

Sturgeon Chub (*Macrhybopsis gelida*)**Status: NSS1; NatureServe G3 S1****Abundance:** Rare

Introduction: With its streamlined body, large and deeply forked caudal fin, and narrow caudal peduncle, the sturgeon chub is adapted to life in fast current and turbid waters. The snout is distinctive for being long and flat, extending well beyond the horizontal mouth. It has a small eye but taste buds in the fins and large barbel of the sturgeon chub help this minnow find food and identify physical structures in turbid waters. They feed on a variety of insects. They have keeled scales.

Habitat: Sturgeon chubs are found in the large, shallow, turbid streams of the Missouri River drainage as well as in the Mississippi River in Louisiana. . They are obligates of free flowing, turbid, rivers that have shallow gravel riffles and strong currents that prevent siltation. In Wyoming, the sturgeon chub can be found in the Powder River from the Montana border to near Salt Creek.

Problems:

Throughout the Missouri River drainage in Kansas, Nebraska, North and South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming the sturgeon chub is considered imperiled because of extreme rarity making it vulnerable to extinction. In Wyoming it is of special concern because its presence is extremely isolated and habitats are declining or vulnerable. Dewatering and habitat degradation are the most serious threats to the sturgeon chub. A variety of water uses result in the intermittency of many tributary streams.

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.
- Continue efforts to maintain water flow and water quality within watersheds occupied by sturgeon chubs.

References and Additional Reading:

Baxter, G.T., and M.D. Stone. 1995. Fishes of Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 290pp.

Stewart, D. 1981. The biology of the sturgeon chub (*Hybopsis gelida* Girard) in Wyoming. M.S. thesis (unpublished). Univ. Wyoming. 53pp.

Weitzel, D. L., 2002. Conservation and Status Assessments for the Sturgeon Chub (*Macrhybopsis gelida*), Western Silvery Minnow (*Hybognathus argyritis*), and Goldeye

(Hiodon alsosides): Rare Fish Species of the Upper Missouri River Drainage, Wyoming.
Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Cheyenne. 38pp.

Sturgeon Chub Distribution

