

# Recovery Planning for the Razorback Sucker and Bonytail in the Lower Colorado River Basin

*A Review of Recovery under the ESA and Recovery  
Criteria from the 2002 Recovery Goals*

# What is Recovery

- Recovery is defined as “improvement in the status of listed species to the point at which listing is no longer appropriate under the criteria set out in section 4(a)(1) of the Act.”
- Recovery is achieved when the implementation of management actions has allowed genetically and demographically viable, self-sustaining populations to thrive under minimal ongoing management and investment of resources.
- Recovery Plans identify the management actions needed to recover a species.

# Role of Partners in Recovery of Species

- Section 7 (a)(1) states:

The Secretary (of the Interior) shall review other programs administered by him and utilize such programs in furtherance of the purposes of this Act. All other Federal agencies shall....utilize their authorities in furthering the purposes of this Act by carrying out programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species listed pursuant to section 4 of this Act.

- Federal agencies thus have an inherent obligation under 7(a)(1) to contribute to species recovery.

# Role of Partners in Recovery of Species

- Partners include Federal and state agencies, Tribes, local government organizations, private groups (environmental groups, land user groups, or other professional groups), and knowledgeable individuals from universities or other scientific institutions.
- Partners contribute to the development of Recovery Plans through submission of technical information, biological information, and other specific concerns during the planning process.
- During the planning process, partners may be listed in the recovery implementation schedule as either the lead or supporting entity for that task.

# Role of Partners in Recovery of Species

- However, once a Recovery Plan is completed and signed, only the Fish and Wildlife Service is required to proceed with implementation of the plan. Other partners are encouraged to implement actions from the plan to contribute to recovery.
- Under their section 7(1)(a) authorities, Federal agencies can implement portions of the plan, but are not required to do so.
- There is one exception.....

# Role of Partners in Recovery of Species

- Recovery Implementation Programs (RIPs): these are single or multi-agency programs that have a goal to recover certain species while the partners move forward with specified development activities.
- RIPs in the Colorado River Basin:
- Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (UCRRP)
- San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRRIP)
- RIPs implement actions from the Recovery Plan as part of their required activities to achieve recovery.

# History of Recovery Plans

- Bonytail: Listed in 1980. First recovery plan in 1984, revised in 1990. Recovery goal in 1990 was to prevent extinction by establishing refuge populations, and reintroduce into the wild. Lake Mohave identified as a priority recovery site. Replaced by Recovery Goals in 2002 which required a genetic refuge in Lake Havasu or Mohave (or other site) and two self-sustaining populations in the Lower CRB.

# History of Recovery Plans

- Razorback sucker: Listed in 1991. Recovery Plan 1998. Goal of Recovery Plan was to stabilize existing populations (including Lake Mohave), and establish two new populations in the Lower CRB. Replaced by Recovery Goals in 2002 which required genetic refuge in Lake Mohave and two self-sustaining populations in the Lower CRB.

# 2002 Recovery Goals

- UCRRP initiated development to update species status and identify specific recovery criteria that when met, would allow for downlisting or delisting. Delisting of a species would occur if that species was considered recovered.
- Other Federal agencies in the LCRB participated in the development of the Recovery Goals and provided comments to the draft documents.
- The Recovery Goals contain actions and criteria for both the UCRB and LCRB to achieve recovery.

# 2002 Recovery Goals

- Information for site-specific management actions and criteria was more detailed for UCRB recovery units than for the LCRB recovery units.
- For bonytail and razorback suckers, all UCRB recovery units (where recovery populations would be established) were specified. Recovery units for LCRB were not, except for Lake Mohave as the genetic refuge for razorback and either Lake Mohave or Havasu (or other location) for bonytail.
- Goals set population size and trend data for each self-sustaining recovery unit.

# Lower CRB Management Plan

- Title: Management Plan for the Big River Fishes of the Colorado River Basin. 2005
- Designed to be a supplement to the 2002 Recovery Goals to guide implementation in the LCRB.
- Developed by knowledgeable scientists, agency employees (Federal and State) for the Fish and Wildlife Service Region 2 (Southwest Region).
- Focused on where opportunities might exist for implementing recovery goals and identified management strategies for all 4 Big River Fishes.

# Lower CRB Management Plan

- This plan is a roadmap for how the LCRB partners can implement the 2002 Recovery Goals for bonytail and razorback sucker.
- With the exception of the Fish and Wildlife Service, no other partner is required to implement the plan.
- Cooperation of partners is voluntary