

BONYTAIL

Gila elegans (Endangered Colorado, Federally)

Restoration stocking of bonytails has occurred in the Green and Yampa rivers in Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado.



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THIS LARGE CHUB (18 INCHES long) is also a member of the minnow family. It's similar to the humpback chub, but has only a slight hump behind the head and a long, narrow tail. Adults are green on top and silvery-white below. They can be very dark in clear waters and pale in turbid waters. Their distribution and habitat requirements are largely unknown due to its rapid decline prior to extensive research into its life history. Reasons for its decline are probably similar to the other endangered Colorado River fishes. The bonytail is extremely rare in Colorado and no self-sustaining populations exist throughout the Colorado River Basin. Only one has been captured in the state since 1980, and only 10 others have been taken from the whole Upper Colorado River basin since 1977. An aging, non-reproducing popu-

lation occurs in Lake Mojave. Recovery potential for this species exists now largely in a captive hatchery broodstock at Dexter National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico. Progeny from these fish have been used to develop additional populations at Wahweap Hatchery in Utah and riverside ponds in the Lower Basin.

Restoration stocking of bonytail in the wild to develop adult populations is the priority recovery action in Colorado and the Upper Basin Recovery Program. Stocking of bonytail has occurred in the Green River in Utah, the Green and Yampa rivers in Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado, and in the Colorado River in the Grand Valley near Grand Junction. While these releases continue over the next several years, efforts will be made to monitor their survival and learn as much as possible about their habitat needs and limiting factors.