



# Razorback Sucker Species Information

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**Scientific Name:** *Xyrauchen texanus*

**Family:** Castostomidae

**Description:** They feed on plankton, plant matter, and small aquatic invertebrates. Adults are capable of reproducing at three to four years of age, with spawning occurring during high spring flows. The razorback sucker's keel, located on its back behind its head, distinguishes this fish from other suckers. The keel helps the fish navigate in turbulent waters. The razorback sucker is one of North America's larger suckers; it can grow to a length of three feet, live upwards of 40 years, and weigh between twelve to fourteen pounds.

**Status:** Endangered, October 23, 1991. Poor survival of young has been attributed to loss of habitat and predation by nonnative fishes. Recovery efforts include developing habitat as well as rearing and release of fish by hatcheries.

**Native Area:** The razorback sucker is native to the Colorado River basin and has been affected by the installation of major dams on the Colorado River and introduction of nonnative fish. Wild populations of razorback sucker are very rare and consist primarily of adults. The species is being reintroduced into the Green, Gunnison, upper Colorado and San Juan Rivers, Lakes Mojave and Havasu, and the lower Colorado and Verde rivers.

**Additional Comments:** The National Fish Hatcheries assist with the recovery efforts through captive propagation and release of fish into the wild. The released fish are implanted with tracking devices to study their behavior, movement, and habitat needs.



*Information and photo provided by Uvalde National Fish Hatchery*

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/uvalde/index.html>