

Plains Minnow (*Hybognathus placitus*)

Status: NSS3; NatureServe G4 S3

Abundance: Uncommon

Introduction: The body is stout with a short head and small inferior like mouth. Adult plains minnows grow 4 to 6 inches in length. The spawning habits of the plains minnow are not well known, although the fact that gravid females can be found throughout the summer indicates an extended breeding season. This minnow feeds mostly on algae and other vegetation along the bottom of quiet waters.

Habitat: The plains minnow prefers large, turbid streams, slow water and side pool habitat. They are typically found in streams with sand or silt bottoms. They may be found in the slower waters of side pools and river backwaters. The plains minnow is tolerant of high water temperature, high salinity and low oxygen, making them well adapted for survival in intermittent pools.

Problems:

Plains minnow existence is considered secure range-wide, though Colorado and Wyoming consider it a species of concern. It has been suggested that the distribution of the plains minnow in Wyoming may be in decline at local and subdrainage scales. The reason for the trend is not known though diminished turbidity, decreased sediment transport and increased flow associated with construction of dams in the Missouri river drainage is believed to be a contributing factor.

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.

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.

Plains Minnow Distribution

