

**Hornyhead Chub (*Nocomis biguttatus*)****Status: NSS1; NatureServe G5 S1****Abundance:** Rare

**Introduction:** Body is robust, with a large head and blunt snout. They have a large mouth with single barbel. Breeding males have conspicuous nuptial tubercles on their head and body. The hornyhead chub prefers a diet of insects, crustaceans and mollusks, as well as algae and other plant material. When spawning, it constructs a conspicuous gravel nest, with circular areas one to three feet in diameter, tapering from upstream to downstream. Spawning nests are often composed of gravel larger than the male chubs' head. Females enter the nest, which is guarded by the male, when spawning.

**Habitat:** This fish is found in medium-size to large clear, gravel-bottomed streams. It is relatively uncommon in Wyoming, but has been found in the Laramie River downstream from Wheatland Reservoir 2 as well as in the North Laramie River. Outside of Wyoming, the hornyhead chub occurs from New York to the Rocky Mountains and south to Arkansas.

**Problems:**

Dewatering and habitat degradation, associated with human water usage and management have impacted the hornyhead chub.

**Conservation Actions:**

- Studies are needed to better understand the population genetic structure.
- 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.
- 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.
- Davis, B.J., and R.J. Miller. 1967. Brain patterns in minnows of the genus *Hybopsis* in relation to feeding habits and habitat. *Copeia* 1967 (1):1-39.
- Lachner, E.A. 1950. The comparative food habits of the cyprinid fishes *Nocomis biguttatus* and *Nocomis micropogon* in western New York. *Journal of the Washington Academy of Science* 40(7):229-236.
- Weitzel, D. L., 2002. Conservation and Status Assessments for the Hornyhead Chub (*Nocomis biguttatus*), Suckermouth Minnow (*Phenacobius mirabilis*), and Orangethroat Darter (*Etheostoma spectabile*): Rare Stream Fish Species of the Platte River Drainages, Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 40pp.

## Hornyhead Chub Distribution

