

Flathead chub (*Platygobio gracilis*)

Status: NSS3; NatureServe G5 S5

Abundance: Uncommon

Introduction: The body of the flathead chub is an elongated, streamlined minnow with a broad, flattened head. Its mouth is subterminal with a conspicuous barbel. The caudal fin is deeply forked and pectorals fins are falcate. Adults range in size to a maximum of 10 inches. They are omnivorous, feeding mainly on aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates and vegetation. Small fish have also been reported as part of its diet. This chub spawns in late summer when the rivers are low, warm, and the bottoms stable.

Habitat: The large barbel and special sensory organs are adaptations for living and feeding in turbid waters. Its large fins and streamlined shape also allow it to live successfully in swift current.

Problems:

The flathead chub is considered to be widespread, abundant, and globally secure. Flathead chubs have declined throughout their native range and are considered of special concern in North Dakota, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. In Wyoming flathead chub distribution is declining on site, stream, subdrainage and drainage scales. The cause of these declines has yet to be precisely identified.

Conservation Actions:

- A better understanding of the habitat and flow requirements of this species is needed to assess the impacts of water and land use activities.
- A better understanding of the basic biology, life history and ecology is needed.
- Monitoring protocols and sites should be identified and routinely sampled.
- A better understanding of movement, dispersal, and colonization patterns is needed.
- Surveys are needed to provide baseline data and monitor distribution and population trends. These data may be used to identify specific threats and identify management needs and priorities.

References and Additional Reading:

- Baxter, G.T., and M.D. Stone. 1995. Fishes of Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 290pp.
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- McPhail, J.D., and C.C. Lindsey. 1970. Freshwater fishes of northwestern Canada and Alaska. Fish. Res. Board Canada Bull. 173. 381pp.
- Moore, G.A. 1950. The cutaneous sense organs of barbeled minnows adapted to life in the muddy waters of the Great Plains Region. Trans. Amer. Micros. Soc. 69:69-95.

Weitzel, D. L., 2002. Conservation and Status Assessment for the Lake Chub (*Couesius plumbeus*), Flathead Chub (*Platygobio gracilis*), Plains Minnow (*Hybognathus placitus*), and Brassy Minnow (*Hybognathus hankinsoni*) in Wyoming.

