

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
5-YEAR STATUS REVIEW
Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Species: Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*)

Date listed: March 11, 1967. List of Endangered Species (32 FR 4001)

Federal Register Notice of Listing Determination:

- March 11, 1967. List of Endangered Species (32 FR 4001).

Classification: Endangered

Most recent status review:

- August 12, 2020. Five-year status review for the Colorado pikeminnow (Service 2020, entire)

Federal Register Notice citation announcing this 5-year status review:

- March 13, 2023. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Initiation of 5-Year Status Reviews of 27 Listed Species in the Mountain-Prairie Region (88 FR 15448)

Lead Region: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region, Region 6

Lead Field Office Contact: Julie Stahli, Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program Director, 720-697-4933

Current Recovery Priority Number (RPN): 8C

Methodology used to complete this review: In accordance with section 4(c)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C Section 1531 *et seq.*), as amended (Act), the purpose of a 5-year status review is to assess each threatened and endangered species to determine whether its status has changed and it should be classified differently or removed from the Lists of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Plants. Status reviews are to be completed in accordance with sections 4(a) and 4(b) of the Act (16 U.S.C. Section 1533(c)). This 5-year review was conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program with support from relevant Field and Regional Offices. Data for this review were solicited from interested parties through a *Federal Register* notice announcing this review on March 13, 2023 (88 FR 15448). Information we received from that data call included responses from two State wildlife agencies with more recent data and reports. We also received information from the two recovery programs that manage the species. We updated our species status assessment (SSA) report for the Colorado pikeminnow with this new scientific information (Service 2025, entire), which provided the scientific foundation for this 5-year status review.

ASSESSMENT:

Information acquired since the last status review:

Since our last 5-year status review for the Colorado pikeminnow (Service 2020, entire), we received recent monitoring reports from partners in the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program and the San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program, including Colorado State University, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and various U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service offices. This new information showed some recent improvement in the adult abundances of Colorado pikeminnow in the upper Colorado and San Juan river subbasins. There is no new information available for the Green River subbasin, and preliminary data suggest the adult population there remains low or has declined further. We completed a recovery plan for the species on September 13, 2023 (Service 2023, entire).

We updated our SSA report with the new demographic information that we received (Service 2025, entire). The updated SSA analysis based on the new demographic information indicates that the upper Colorado River subbasin has improved to a moderate condition from a low condition, while the Green and San Juan river subbasins remain in low condition due to low recruitment and low adult abundances (Service 2025, pp. 82-124). Additionally, the new monitoring information indicates that the demographic score for the Green River population decreased from 2018 to 2024, although its overall resiliency remains low (Service 2025, pp. 82-124). Despite an increase in adult abundance for the San Juan River subbasin, resiliency in that population is tied to ongoing management associated with a stocking program. Improvement in the upper Colorado River subbasin suggest that threats to that population have been reduced, but threats to the species in the Green and San Juan rivers are unchanged or have increased.

Colorado pikeminnow remains distributed only in the Upper Colorado River Basin and is extirpated from the Lower Basin. There is a proposal to conduct research exploring the possibility of reintroducing the species to the Grand Canyon because water temperatures have increased in that reach of river and appear to be suitable for occupancy. However, no reintroduction has occurred.

In summary, Colorado pikeminnow remains distributed in three populations in the Upper Basin, as described in our previous status review (Service 2020, entire) and in the updated SSA report (Service 2025, entire). While one population has improved in condition, from low to medium, the other two populations are still in low condition. Threats to the species are largely the same as previous analyses or have increased for the Green river and San Juan river populations, with a potential reduction in threats for the upper Colorado River subbasin assumed based on its improved condition from low to medium.

Conclusion:

The Act defines an endangered species as any species that is "in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range" and a threatened species as any species that is "likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range." After reviewing the best available scientific information, evaluating threats

to the species and assessing the cumulative effects of the threats under the Act's section 4(a)(1) factors, we conclude that Colorado pikeminnow remains an endangered species. Although demographic conditions have improved for one population, from low to medium, the other two populations remain low (Service 2025, pp. 82-124). Additionally, threats have remained largely unchanged or have increased for two out of the three populations, so our evaluation of threats affecting the species under the factors in section 4(a)(1) of the Act and our analysis of the status of the species in our 2020 5-year status review (Service 2020, entire) remains an accurate reflection of the species' current status.

In conclusion, our review of the best available information, as documented in our SSA report (Service 2025, entire) and summarized in this 5-year review, does not change our evaluation of species status and the threats affecting the species under the factors in section 4(a)(1) of the Act. Therefore, currently, we recommend no change in status for the Colorado pikeminnow.

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
5-YEAR STATUS REVIEW
Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*)

CURRENT CLASSIFICATION: Endangered

RECOMMENDATION RESULTING FROM THE 5-YEAR STATUS REVIEW:

- Downlist to Threatened
- Uplist to Endangered
- Delist (Indicate reasons for delisting per 50 CFR 424.11):
 - Extinction
 - Recovery
 - Original data for classification in error
- No change is needed

APPROPRIATE LISTING/RECLASSIFICATION PRIORITY NUMBER, IF APPLICABLE: No change from 8C.

Lead Field Office Approval:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Paul Badame
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Deputy Director, Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program

Literature Cited:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). 2020. Five-year status review for the Colorado pikeminnow. August 12, 2020. Available online at https://ecosphere-documents-production-public.s3.amazonaws.com/sams/public_docs/species_nonpublish/3022.pdf

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). 2023. Recovery plan for Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*). September 2023. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region, Denver, Colorado. 28 pp. Available online at https://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plan/20230804_FinalRP_Colorado%20pikeminnow_v4_AMMsigned.pdf

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). 2025. Species Status Assessment Report for the Colorado pikeminnow. Month, Day, Year. Version. Available online at <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3531>.