

Upper Colorado River



Endangered Fish
Recovery Program

2016 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH PROGRESS REPORT



**COLORADO RIVER RECOVERY PROGRAM
FY-2012 ANNUAL REPORT**

Project No.: PIP 12

I. Project Title: Information and Education Program

II. Bureau of Reclamation Agreement Number: R10PG40060

Bureau of Reclamation Agreement Number(s):

R11PG40023

Project/Grant Period:

Start date: 9/16/2011

End date: 9/30/2016

Reporting period end date: 9/30/16

Is this the final report? Yes _____ No X

III. Principal Investigator:

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IV. Project Summary:

See below.

V. Study Schedule:

Initial year: 1988.

Final year: Duration of Recovery Program.

VI. Relationship to RIPRAP:

VI. INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THE
ENDANGERED FISHES AND THE RECOVERY PROGRAM.

Task VI.A. Conduct survey to measure public awareness of and attitudes
toward endangered Colorado River fish and the Recovery
Program.

Task VI.B. Train Recovery Program managers and researchers in media
relations.

- Task VI.C. Plan and implement information and education activities for all significant Recovery Program actions, such as presentations, public meetings, public involvement training.
- Task VI.D. Promote technical publication of study results.
- Task VI.E. Produce, distribute and evaluate information and education products such as the newsletter and brochure; manage media relations including contacting reporters, producing news releases and fact sheets.
- Task VI.F. Participate in development and circulation of educational exhibits about the Recovery Program and the endangered fish.
- Task VI.G. Maintain Recovery Program technical library and library web page.

BACKGROUND

Communication and outreach are coordinated, using a shared approach to ensure that common audiences receive accurate, consistent information about the endangered fishes and efforts to recover them. The I&E Committee developed and approved general key messages in 2009 and will be discussing updating those messages at the September 2016 meeting.

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR THE ENDANGERED FISHES AND THE RECOVERY PROGRAM.

Mission

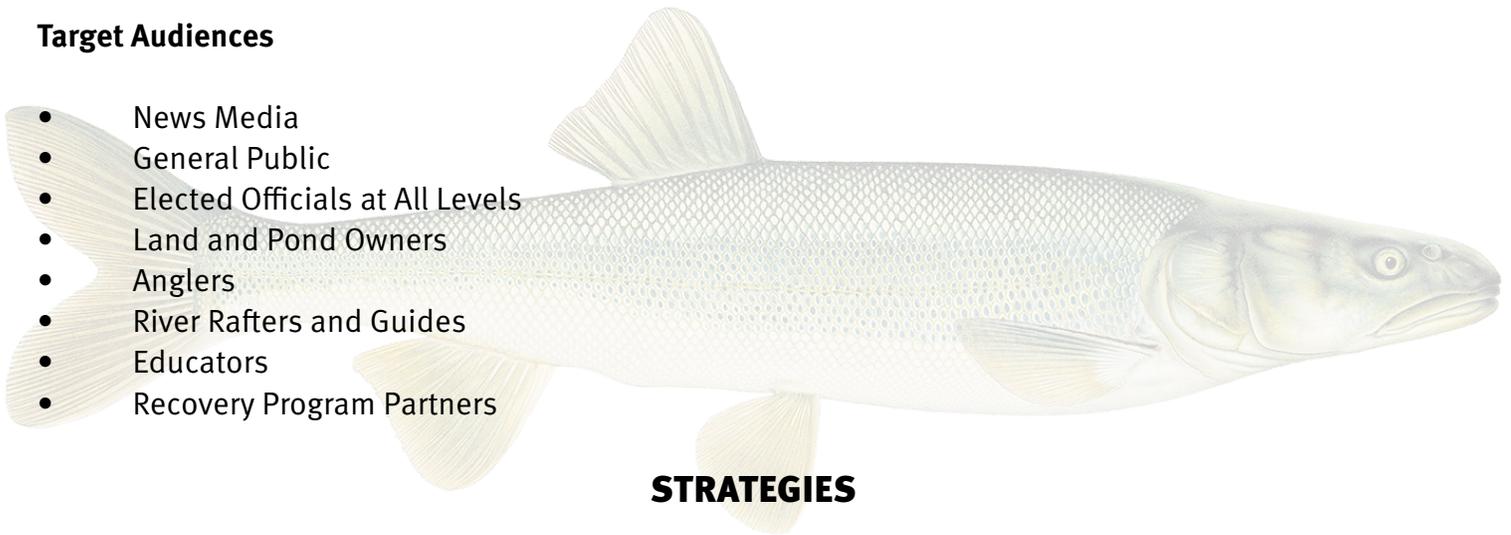
- To support the Recovery Program's success in recovering the endangered fishes by assuring that the public understands what is being done and why, and has confidence that the process is honest, open, sensitive, clear, and understandable.

