



# News Release

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## **Sustainable Population Targets Proposed for Endangered Silvery Minnow -Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks to Amend Species Recovery Plan-**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that the interagency Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery team has developed a scientific model to determine when endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow populations are self-sustainable. The Service anticipates amending the recovery plan – currently under revision – to include risk-based population metrics as benchmarks that determine when the species can be reclassified as threatened and eventually deemed as recovered and removed from the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act.

“The draft recovery plan includes our best advice on how to restore a native fish that belongs in the Rio Grande,” said Benjamin N. Tuggle, Ph.D., Regional Director of the Service’s Southwest Region. “The results of a population viability analysis will provide objective, scientifically established criteria whereby we can measure recovery success.” [Quote approval needed.]

In 2007, public comments were sought on a revised recovery plan that outlines recovery strategies for the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow, a fish native to its namesake river and the Pecos River. The plan outlines suggested conservation measures for improving and increasing the fish’s distribution and habitat. The plan’s goal is to recover the minnow so that it no longer needs Endangered Species Act protection.

The Service is now seeking peer review and public comments on the population viability analysis (PVA) model and the recovery criteria that are proposed for revision based on the model’s results. A final recovery plan is scheduled for completion later this year.

The revised draft recovery criteria and draft Appendix H (PVA information) can be obtained by contacting the Rio Grande Endangered Species Act Coordinator, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2105 Osuna Road, N.M. 87113; phone 505/761-4710, fax 505/346-2542, or e-mail: [Jennifer.Norris@fws.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Norris@fws.gov). Comments must be submitted in writing to the same address, fax or email locations no later the June 6, 2009. The revised draft recovery criteria and draft Appendix H can be downloaded from <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/Library/>.

Once widespread throughout the entire Rio Grande and Pecos rivers, the silvery minnow is now found only in the New Mexico reach from Cochiti Dam to Elephant Butte Reservoir. The decline of the silvery minnow may be attributed to destruction and modification of habitat due to dewatering and diversion, water impoundment and river modifications. Competition and predation by introduced non-native species, water quality degradation, and other factors also contributed to its decline.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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