

**Lake Chub (*Couesius plumbeus*)**

**Status: NSS3; NatureServe G5 S5**

**Abundance:** Unknown

**Introduction:** The body is elongated and rounded with a short head. The mouth is terminal with a large, round barbel. Length of adults may be as great as 6 inches but more commonly 4 inches. Without building a nest or guarding its eggs, the lake chub spawns in the spring in creeks and lakes. Almost completely carnivorous, adult fish eat aquatic and terrestrial insects, while younger fish feed on microcrustaceans.

**Habitat:** Lake chubs are typically found in cool streams and lakes. In Wyoming, it occurs most commonly in the northern part of the state east of the Continental Divide. The habitat preferences of lake chubs are not well known but they are considered a shallow water species. They may be found in a large range of habitats including silted rivers and rocky lake shoals.

**Problems:**

The population trend of the lake chub is unclear, but they appear to be declining on all scales east of the Continental Divide. The reasons for this decline are unclear. The introduction of gamefish in the Big Horn River may be a factor contributing to the suspected decline of lake chubs in that drainage.

**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.
- McPhail, J.D., and C.C. Lindsey. 1970. Freshwater fishes of northwestern Canada and Alaska. Fish. Res. Board Canada Bull. 173. 381pp.
- Simpson, J.C. 1941. Food analysis of some important species of Wyoming forage fishes. M.S. thesis (unpublished). Univ. Wyoming.
- 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.

# Lake Chub Distribution

