



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

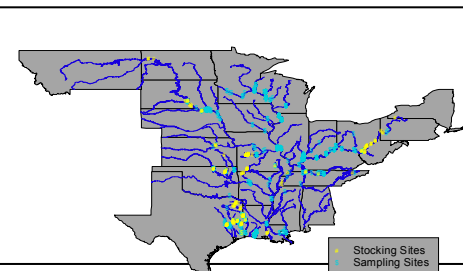
Administration of the National Paddlefish Database *Leadership in Science and Technology*



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service was petitioned to list the paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*), a species of concern, as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1989. Paddlefish were formally listed as a species needing more detailed biological information.

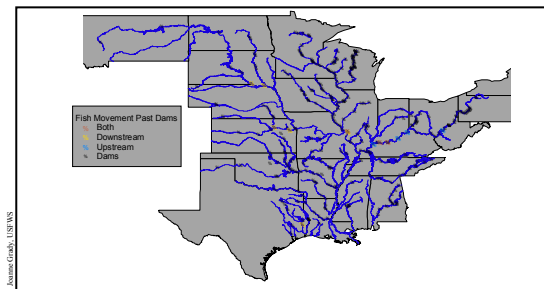


The Fisheries Program, represented by Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance Offices and National Fish Hatcheries in 5 Regions, is working together with its partners to gain a better understanding of the population status, habitat requirements, and movement patterns of paddlefish. The information gained is used to conserve paddlefish populations and identify critical habitats for restoration.

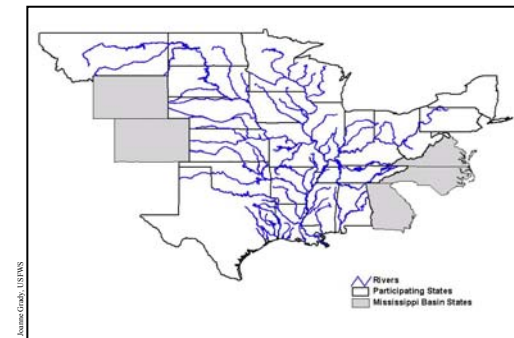


Data from paddlefish management activities throughout the Mississippi River Basin are contained in the national data base designed and operated by the USFWS.

The Service's Carterville and Columbia Fishery Resources Offices lead the basin-wide coordination and technical assistance for this national project. The Service manages the national database housing biological data for tens of thousands of individually tagged free-ranging paddlefish, and more than 1 million hatchery reared and tagged paddlefish.



The database allows for release and recapture data for individual paddlefish to be linked. Analysis of these data illustrates the extent to which dams limit paddlefish movements throughout their range.



Twenty-three of the twenty-eight MICRA member states are actively involved in the national paddlefish stock assessment.

The USFWS and the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA), an organization of 28 Mississippi River Basin state natural resource agencies, recognizing the need for improved interjurisdictional management, initiated a national paddlefish stock assessment in 1995.

The Service's leadership role, which has provided the Mississippi River Basin states with the technology to cooperatively manage such a complex, interjurisdictional fish, will continue as data from recaptured paddlefish increases during the next several years and data are analyzed to direct future management and conservation.