Goals

- Develop public involvement strategies at the beginning of any and all projects.
- Educate target audiences about endangered fish, the threats to their survival and Recovery Program efforts to recover them.
- Promote Recovery Program accomplishments.
- Improve communication within the Recovery Program and its partner organizations.

Target Audiences

- News Media
- General Public
- Elected Officials at All Levels
- Land and Pond Owners
- Anglers
- River Rafters and Guides
- Educators
- Recovery Program Partners



STRATEGIES

Our communication plan addresses Recovery Program strategies in general for the overall program.

NEWS MEDIA: Actively work to identify issues that would generate the interest of the news media. Prepare and distribute advance and follow-up news releases to media, members of Congress and Recovery Program partners. Identify and seek support of partner and other organizations to issue news releases and/or provide supportive statements. Invite reporters to accompany biologists as they conduct their work.

RESPONSIBILITY: I&E Coordinator/I&E Committee/Recovery Program Partners

2016 EVENTS

- The Recovery Program and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) issued press releases on evidence of wild bonytail spawning in Stewart Lake, Utah.
- Robert Segin, USFWS External Affairs, along with Recovery Program staff took reporters from the Denver Post into the field near Grand Junction, CO. They accompanied Service staff while conducting fish sampling, viewed fish passages/screens, visited a hatchery and learned how USFWS manages endangered fish in the Colorado River.
- CPW has hosted three fishing tournaments. Two at Ridgway and one at Elkhead Reservoirs. Mike Porras and Joe Lewandowski each provided news releases promoting these tournaments. The Recovery Program in support of CPW's actions has provided a custom Catch and Keep logo that is currently being used in the Colorado Fishing Regulations booklet and on 1000 rack cards that have been produced for each of these fishing tournaments.
- UDWR continues to engage the media with it's "Catch and Kill" message of **NO RETURN** to the rivers for the "Worst of the Worst" fish species: smallmouth bass, northern pike and walleye.
- Kevin McAbee, Nonnative Fish Coordinator for the Recovery Program assisted CPW with Craig Daily Press reporter Patrick Kelly's articles. Tom Chart, Director of the Recovery Program prepared a letter to the editor in response to the article in the Craig Daily Press.
- Jana Mohrman, USFWS and Brent Uilenberg, USBR assisted reporter Brent Gardner-Smith of the Aspen Daily News with articles about releases from Ruedi Reservoir to benefit the endangered fish.

2017 Coming EVENTS

- Development of radio spots with the input and approval of the I&E Committee. This will be on the agenda for the I&E Committee meeting in September.

PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS: Produce and distribute publications and other educational materials to provide current information to target audiences, ensuring consistent identity and content (such as Swimming Upstream newsletter, Program Highlights briefing document, nonnative fish and native fish brochures, nonnative fish removal rack cards, fact sheets, magnets, rulers, etc.)

