

Protect the Humpback Chub and All Endangered Species!



Humpback chub photo by George Andrejko

The humpback chub (*Gila cypha*) is an endangered fish that lives only in the Colorado River basin and is declining throughout much of its range. It was one of the original species listed under the Endangered Species Act and without protection it may have disappeared long ago. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is [proposing downlisting](#) the fish from “Endangered” to “Threatened” despite the fact that its most stable population is in the Little Colorado River, a place imperiled by mining waste, proposed development, and dams. Simultaneously the administration is attempting to change the regulations enforcing the Endangered Species Act, which could spell disaster for other species in decline. [You can send a letter to USFWS here.](#)

Please Write a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Newspaper Describing Why the Endangered Species Act is Important to You and to the Wildlife that Depend on It!

Use the talking points below:

Humpback Chub Facts:

- One of the 6 remaining native fish in the Colorado River in Grand Canyon; it is endemic to this region.
- It has existed in the Colorado River for approximately 3-5 million years.
- It has a very distinctive hump on its head that is believed to act as a means to prevent predation by making the fish harder to swallow.
- It can live for more than 30 years.
- The largest self-sustaining population of chub is found in the Little Colorado River in Grand Canyon. It is declining and disappearing throughout the upper Colorado River basin.
- It was originally recognized as endangered in 1967 and given full protection when the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973.

Background on the Endangered Species Act:

The Endangered Species Act aspires to prevent extinction, recover imperiled plants and animals, and protect the ecosystems on which they depend. For more than 40 years, the Endangered Species Act has been a remarkably successful conservation law that protects imperiled species and their habitats. In the years since it was enacted, a remarkable 99 percent of listed species including the bald eagle, Florida manatee, and the gray wolf have been spared from extinction.

Not only is the Endangered Species Act an effective law, it is also immensely popular. A 2015 Tulchin Research poll showed that 90 percent of voters support the Act, including 96 percent of self-identified liberals and 82 percent of self-identified conservatives. A 2018 study by researchers at The Ohio State University found as enacted, a remarkable 99 percent of listed species including the bald eagle, Florida manatee, and that roughly four out of five Americans support the Endangered Species Act. Over 800,000 people sent comments to the federal agencies opposing these changes. The new regulations are an unprecedented weakening of protections for endangered species.

Proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act:

- Rule changes will allow consideration of economic factors in decisions about whether species are listed as threatened or endangered.
- Long-term threats, such as climate change, will not be considered when designating protected species; only more immediate threats will be prioritized.
- The changes will strip newly listed threatened species of automatic protection, weaken protection of species' critical habitat, and relax consultation standards that are meant to ensure federal agencies avoid jeopardizing species' survival.