



Recent Cutthroat Trout Studies in Colorado

Overview of the Endangered Species Act Evaluation Process of Recent Cutthroat Trout Research in Colorado



New research on cutthroat trout in Colorado has identified the need for a thorough re-evaluation of the taxonomy, classification, and range of cutthroat trout in Colorado. This fact sheet provides the steps of the evaluation process:

Step 1. Scientific Review of Research

Consists of a 3-day workshop with genetic and taxonomic experts

- Peer review topics to be analyzed:
 1. Are conclusions reached by the two studies logical and supported by evidence provided in reports?
 2. Is there agreement between the conclusion of the genetic study and the meristic study?
 3. Does the variation identified in the studies result in need to revise taxonomy (i.e., subspecies, etc.) of cutthroats?
 4. How do conclusions in the studies compare with other cutthroat genetic and meristic studies?
- Workshop will include an opportunity for public input
- Workshop will be coordinated by the Service
- Estimated timeframe: Spring 2013

Step 2. Evaluate Classification of Cutthroats

- Evaluate lineages and ranges of cutthroat trout identified in studies
- Evaluate recommendations and results of workshop
- Consider recommendations of Recovery Teams (Greenback, Rio Grande, Colorado River)
- This step will be conducted by the Service

Step 3. Status Review

- Service will conduct a status review, including analyzing whether threats occur to any “listable” entities
 1. Present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of its habitat or range
 2. Over-utilization for commercial, recreational, or scientific purposes
 3. Disease or predation
 4. The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms
 5. Other natural or man-made factors affecting its continued existence

- Service will evaluate risk of extinction
 1. Evaluate factors affecting population trends
 2. Evaluate vulnerability and resiliency of species (recruitment, survival, population levels)
 3. Explore and document uncertainties
 4. Estimate extinction likelihood in the foreseeable future
- Service will evaluate all identified cutthroats in Colorado and determine if a species, subspecies, or Distinct Population Segments (DPS) warrant listing or a change in listing status

Step 4. Rulemaking, if Necessary

- The Service will conduct rulemaking (if necessary) to assign the appropriate listing status to any species, subspecies, or DPSs that are determined to be warranted for listing. This action would include proposed and final rules, public input, peer review, etc.
- Note - current listing status will remain unchanged until rulemaking process is complete

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
PO Box 25486, Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Colorado Field Office
303 / 236 4773

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Cutthroat trout from Bear Creek / Kevin Rogers, Colorado Parks & Wildlife