

**Mountain Sucker (*Catostomus platyrhynchus*)**

**Status: NSS3; NatureServe G5 S5**

**Abundance:** Common

**Introduction:** A diminutive sucker it rarely grows in excess of 6 inches. It is slender, has a deep caudal peduncle and a short head. The inferior mouth has distinctive lateral notches and cartilaginous biting ridges. The mountain sucker spawns in late spring and early summer. These fish use the cartilaginous biting edges of their jaws to scrape algae off of rocks, and they sometimes feed on invertebrates as well. This species may be important as a food source for trout.

**Habitat:** The mountain sucker enjoys a wide range of habitats, including large rivers, lower elevation creeks, and montane lakes and streams. They prefer cold water and are most often associated with mountain streams where they coexist with cutthroat trout. In Wyoming, the mountain sucker is common in all drainages west of the Continental Divide and, east of the Divide, in drainages of the northern and northeastern counties. In the Wind River Mountains, it can be found at elevations up to about 10,000 feet.

**Problems:**

Wyoming's mountain sucker population is believed to be stable, but there are concerns that its habitat, swift to moderate streams and montane lakes, is either declining or is vulnerable. Some researchers also suggest that this fish's distribution may be declining.

**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.
- New methods to restore habitat at a watershed level need to be developed and then implemented range-wide especially replacement of declining aspen communities in headwaters of most sub basins.
- 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.
- Continue reestablishing the entire native fish assemblage in streams rehabilitated to remove non-native trout species as part of cutthroat trout restoration projects.

**References and Additional Reading:**

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