RESPONSIBILITY: I&E Coordinator/I&E Committee

WHAT'S NEW IN 2016:

- "Swimming Upstream" newsletter is now an 8.5" x 11" booklet in full color. I&E Coordinator, Melanie Fischer delivered newsletters to the Craig Chamber of Commerce and spoke directly to them about distributing other publications to the public. Newsletters are well received and distributed widely.
- Produced a four-page brochure called "On the Path to Recovery" for distribution to Congressional aides to highlight progress made in the recovery of the endangered fishes.
- A new native fish brochure has been developed and will be available for distribution in 2016. They will be distributed to State Parks, fishing shops, and retail outdoor gear stores across the basin. A percentage of native fish brochures will be pocket laminated and given to field crews, river runners and angling guides for distribution to folks encountered on the river or for use in a boat to identify the thirteen native fish species of the upper Colorado River basin. A nonnative fish message is prominent on the front cover.
- Two new rack cards identifying why nonnative fish need to be removed from reservoirs produced in conjunction with CPW's fish tournaments.
- Nonnative fish removal artwork has been developed for the Lil' Suckers beverage holders. The state of Wyoming has agreed to initial funding in the amount of \$1500.00. This product will be distributed to field crews, river runners and angling guides for distribution to people encountered on the river.
- Sets of 5x7 inch note cards have been developed with species pictures on the front one of the five elements of recovery highlighted on the back.

SPECIAL EVENTS AND PUBLIC MEETINGS. Strategically identify opportunities to reach target audiences through participation in special events and public meetings.

RESPONSIBILITY: I&E Coordinator/I&E Committee/Recovery Program Partners

WHAT'S NEW IN 2016:

- CPW and the Recovery Program hosted a public meeting in Craig CO on April 14, 2016. The discussion included a proposed net and fishing tournament at Elkhead Reservoir. The Recovery program had three staff members in attendance and provided artwork for several posters detailing why nonnative fish removal was necessary.

INTERPRETIVE EXHIBITS/SIGNAGE. Coordinate production and installation of interpretive signs/exhibits at public facilities with high visitation in target communities. Place program exhibit in highly visible public locations

RESPONSIBILITY: I&E Coordinator/I&E Committee/Recovery Program Partners

WHAT'S NEW IN 2016:

Visited select State Parks in Colorado and Utah assessing the need for either new signs or replacement of existing signs. This will be discussed at the I&E Committee meeting in September, 2016.

SOCIAL MEDIA and WEBSITE. Maintain our social media presence and promote our Facebook page and public website (ColoradoRiverRecovery.org)

RESPONSIBILITY: I&E Coordinator/Recovery Program staff

WHAT'S COMING IN 2016-2017:

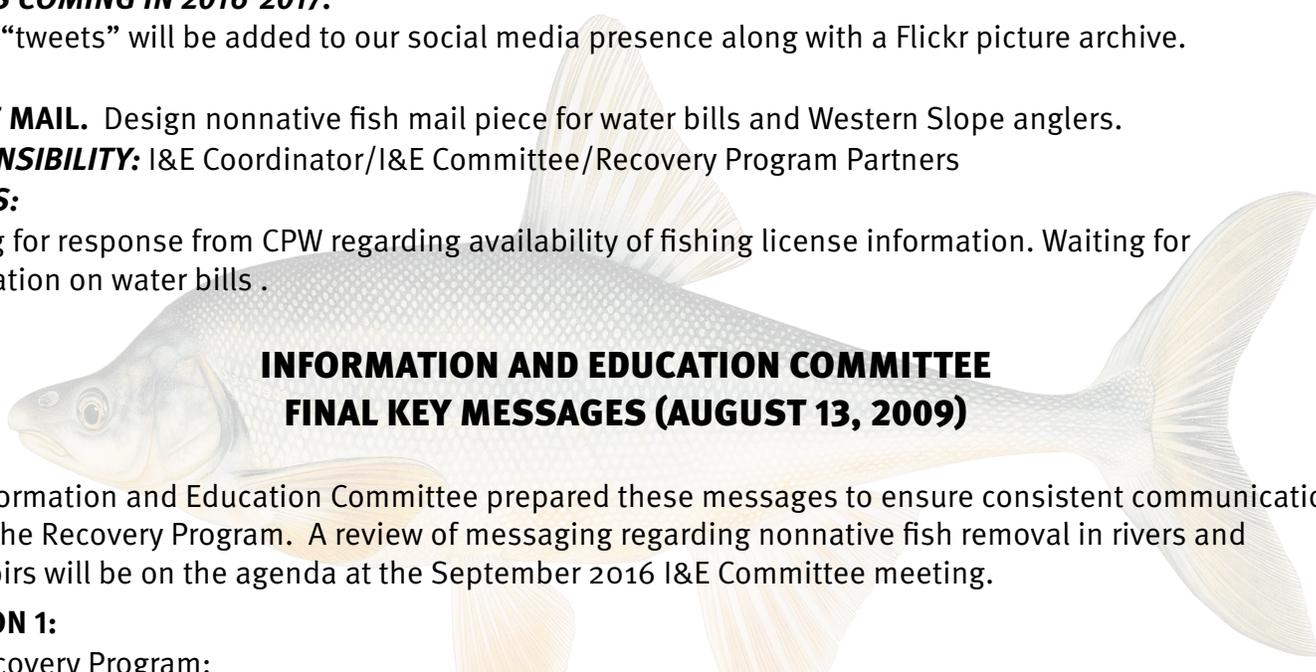
Twitter "tweets" will be added to our social media presence along with a Flickr picture archive.

