



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance

Native Fish Conservation

What is the problem?

Many of our Nation's native fish populations are declining or are at historically low levels. This problem is evident in the growing list of threatened and endangered fish. Over 100 different types of fish are fighting for survival in the United States. Declining fish populations are indicators of broader problems in our environment.



Humpback chub

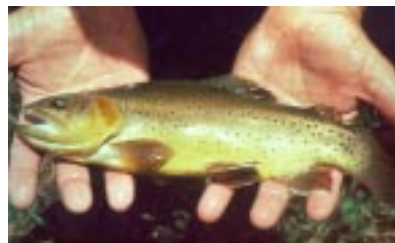
Why are fish numbers declining?

Fish and other aquatic species often disappear first when ecosystems are altered or the environment is polluted. Threats to aquatic species vary among regions, but common problems include land use effects (erosion and sedimentation, altered stream flows), dams and obstructions, pollution, and invasive species.

What are we doing?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program, is helping to reverse this trend by restoring and maintaining the health of the Nation's fishery resources. The program relies on about 300 fishery biologists and other experts across the Nation. They diagnose ailments, prescribe remedies, refer specific problems to specialists, and coordinate diverse efforts to restore and maintain health of native fish and aquatic species.

There are no simple solutions to restoring and maintaining aquatic species and their habitats. Individual action by government agencies, private industry, or conservation organizations typically falls short of what is needed to cure the ailments that affect aquatic resources. The Service uses partnerships as the key to developing and implementing solutions.



Apache Trout

Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance biologists work with others to restore habitats by planting native vegetation on stream banks, rehabilitating instream habitats, controlling erosion, controlling invasive species, and restoring fish passage around man-made impediments. We also study remnant populations of depleted species, collect wild fish for health inspections, and evaluate the results of stocking from the National Fish Hatchery System.



Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance evaluates restoration progress of stocked steelhead on the west coast.

The Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program works with other Service programs to address the needs of imperiled fish and other aquatic species. For example, we cooperated with the Endangered Species program to develop the *National Strategy for the Conservation of Native Freshwater Mussels*. A companion document, *Native Fish, A National Conservation Strategy* is currently being developed. These documents

encourage a unified approach for restoring native fish and aquatic resources.

Who benefits?

The Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program fosters a unified approach to conserving native fish, enhancing the success of State, Tribal, Federal, and private sector efforts.

These restoration efforts reduce the need for listing actions under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Cooperative restoration efforts help many recreational and migratory fish, including salmon, trout, striped bass, walleye, paddlefish, and sturgeon.

The American people benefit from restored native fish populations. Healthy fish populations indicate a healthy environment. Self-sustaining fish populations support fishing and other beneficial activities.



Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance biologists evaluate the status of fish populations to help restore and recover our Nation's native fish. Field sampling techniques include electro-fishing (left), seining (upper right), radio tracking (right) and weighing and measuring (bottom).

Degraded stream habitats



Restored stream habitats



Examples of habitat restoration projects. Restructuring and replanting native plants stopped the erosion and the collapse of the bank (top row). Fencing off livestock from the stream restored flows and the streambank (lower row)

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