

RAZORBACK SUCKER
(*XYRAUCHEN TEXANUS*)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G2 / listed endangered 23 OCT 1991 (56FR:54957) with designated Critical Habitat 21 MAR 1994 (59FR:13374).

Distribution: Restricted to the Colorado River and a few of its warm-water tributaries; regularly found only in Lake Mohave, the upper Green River, UT and the lower Yampa River, CO; rare along the mainstem Colorado River in Marble Canyon and the mouth of the Little Colorado River, San Juan arm of Lake Powell, and upstream within the San Juan River (SJR). The only occurrences recorded for the SJR are from Bluff, UT; in 1976 two adult and 100-150 young were found in an irrigation pond connected to the river by a man-made canal, and in 1988 one adult was captured in the main channel. Results of recent releases of hatchery-raised suckers in the SJR are still pending.

Habitat: In mainstream portions of rivers, pre- and post-spawning suckers mostly use low-flow areas (backwaters over sand and silt substrate, deep eddies, and impoundments), but shallow to deep runs over sandbars and seasonally-flooded shorelines are also important. Spawning occurs in areas with shallow, swift riffles over gravel or cobble substrate, and they may also use backwater habitats. Young-of-year use warm, flooded bottomlands and backwaters. Irrigation canals and ponds connected to the San Juan River may be potential habitat.

Similar Species: Adult humpback chubs have a non-keeled dorsal hump, and do not have a large, fleshy mouth. Young may be confused with other sucker species.

Phenology:

≤m.APR: move to spawning areas prior to peak spring runoff
m.APR-m.JUN: spawning occurs during runoff in 9-17°C water
m.JUN-e.MAR: growth, dispersal of young; non-breeding season

Formal Survey Protocol: None. Evaluations may be based on the presence of habitat or Federally designated Critical Habitat. Electrofishing or seine surveys may be required if the proposed action may result in an adverse effect to the species. Federal permit required for collection.

Avoidance: Near occupied habitat, no surface disturbance year-round within 60 m of top of stream bank, and prevent changes to water chemistry or quantity upstream. Within federally designated critical habitat, no modification of constituent habitat elements within 100-year floodplain.

References:

- Bestgen, K.R. 1990. Status review of the razorback sucker, *Xyrauchen texanus*. Colorado State University Larval Fish Laboratory, contribution 44. 92pp.
- Holden, P.B. and W. Masslich. 1997. San Juan River recovery implementation program, summary report 1991-1996, PRN-576-2. BIO/WEST, Inc., Logan, UT.
- Minckley, W.L. 1973. Fishes of Arizona. Arizona Game and Fish Department, Sims Printing Co., Inc. Phoenix, AZ. (description p.153)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 1998. Razorback sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*) Recovery Plan. Denver, Colorado. 81pp.