DIRECT MAIL. Design nonnative fish mail piece for water bills and Western Slope anglers.

RESPONSIBILITY: I&E Coordinator/I&E Committee/Recovery Program Partners

STATUS:

Waiting for response from CPW regarding availability of fishing license information. Waiting for information on water bills .



**INFORMATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FINAL KEY MESSAGES (AUGUST 13, 2009)**

The Information and Education Committee prepared these messages to ensure consistent communication about the Recovery Program. A review of messaging regarding nonnative fish removal in rivers and reservoirs will be on the agenda at the September 2016 I&E Committee meeting.

VERSION 1:

The Recovery Program:

- (Purpose) Recovers endangered fish while water use and development continue
- (Partners) Embodies a spirit of cooperation
- (Process) Learns from the past to plan for the future

VERSION 2:

The Recovery Program:

- Is working to recover four endangered fish species that are found only in the Colorado River Basin.
- Provides for human uses of water to continue in compliance with the Endangered Species Act.
- Is a continuing collaborative success story and a model for other endangered species recovery programs.

VERSION 3:

The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program works to:

- Recover endangered fishes and conserve their habitats in the upper Colorado River basin while water use and development continue;
- Model an inclusive, cooperative and landscape-level approach to conservation; and,
- Learn from the past to manage and conserve our natural resources for the future.

2016 OUTREACH EVENTS CALENDAR

ATTENDED

- Colorado Water Congress, January 27-29, 2016, Denver, CO
- Utah Water Users Association, March 14-16, 2016, St. George, UT
- Northwest Colorado Oil and Gas Forum, April 7, 2016, Rifle CO
- Elkhead Public Meeting, April 14, 2016, Craig CO
- I&E Tour of the Western Slope area in Colorado, May 8-13, 2016. Visited State Parks, retail outlets, Craig hotels and Chamber of Commerce, and Children's Nature Museum in Fruita CO. Found multiple placements for native fish brochure and other publications.
- Kathleen Tadvick, Education & Hunter Outreach Coordinator, CPW, Grand Junction, CO: Classroom razorback sucker release at Connected Lakes State Park May 9-10, 2016
- Tildon Jones, Supervisory Fish Biologist, Colorado River Fish Project, USFWS Vernal Utah: Classroom razorback sucker release at Ouray National Wildlife Refuge May 11, 2016
- Ute Water Children's Water Festival, May 16-17, 2016, Grand Junction, CO
- Denver Water Children's Water Festival, May 17, 2016, Denver, CO
- Endangered Species Day, May 20, 2016 at the Denver Aquarium
- Open House, Program Directors Office, Lakewood, CO, Endangered Species Day, May 20, 2016 for the USFWS Regional Office.
- Photographed at Elkhead Fishing Tournament, June 19, 2016
- Colorado Water Workshop, June 22-24, 2016 Gunnison, CO
- Rocky Mountain Coal Mining Institute Annual Conference, June 26-28, 2016, Steamboat Springs, CO
- Chris Michaud, Fisheries Biologist, UDWR Moab, Utah: lecture on the Colorado pikeminnow at the Moab Information Center (co-sponsored by Canyonlands Natural History Association and The Museum of Moab), July 15, 2016.
- UDWR-Moab, Utah hosted an informational booth at the Moab Farmers' Market many Thursdays throughout summer 2016.
- Aurora Water Tour, August 10-11, 2016. This tour specifically targets policy makers, including city council, legislative delegation, federal and state agency staff, community leaders, and many of Aurora's regional partners. Aurora's water supply system spans three river basins and serves more than 350,000 people.
- Grand Junction Farmer's Market, August 18, 2016, Grand Junction, CO
- Palisade Peach Festival, August 19-20, 2016, Palisade, CO
- Palisade Farmer's Market, August 21, 2016, Palasade, CO

