection of the ESA. Recovery is a process by which the decline of an endangered or threatened species is arrested or reversed, and threats to its survival are neutralized, so that the long-term survival in nature can be ensured.

Q: How was the Draft Revised Apache Trout Recovery Plan assembled?

A: To develop a scientifically based and attainable recovery plan, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) formed the Apache Trout Recovery Team in 1975. Since its inception, the Team has consisted of experts from the State and Federal resource agencies, Tribes, and academics. The original Plan was developed in 1979 and revised in 1983. The Service continued to seek review, suggestions, and edits from the Team and affiliates in the development of a new draft revised recovery plan. We will publish this draft for public and peer review, address the comments received during the comment period, and finalize the plan. The plan then serves as a current roadmap for the recovery of the species.

Q: What is the Apache trout?

A: The Apache trout is a member of the Salmonid family. This yellow or yellow-olive cutthroat-like trout has large dark spots on its body. Its dorsal, anal, and tail fins are edged with white. Unlike some other species of trout, it has no red lateral band. It is designated as Arizona's state fish.

Q: Where is the Apache trout found?

A: The Apache trout is found only in the White Mountains in East-Central Arizona. The fish are found on lands administered by the White Mountain Apache Tribe, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and private inholdings.

Q: What is the historical and present distribution and status of the species?

A: Historically, Apache trout were present in the high elevation streams and rivers in the upper Salt River and Little Colorado River watersheds. By the 1950s, the species was reduced to 13 populations on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation (FAIR). The Apache trout was listed as endangered in 1967 and reclassified to threatened in 1975 based on recovery actions that improved the status of the species. Currently, Apache trout are found in 26 streams on the FAIR and the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest, and the species is also stocked for recreational fishing in several lakes/reservoirs in the White Mountains.

Q: What are the threats to the Apache trout?

A: The main threats to the species are habitat modification and destruction and negative interactions (predation, hybridization, and competition) with nonnative species.

Q: What are the objectives of the Revised Apache Trout Recovery Plan?

A: The current strategy for recovery of Apache trout is to implement actions to ameliorate the five listing factors and establish and maintain at least 30 self-sustaining populations. Attaining these goals will lead to the removal from the Federal list.

Major Actions Needed:

- 1) Complete any regulatory compliance required for recovery actions and species management;
- 2) Construct new fish barriers and maintain existing fish barriers;
- 3) Remove or minimize undesirable fishes using piscicides or other feasible means in all or portions of recovery streams;
- 4) Establish and maintain 30 self-sustaining populations of pure Apache trout; and,
- 5) Monitor all populations.

Q: How many Apache trout populations will be required to determine that the species is no longer threatened?

A: Once 30 populations are established in the wild, the Apache trout can be considered for removal from the Federal list of endangered and threatened species.

Q: Who will fund and perform the tasks suggested in the Final Revised Apache Trout Recovery Plan?

A: The Service, U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Trout Unlimited, Federation of Fly Fishers, and Wildlife Conservation Council are participants in planning and implementing recovery actions for Apache trout. A variety of funding sources are available for recovery tasks such as State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, Heritage Fund, Western Native Trout Initiative dollars, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funding.

Q: How much will the recovery of the Apache trout cost and who will pay for it?

A: The Recovery Team developed a 7-year implementation schedule (including recovery and post-recovery management) that estimates recovery activity costs at \$1,965,000.

Q: How can I comment on the draft revised recovery plan, provide information for the 5-year review, or find additional information about the species?

A: The draft recovery plan and other documents pertaining to Apache trout biology and management are available on the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona> and at www.fws.gov/Endangered. You can submit comments on the recovery plan or provide information for the 5-year review until September 25, 2007. Send comments to the Arizona Fishery Resources Office, US Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 39, Pinetop, AZ 85935, by facsimile 928-338-4763, or by email to Stewart_Jacks@fws.gov.