Razorback Sucker *Xyrauchen texanus*

Proposed Downlisting with 4(d)

Photo credit: Melanie Fischer, USFWS

Julie Stahli

Upper Colorado River

Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Overview

Propose to reclassify the razorback sucker from endangered to threatened and issue a 4(d) rule.

Razorback sucker is a *conservation reliant species*.

Downlisting and recovery are dependent on continued management actions, including propagation.

SSA Involvement

Delphi Process

47 biologists

Navajo Nation
Southern Ute
States
Federal Agencies
Universities

Current and Future Condition

17 member team

States
FWS
USBR
NPS
WAPA

Upper CO Program
San Juan Program
LCR MSCP

Review

Peer Review: CSU, USGS, NPS

Colorado
New Mexico
FWS
USBR
Marsh & Assoc.
University Experts
Water users
USGS
Navajo Nation

San Juan Program
LCR MSCP

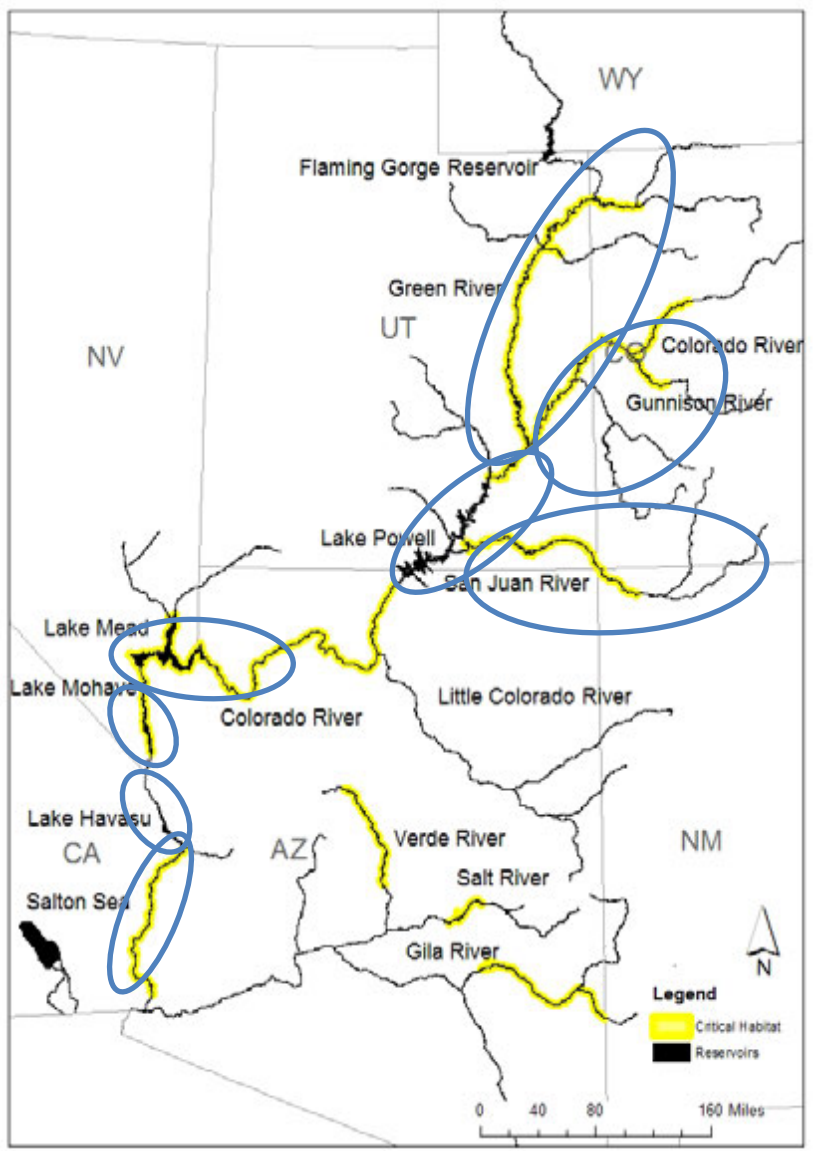
Species Overview

Species Needs identified in SSA

- Habitat
  - –Spawning substrate
  - –Backwaters, floodplains or sheltered shorelines
  - –Deep pools, eddies
- Suitable temperature and water quality
- Sufficient food
- Variable flows to connect habitat
- Range & Connectivity between populations