STILL TO BE ATTENDED

- River Rendezvous, September 30 - October 1, 2016, Green River, UT
- WY Water Assoc., October 26-28, 2016, Casper, WY
- Upper Colorado River Basin Water Forum, Colorado Mesa University, November 2-3, 2016, Grand Junction, CO
- CO River Water Users, Las Vegas, NV, December 14-16, 2016

OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE:

The Recovery Program is working with the Children’s Nature Museum in Fruita CO to acquire a 250 gallon aquarium and pursue permitting to display the four endangered fishes of the Upper Colorado River on a permanent basis.

Palisade High School is coordinating with Ouray National Fish Hatchery in Grand Junction, to install an aquaculture facility that would raise endangered fish in a river ecology class at the high school.

A permanent display of live razorback sucker and bonytail at the Utah Museum of Natural History in Vernal, UT is in the completion phase. Pond has been finished, with the installation of fish in outdoor pond to happen soon. Interpretive signs are in the design phase and will be installed on site.

Upper Colorado River
Endangered Fish
Recovery Program



and



San Juan River Basin
Recovery Implementation
Program

Working Together to Recover Endangered Fishes

The Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program use innovative, cost-effective measures to recover the endangered Colorado River fishes. At the same time, water and hydropower resources are managed within state and federal laws and tribal rights to meet the needs of people in growing western communities.

The recovery programs' partners represent state and federal agencies, water and environmental organizations, power customers, and American Indian tribes. These partners believe that working cooperatively produces far greater results than independent efforts and minimizes conflicts, such as lawsuits over water use.

The recovery programs currently provide ESA compliance for 2,427 water projects depleting more than 3.7 million acre-feet per year. No lawsuits have been filed on ESA compliance for any of these water projects.

Nonnative Fish: The Greatest Threat to Recovery

The overall goal for recovery of the four endangered fishes is to achieve naturally self-sustaining populations and protect the habitat on which those populations depend. The recovery programs implement actions under several recovery elements:

Providing Flows



Managing Nonnative Fish



Monitoring Populations



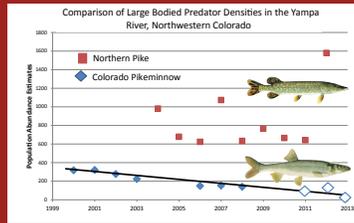
Stocking Endangered Fish

Restoring Habitat

In the Upper Basin, despite years of significant effort, the nonnative fish threat remains largely uncontrolled.



Nonnative Predators Delay Recovery



Fish illustrations by Joseph Tomelleri

A guide to the Native Fishes of the Colorado River basin



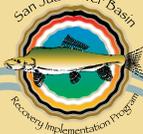
Colorado Pikeminnow Photo Courtesy, Charlie Card

The native fishes of the upper Colorado River basin have evolved over millions of years to survive in a desert river system. These native fish represent a unique and irreplaceable natural heritage. Only 13 fish species are native to the upper Colorado River basin. They have been joined by 50 nonnative fish species, some of which are voracious predators and have contributed to the endangered status of the Colorado pikeminnow, humpback chub, bonytail and razorback sucker.

