

UPDATE
October 1996

A. Population Status:

<u>Species</u>	<u>River</u>		
	<u>Green</u>	<u>Yampa</u>	<u>Colorado</u>
Colorado squawfish	Stable/Increasing?	Stable	Stable/Small
Humpback chub	Stable?/ Small	Stable?/ Small	Stable
Razorback sucker	500+/- adults	few adults	Few Adults
Limited Recruit.	Limited Recruit	No Recruitment	
Bonytail	--Very rare -- No Recruitment -- All Rivers		

Notes:

1. Larval CSF captured in 1995 in the Gunnison River above Redlands.
2. Larval CSF captured in 1995 in the 15 mile reach for first time since 1982.
3. Larval CSF capture in the Price River in 1996.
4. Presence of a spawning razorback sucker population in the lower Green River confirmed by larval collections in 1996
5. Water users believe downlisting of CSF and HBC is warranted.

B. Program Management

Goal: Ensure effective implementation and coordination of the Recovery Program

Status: *FY 97 work plan has been developed; funding appears secure.
 *Discussions on strategies to provide long-term funding for the Program have been put on hold pending resolution of water users issues re: Section 7 consultation.
 oManagement Objectives (recovery goals) for the endangered fish will be completed in 1997.

C. Habitat Management (Instream Flows)

Goal: To protect sufficient instream flows to support self-sustaining populations of the fishes

- Status:
- o The change in the Steamboat Lake (Yampa River) decree to allow for reservoir releases for instream flows is progressing through water court. A 5 year contract for the water has been signed.
 - o Agreement has been reached with most of the objectors to the CWCB's application for a 581 cfs instream flow right in the 15-Mile Reach (July-September).
 - o A one-year contract was executed for an additional 21,650 af for water from Ruedi Reservoir was signed. Issues over delivery of that water and a longer term contract are under review.
 - * A settlement was reached on the operation of the Orchard Mesa check which should provide approximately 30,000 acre feet of water to the 15-mile reach.
 - o Flows along the Green River peaked in excess of 22,000 cfs this spring, providing FWS with information needed to issue its biological opinion.
 - o Work to synthesize information related to Flaming Gorge and Aspinall Units is progressing and will be completed in FY 97.
 - * FWS agreed to take the lead on NEPA compliance for the Yampa River Endangered Fish Recovery and Water Management Plan.

D. Habitat Development and Maintenance

Goal: To provide or enhance habitat for the rare fishes through habitat development or management measures such as:

- o fish passageways
- o restoration of flooded bottomland habitats.

- Status:
- o Construction of the fish passageway at Redlands Dam (Gunnison River) has been completed. Over 7,000 native fishes, including 1 Colorado squawfish, have used the ladder.
 - o Levee's will be breached on ?? sites along the middle Green River this winter.
 - o A Land Acquisition Coordinator (Dave Soker, FWS) has been hired in Vernal, Utah.
 - o A 160 acre flooded bottomland has been acquired in the 15-mile reach.

E. Stocking Native Fishes

Goal: A. Produce a sufficient supply of hatchery reared fish to support research and recovery activities.

B. Conserve the genetic diversity present in the wild.

- Status:
- o Approximately, ?? razorbacks will be stocked in the Colorado/Gunnison Rivers this Fall.
 - o Approximately, ??? razorbacks will be stocked in the Green River this Fall.
 - o Approximately 3000?? bonytail will be stoked in the Colorado River near Moab, UT , this Fall.
 - o Additional hatchery/grow out facilities were constructed at Ouray, Wawheap, and Grand Junction.
 - o Construction of additional refuge ponds at Craig, Colorado was canceled because of high cost.

F. Nonnative Fishes and Sportfishing

Goal: Minimize the impacts of nonnative fishes and incidental take associated with sport fishing on the endangered fishes.

Status: * Procedures for Stocking of Nonnative Fishes have been agreed to by the Service and the States and are ready for endorsement by the Implementation Committee.

o The Nonnative Fishes control strategy has been completed and approved by the Biology Committee

o The Colorado Division of Wildlife is pursuing regulation to remove the bag limits on warm water sportfish for river within critical habitat.

G. Information and Education

Goal: To promote public understanding, appreciation, and support for efforts to recover the endangered fish.

Status:

- o A formal dedication of the Redlands fish ladder was held in August 1996
- o A Recovery Program Field/River Trip was conducted in the Grand Junction, Colorado area in August 1996

H. Section 7 Consultation

Goal: To allow water development to proceed in the Upper Colorado River Basin in compliance with the ESA.

Status: * FWS has determined that the Recovery Program has continued to make sufficient progress to serve as the reasonable and prudent alternative for depletion projects less than 1,500 acre feet. Service requirements to restore the threshold to 3,000 acre feet have been met.

*Approximately ?? projects with a potential to deplete about acre feet have received favorable biological opinions since the inception of the Recovery Program in 1988.

*Water users have raised concerns about the preliminary draft biological opinion of the Ute Pipeline.

* Work groups have been appointed by the Management Committee to resolve Section 7/Instream flow/recovery issues on the 15-mile reach and the Duchesne River.