

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

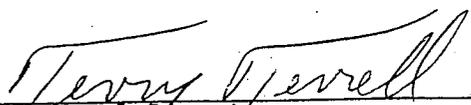
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

PROCEDURES FOR STOCKING NONNATIVE FISH SPECIES
IN THE UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Council on Environment Quality's regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the national Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Part 1500-1508), the Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required to enter into a cooperative agreement with the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, to implement stocking procedures. The Service has determined that their participation in the stocking procedures as analyzed in the attached environmental assessment does not constitute a major Federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Impacts were evaluated using the best available data and assumptions. The following is a summary of impacts:

1. Aquatic Biological Resources: The stocking procedures will reduce the escapement of nonnative fishes into the rivers of the Colorado River Basin.
2. Recreation: The stocking procedures will increase recreational fishing opportunities above existing levels while providing increased protection for the endangered fishes. This includes 7 reservoirs with existing Lake Management Plans, and adding routine stocking for Corn Lake, Connected Lakes, Duke Lake, Juniata Reservoir, and Jerry Creek Reservoir. Additionally, all isolated public waters above the 50-year floodplain can be routinely stocked.
3. Recovery of Endangered Fishes: The stocking procedures will greatly reduce the escapement of nonnative fishes into critical habitat of the endangered fishes. This action will help to facilitate their recovery.
4. Economy and Human Environment: Limits on stocking of warmwater fishes in floodplain ponds will have some impact on the aquaculture industry. However, because most warmwater species reproduce in private ponds, annual stocking has not been required. Trout may still be stocked in any floodplain ponds and rivers above critical habitat. Largemouth bass, black crappie, bluegill, and triploid grass carp can be routinely stocked above the 50-year floodplain. These represent, other than trout, the most often stocked fish supplied by the aquaculture industry. Private ponds below the 50-year floodplain that are bermed and screened also can be stocked with these species.

The Service distributed the draft environmental assessment to various sportfishing, environmental, and water user interests. Three public meetings were held to receive public comment.


DEPUTY Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Denver, Colorado

10/10/96
Date