Upper Colorado River



Endangered Fish
Recovery Program



HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF NONNATIVE SPECIES



SMALLMOUTH BASS



NORTHERN PIKE



WALLEYE

UTAH AND WYOMING HAVE
CATCH & KEEP
REGULATIONS. IT IS ILLEGAL TO
RETURN THESE FISH TO THE RIVER.

One hundred years ago only 13 native species swam in the Upper Colorado River and its tributaries—today they have been joined by more than 50 nonnative species. Introduction and establishment of problematic nonnative predators affect native fishes, the Recovery Program, anglers, and local communities with high environmental and economic costs.

Removing illegally-introduced species is expensive and time-consuming. We must all join forces to prevent the spread of these problematic nonnative predators in order to preserve native fish in the river and desirable sport fisheries in the reservoirs.

Fish Illustrations © Joseph R. Tomelleri

Review your state fishing regulations. State regulations may vary based on river mile and are the LAW. Regulations on the river may be **very different** than in reservoirs. **Know the law.**

<http://cpw.state.co.us/Documents/RulesRegs/Brochure/fishing.pdf>

<http://wildlife.utah.gov/fishing-in-utah/guidebooks/51-rules/guidebooks/1530-2015-utah-fishing-guidebook.html>

https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Regulations/Regulation-PDFs/WYFISHINGREGS_BROCHURE



Ridgeway Reservoir has a "NO BAG OR POSSESSION LIMIT" on smallmouth bass.



SMALLMOUTH BASS

If you catch *any size* of this species, please keep them. **DO NOT** return them to the reservoir alive.

WHY ARE THESE FISH SPECIES "CATCH & KEEP"?

Nonnative fish have spread and increased dramatically in the past decade throughout the Upper Colorado River basin. Problematic nonnative predators must be eliminated from reservoirs because they continue to escape from reservoirs into downstream endangered fish habitat. We are committed to providing desirable fishing opportunities in these reservoirs as long as they do NOT contain the most problematic species: **smallmouth bass, fertile walleye, northern pike, and burbot.**

- No bag limits
 - No possession limits
- on Smallmouth Bass at Ridgeway Reservoir

Fish for rainbow & brown trout here. Daily bag limit – 4; possession limit – 8.



Elkhead Reservoir has a "NO BAG OR POSSESSION LIMIT" on smallmouth bass and northern pike.



SMALLMOUTH BASS



NORTHERN PIKE

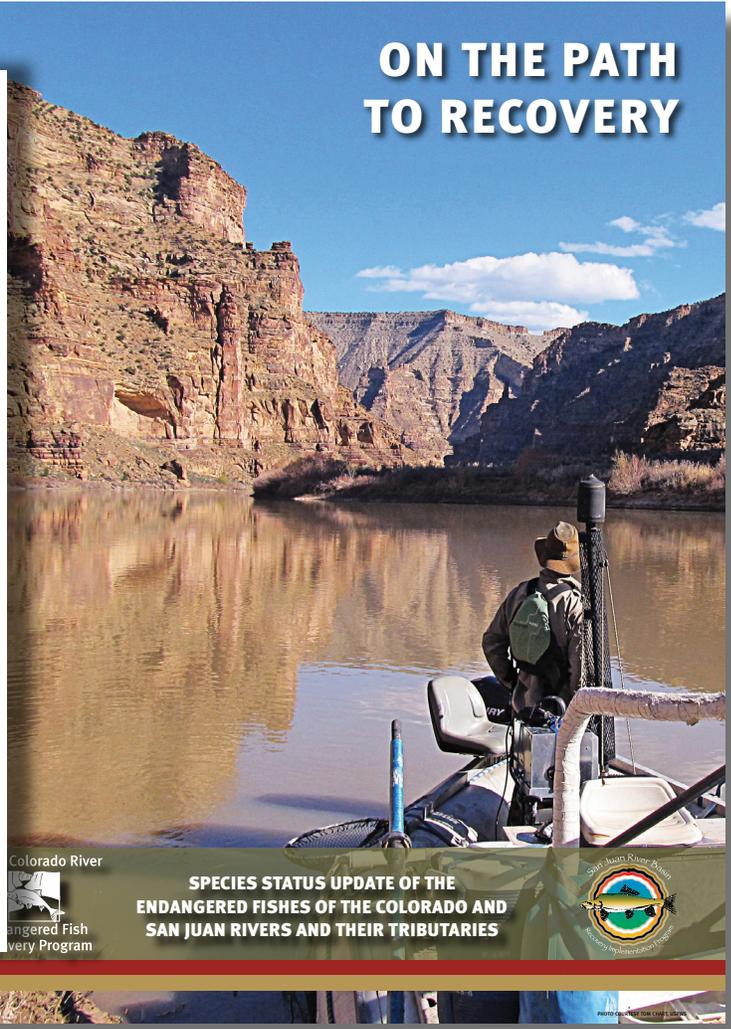
If you catch *any size* of these species, please keep them. **DO NOT** return them to the reservoir alive.