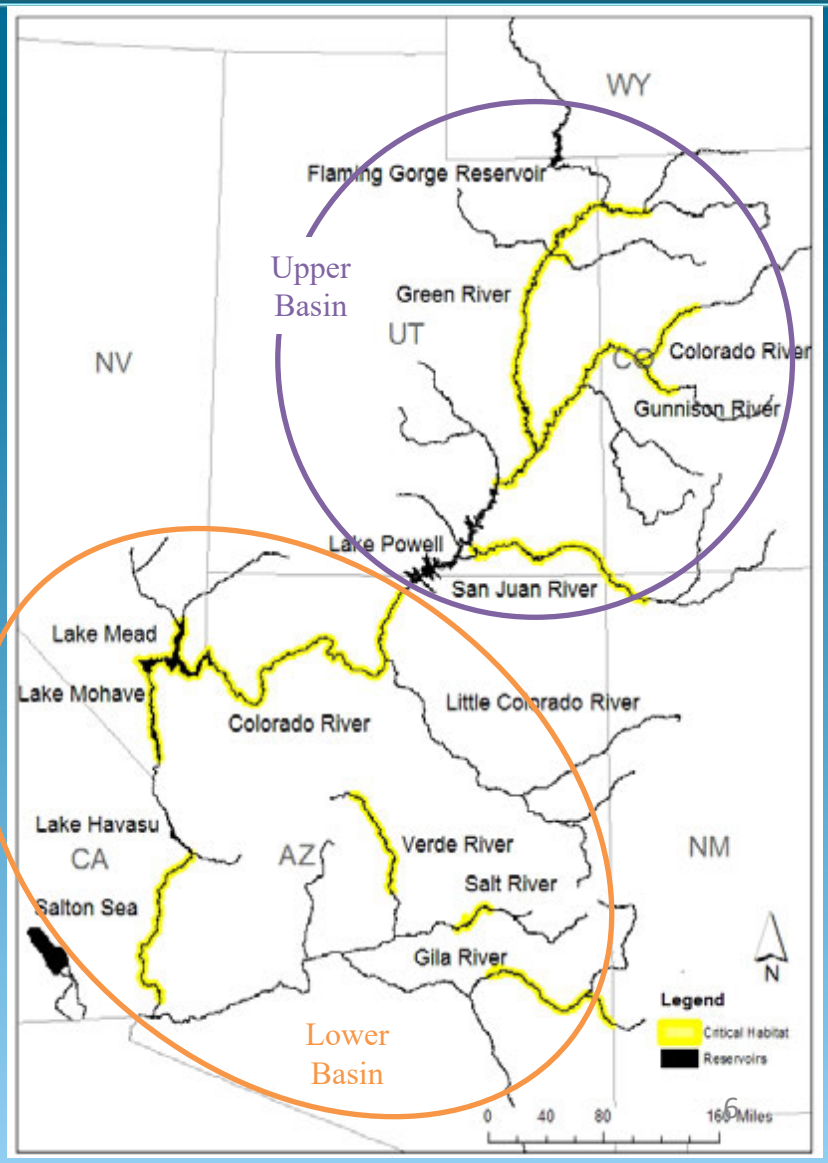
Geographic Extent

- Colorado River Basin
  - –Green River
  - –Colorado and Gunnison rivers
  - –San Juan River
  - –Lake Powell
  - –Lake Mead (and river)
  - –Lake Mohave (and river)
  - –Lake Havasu (and river)
  - –Colorado River below Parker Dam
- Historically present in the Gila Basin



