

UPDATE
March 1997

A. Population Status:

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

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- Notes:
1. relatively large numbers of YOY Colorado squawfish captured on the Colorado River in summer/fall of 1996.
 2. presence of a spawning population of razorbacks in the lower Green River was recently confirmed.

B. 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 basin) decree to allow for reservoir releases for instream flows is still tied up in water court. (The 5-year contract for the water has been signed).
 - o Agreement has been reached with the objectors to the CWCB's application for a 581 cfs instream flow right in the 15-Mile Reach (July-September). Final decree is being reviewed by the Department of Justice.
 - o A 1997 (one-year) contract for an additional 21,650 af of water from Ruedi Reservoir has been drafted. 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. At least two-years will be required for delivery of the water.
 - o Flows in the Green River and Colorado River will be above average in 1997.

- o Work to synthesize technical information related to Flaming Gorge and Aspinall Units is progressing and will be completed in 1997.
- * MOU was signed by FWS and the Yampa River Basin Partnership to facilitate local involvement in the Yampa River Endangered Fish Recovery and Water Management Plan.
- o Reservoirs in the upper Colorado River will be operated to enhance peak flows in 1997.
- o support for the Colorado's instream flow filings on the Yampa and Colorado River has grown in the State legislature (CWCB has devoted considerable time to educating key legislators about the need for these filings).
- o the CWCB approved a \$1.25M grant to the Recovery Program for O&M of the Grand Valley water management improvements and is attempting to amend the CWCB construction fund to allow for grants in support of endangered species recovery efforts.

C. 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 2-3 sites along the middle Green River this winter/spring, pending issuance of a permit from the Corp of Engineers.
- o Several floodplain landowners along the Green, Gunnison, and Colorado rivers have expressed an interest in selling their land or entering into flood easements with FWS. Questions over who owns the floodplain in Utah have complicated the acquisitions on the Green River.
- o 45 young razorbacks and 6 Colorado squawfish were harvested from Old Charlie Wash in last August. 7 tons of nonnatives were disposed of.

D. 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 Last fall, approximately 280 12-15 inch razorbacks were stocked in the Gunnison Rivers and about 1,200 razorbacks were be stocked in the Green River last fall.
- o Approximately 2,000 bonytail were stocked in the Colorado River near Moab, UT, last fall.
- o The Ouray National Fish Hatchery will be completed by the Spring of 1998, growout ponds will be acquired in the Grand Valley in 1997/98.

- o Increased stocking of razorbacks is planned for 1997.
 - 7,000 razorbacks in the Gunnison River
 - 1,000 razorbacks in Green River
 - 5-10k bonytail in Colorado River
- o The hatchery facility plan, Genetics Management Plan and razorback stocking plan for the Green River will be updated in 1997. CDOW and FWS developing a razorback/Colorado squawfish stocking plan for the Colorado River.
- o the CWCB approved a \$2M grant to construct a native aquatic species hatchery in the San Luis Valley.

E. Nonnative Fishes and Sportfishing

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

- Status:
- o The Nonnative Fishes Control Strategy has been completed and approved by the Management Committee. Priority elements of the strategy will be implemented - 1997 -catfish, carp and centrarcids on the Green River
 - pond reclamation along CO/Gunnison river - 1998 - 1997 activities plus:
 - small minnows from Gunnison, Green, and Colorado rivers
 - centrarcids from the Colorado River
 - catfish from the lower Yampa River
 - o The Colorado Wildlife Commission approved the removal of bag limits on warm water sportfish on rivers within critical habitat.

F. Information and Education

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

- Status:
- o The "Recovery Program Status Report" was completed and distributed last February.
 - o News releases have been issued on a variety of Recovery Program projects/issues.
 - o The Recovery program Newsletter was published last fall.

G. Section 7 Consultation

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

- Status: *
- FWS will finalize its annual review of sufficient progress in April 1997. The Service's requirements to restore the threshold to from 1,500 to 3,000 acre feet have not been met.

- * The draft biological opinion on historic and new depletions have been delayed until the end of September because of the need for additional hydrology data analyses
- o A draft biological opinion on historic and new depletions from the Duchesne River should be released in April.

H. Program Management

Goal: Ensure effective implementation and coordination of the Recovery Program

- Status: *
- * RIPRAP changes and FY 98 program guidance have been drafted and reviewed by the technical and Management Committees; FY 98 capital funds are less than requested.
 - * Discussions on strategies to provide long-term funding for the Program have been put on hold pending resolution of issues concerning Section 7 consultation. Water users and the conservation groups have been meeting to resolve issues.
 - o Management objectives (AKA recovery goals) for the endangered fish will be completed in 1997.
 - * Recruitment of a new Program Director proceed pending approval and processing by FWS in Washington D.C.