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News Release



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RECOVERY PLAN FOR LOST RIVER AND SHORTNOSE SUCKERS AVAILABLE

Klamath Falls, Ore., —The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the release of a final revised recovery plan for the endangered Lost River and shortnose suckers, two native fish species that live in the Klamath Basin of Southern Oregon and Northern California. This updated recovery plan replaces one first published in 1993 and it is available at www.fws.gov/KlamathFallsFWO.

Recovery plans are guidance documents required by the Endangered Species Act for all listed species. While recovery plans do not have a regulatory purpose, they are an important tool to ensure sound scientific and logistical decision making throughout the recovery process.

“The ultimate goal of the recovery program for Lost River and shortnose suckers is to implement actions that will lead to the recovery of these species so that Endangered Species Act protection is no longer necessary,” said Laurie Sada, field supervisor of the Service’s Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office. “The final revised recovery plan outlines strategies to reduce Lost River and shortnose sucker mortality, restore habitat, increase connectivity between spawning and rearing habitats, and improve water quality.”

The recovery plan states that if actions are successfully implemented, then Lost River and shortnose suckers could recover in five to seven generations, or roughly 30 to 50 years. In addition, the Service estimates that the cost to achieve recovery is roughly \$135 million.

The revised recovery plan also acknowledges and builds upon many significant recovery actions undertaken to date including: restoration of the Williamson River Delta, removal of Chiloquin Dam, screening of the A-Canal and Geary Canal intakes, and construction of the fish ladder in the Link River Dam.

While recent conservation efforts have helped to prevent the species from extinction, Lost River and shortnose sucker continue to face serious threats to their existence. Data indicate that it has been more than 10 years since a substantial amount of individuals have joined the adult population in Upper Klamath Lake for both species, meaning that as older individuals die off, juvenile suckers are not surviving long enough to replace them.

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In addition, data show that as of 2010, the shoreline spawning population of Lost River sucker in Upper Klamath Lake was estimated to have declined to between 56 and 75 percent of 2002 levels. Similar patterns for Lost River suckers are becoming apparent in Clear Lake Reservoir as well. Shortnose sucker spawners that ascend the Williamson and Sprague Rivers are estimated to have declined to approximately 30 percent of 2001 levels. Populations in Gerber and Clear Lake Reservoirs appear stable, although data are very sparse.

Should sucker populations continue to decline, the revised recovery plan also calls for a controlled propagation program as a last resort to protect the species from imminent extinction. While artificial propagation programs have likely contributed to continued persistence of several related species, no controlled propagation program have been successful to achieve delisting.

The revised recovery plan also describes a number of criteria that need to be met in order for the Lost River and shortnose sucker to be downlisted to threatened status or to be de-listed altogether and no longer require ESA protections. (See attached fact sheet for these criteria).

The recovery plan released today has undergone public comment and was submitted to a scientific peer review. While the recovery plan issued today is final, recovery plans are subject to modification as dictated by new findings, changes in species status, and completion of recovery actions.

The recovery plan is also consistent with the Service's final critical habitat rule for the two species, which was published in 2012. The Service designated approximately 282 miles of streams, and 241,438 acres of lakes and reservoirs as critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as areas that contain the physical and biological features that are essential for the conservation of the species.

Attachments

- **Fact Sheet: Down-listing/De-listing Shortnose and Lost River suckers**

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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/cno. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/usfwspacificsouthwest>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSPacSWest>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws_pacificsw/



Fact Sheet

De-Listing and Down-Listing Lost River and Shortnose Suckers

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The recovery plan identifies criteria that need to occur for down-listing (moving from endangered status to threatened status) and de-listing (removal of ESA protections) these species from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

Periodically, the Service reviews each species' status and considers the species for reclassification on or removal from the list. Lost River sucker and shortnose sucker will be considered for reclassification to threatened status when:

- The current spawning and rearing habitat is maintained and improved access ensures annual use;
- A range-wide Spawning and Rearing Enhancement Plan has been developed and implemented;
- Connectivity and access to habitats that provide refuge to suckers to avoid poor water quality (particularly Pelican Bay in Upper Klamath Lake) are assured during the months of July, August, and September (pertains only to the Upper Klamath Lake Recovery Unit);
- Natural vegetated wetland areas are restored, including instream, wetlands, and riparian areas around the mouth of Willow Creek where it meets Clear Lake Reservoir and throughout its drainage (pertains only to the Clear Lake Reservoir Management Unit);
- Newly identified or clarified effects of predation and disease are minimized through implementation of recommendations from ongoing scientific research which clarifies the interaction of Lost River sucker and shortnose sucker with predators and pathogens;
- An Entrainment Reduction Plan has been developed and implemented;
- Two additional recurring and successful spring-spawning populations are established in the Upper Klamath Lake – Spring Management Unit (specific to Lost River sucker);
- Development and implementation of a plan to assess, monitor, and improve juvenile and sub-adult vital rates and demography, including threats and negative impact reduction; and
- The effects of detrimental water quality have been minimized.

In order for these species to be considered for removal from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, they must meet two criteria in addition to those listed above.

- The States of Oregon and California and the Klamath Tribes should prepare and finalize population management plans, either collaboratively or separately.
- Populations of the species within Upper Klamath Lake must experience sufficient growth and stability over a 25-year period, as evidenced by population abundances exceeding those from baseline years. Twenty-five years equates to approximately two average adult life spans for Lost River sucker and three for shortnose sucker, and will enable assessment of the populations' response to cyclical threats, such as periodic die-offs and drought. The years 2002 and 2001 will serve as the baseline for Lost River sucker and shortnose sucker, respectively, since these are the first years in which estimates of this type are statistically valid for each species.