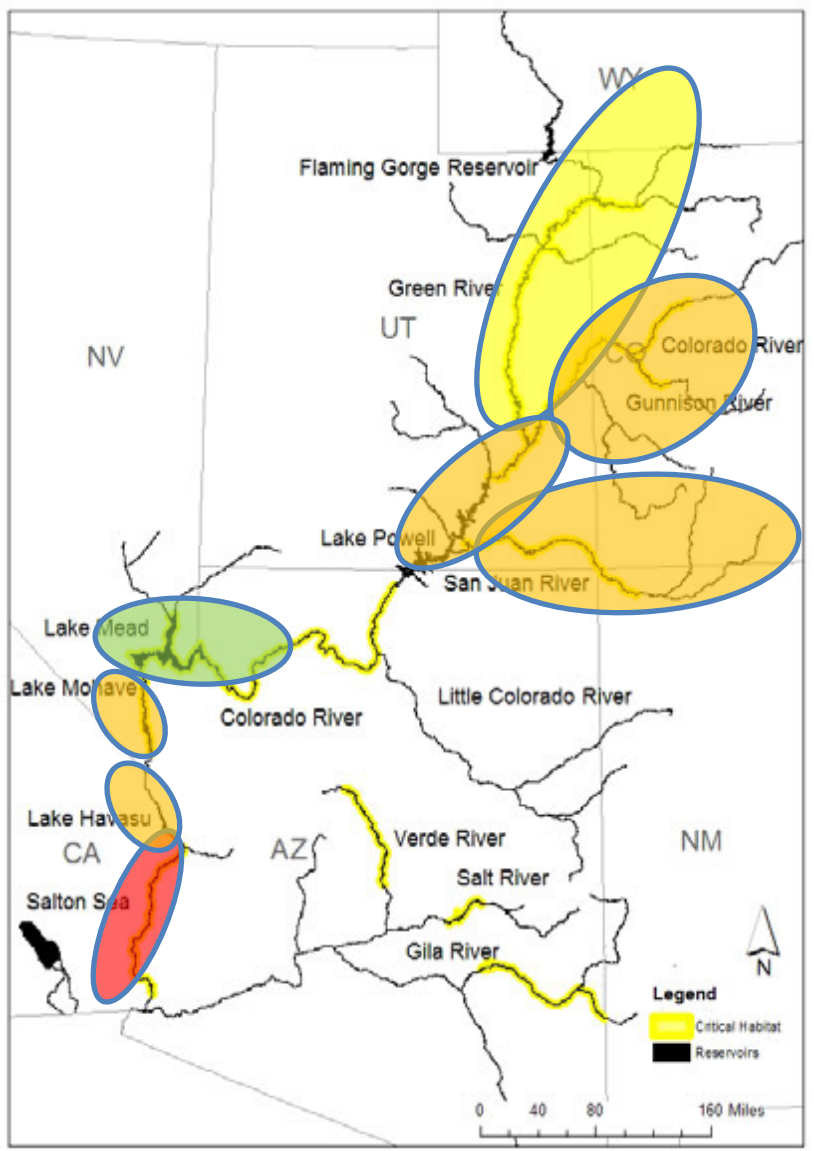
History


Photo credit: USFWS


WY
Flaming Gorge Reservoir
Upper Basin
Green River
UT
NV
Colorado River
Gunnison River
Lake Powell
San Juan River
Lake Mead
Lake Mohave
Colorado River
Little Colorado River
Lake Havasu
CA
AZ
Verde River
NM
Salt River
Salton Sea
Gila River
Lower Basin
N
Legend
Critical Habitat
Reservoirs
0
40
80
160 Miles

Current Condition

- Upper Basin
  - Resources generally sufficient
  - Large population in the Green, supported by Colorado & San Juan
  - Potential of Lake Powell
- Lower Basin
  - Resource conditions variable
  - Small self-sustaining population in Lake Mead
  - Persistent populations in Lake Mohave and Lake Havasu
  - Extirpated condition below Parker Dam



Threats

- Nonnative predation
- Habitat – flow regime
- Climate change


Photo credit: UDWR


Photo credit: UDWR


Photo credit: USFWS

Conservation Actions

- Water management
- Stocking and augmentation
- Nonnative removal
- Research and Monitoring

Recovery and Conservation Programs

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

Recovery Programs

Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

- Stock 23,400 razorback sucker annually
- Manage flows to support razorback sucker
  - –Flow recommendations established for all major rivers
  - –Larval transport into managed wetland habitats
  - –Managed wetlands have provided the first signs of wild recruitment in the upper basin
- Nonnative fish removal occurs in over 900 miles of river
- Fish passages allow for free movement across the upper basin
  - –Except for the San Juan Waterfall
- Canal screens prevent entrainment
- Monitoring
- Adaptive management