WHY ARE THESE FISH SPECIES "CATCH & KEEP"?

Nonnative fish have spread and increased dramatically in the past decade throughout the Upper Colorado River basin. Problematic nonnative predators must be eliminated from reservoirs because they continue to escape into endangered fish habitat downstream. We are committed to providing desirable fishing opportunities in these reservoirs as long as they do NOT contain the most problematic species: **smallmouth bass, fertile walleye, northern pike, and burbot.**

- No bag limits
 - No possession limits
- on Smallmouth Bass and Northern Pike at Elkhead Reservoir

ON THE PATH TO RECOVERY



Colorado River
Endangered Fish
Recovery Program

SPECIES STATUS UPDATE OF THE ENDANGERED FISHES OF THE COLORADO AND SAN JUAN RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS L. SMITH



Photo by Michael Adams, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On the front: Healthy young Colorado pikeminnow collected at Redlands fish ladder. Fish ladders are constructed to allow fish to migrate upstream to spawn and complete their life cycle.



Pictured Above: The Redlands fish ladder was completed in 1996 on the lower Gunnison River. Fish ladders reconnect habitat.

Upper Colorado River



Photo by Julie Howard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On the front: A young-of-year razorback sucker that was captured when draining Stewart Lake wetlands in the fall of 2013. A larger fish improves the survival rate when released into the river.



Pictured Above: Stewart Lake is a man-made wetland habitat that uses a "picket weir" (like a picket fence in the water) with quarter-inch openings to allow larval razorback sucker to move into the wetland, but prevent large nonnative fish from entering.

Upper Colorado River



ColoradoRiverRecovery.org



facebook.com/ColoradoRiverRecovery/

- VII. Recommendations:** Recovery Program I & E efforts should continue to focus on outreach projects that will reach the greatest number of people identified as target audiences. I&E Committee members should continue to find ways to inform the public and elected officials about recovery efforts through their own organizations and seek opportunities to expand outreach efforts, including using social media as appropriate.

In FY 17, two aquarium exhibits will be on display in Grand Junction, CO. where the public can see the endangered fish in person. An aquaculture facility at Palisade High School will be live by the 2017-18 school year. The Recovery Program will continue to encourage researchers to provide high resolution photos of their work that can be used in various ways to promote the Recovery Program.

I&E Committee will continue to develop targeted messages for anglers through water users and other groups.

- VIII. Project Status:** On-track and ongoing.

- IX. FY 2016 Budget:**

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

- A. Funds Provided: \$30,440
- B. Funds Expended: \$30,440
- C. Difference: \$ -0-
- D. Percent of FY 2016 work completed and projected costs to complete.
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: Not applicable.

San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

- A. Funds Provided: \$ 17,000
- B. Funds Expended: \$ 17,000
- C. Difference: -0-
- D. Percent of FY 2016 work completed and projected costs to complete: 100% of the shared projects were completed.
- E. Recovery Program funds spent for publication charges: Not applicable.

- X. Status of Data Submission:** Not applicable.

- XI. Signed:** Melanie Fischer January 20, 2017
Information & Education Coordinator Date