Photo credit: UDWR

Future Status of the Programs

- Programs' Cooperative Agreements signed through 2023
- Funding authorized through 2023
- Bills require a Report to Congress in FY22
  - Accomplishments & Status of the fish
  - Expenditures & Post 2023 Activities & costs
  - Negotiations for programs post-2023 are ongoing

Habitat Conservation Plan

- LCR-MSCP manages species below Hoover Dam under the HCP (2004)
- Conservation Measures
  - Create 360 acres of razorback sucker habitat
  - Stock up to 660,000 subadult razorback sucker
  - Support Lake Mohave genetic refuge
  - Monitor populations (including Lake Mead)

Razorback Sucker
Proposed Rule Conclusion

Reclassify from endangered to threatened

Not in danger of extinction throughout its range, based on current conditions, thus does not meet endangered definition;

- Widely distributed: 7 populations; rivers and reservoirs
- Numerous adults: 50,000+ hatchery produced adults in system
- Successful stocking: Long-lived adults occupy habitats far from stocking locations
- Adapting to wild: Adults migrate and spawn in many locations
- Incomplete life cycle: Wild recruitment remains rare

Razorback Sucker
Proposed Rule Conclusion

Reclassify from endangered to threatened

Likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future of 30 years, thus does meet threatened definition;

- Management actions could diminish
- Stocking could cease to be an effective management tool
- Continued management could improve species conditions to varying degrees

What is a 4(d) rule?

Section 4(d) of the ESA directs the Service to issue regulations deemed "necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of threatened species."

What this means

- Incentivize positive conservation actions
- Streamline the regulatory process for minor impacts
- Clarify/simplify what forms of take of
  are and are not prohibited

4(d) Rule

Take will continue to be prohibited, except for the following forms of take that would be excepted under the Act:

1. Population restoration efforts including **captive breeding, stocking and reintroduction** of individuals;
2. Display of razorback sucker for **educational purposes**;
3. Creating and managing **nursery habitat** for razorback sucker;
4. Removal or **suppression of nonnative fish** species;
5. **Catch-and-release angling** activities; and
6. **Chemical treatments** in support of the recovery of razorback sucker

Next Steps

- Proposed rule is currently open for public comment - closes September 6th
- FWS will consider and incorporate all new information into final rule
- Revision of recovery goals

Thank You – Questions?

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Razorback Sucker SSA Technical Input

Science Team for Scenario Development

–Paul Badame – Utah
–Shane Capron – WAPA
–Pete Cavalli – Wyoming
–Tom Chart – UCRRP
–Harry Crockett – Colorado
–Scott Durst – San Juan RIP
–Mark Grover – Arizona
–Jess Gwinn – FWS R2 ES
–Mark McKinstry – USBR
–Dale Ryden – FWS R6 FAC
–Brandon Senger – Nevada
–David Speas – USBR
–Jim Stolberg – LCR MSCP
–Melissa Trammell – NPS
–David Vigil – California
–Matt Zeigler – New Mexico

Razorback Sucker
SSA Preparation & Review

Writing Team

UCRRP

- –Julie Stahli
- –Tom Chart
- –Kevin McAbee

BIO-WEST

- –Brandon Albrecht
- –Ron Kegerries
- –Sean Keenan
- –Harrison Mohn
- –Ron Rogers

Peer Review

- –Koreen Zelasko - CSU
- –Summer Burdick - USGS
- –Robert Schelley – NPS

Stakeholder Review

- – Upper Colorado and San Juan Recovery Programs' Biology Committees
- – Tribal Partners
- – Lower Basin Programs' Representatives (identified by R2)

Reviews Received

- –State of Colorado
- –State of Arizona
- –State of New Mexico
- –Brian Kesner
- –Paul Marsh
- –Chuck Minckley
- –Tom Wesche
- –Dave Speas
- –R2 Fisheries
- –Tom Dowling
- –Bill Stewart
- –San Juan Program
- –Tom Pitts
- –Scott Vanderkooi