

News Release



**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Region 7 - Upper Colorado Basin
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

For Immediate Release

December 31, 2020

Contact: Joe Szuszwalak, joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov, 303-236-4336

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces June sucker has moved from Endangered to Threatened

Native Utah fish on the path to recovery thanks to critical partnerships



June sucker (*Chasmistes liorus*), USFWS

DENVER—Thanks to the joint conservation efforts of state, local and Federal partners, one of Utah’s endangered fishes, the June sucker, is one step further on the path to recovery.

“This is an exciting milestone for the June sucker, the Recovery Implementation Program, and the Service, the Department of the Interior and our partners,” said **Interior Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Dr. Tim Petty**. “Accomplishing this downlisting from endangered to threatened speaks to the value of being good stewards of our lands and waters, ensuring opportunities to enjoy our fish and wildlife resources, to enhance recreation access and to

increase the security of water projects for an area with a growing population.”

After a thorough review using the best available science, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is reclassifying the June sucker from endangered to threatened status under the Endangered Species Act (Act). This decision is based on a recent peer-reviewed assessment that concluded the species is no longer in danger of immediate extinction. The Service is also issuing a concurrent special rule under section 4(d) of the Act, which reduces the need for permits for activities that benefit and conserve the species.

“Moving the June sucker from endangered to threatened would not have been possible without strong partnerships with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and other groups,” **said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Director Noreen Walsh**. “Collaborative conservation is the key to recovering endangered and threatened species, and we look forward to continued efforts to conserve this important indicator species.”

The June sucker, a fish native to the Beehive State and found only in Utah Lake, and its tributary rivers during seasonal spawning, numbered only 300 in 1999. Since then, its wild population has increased significantly, with over 3,500 hundred fish recorded spawning annually in recent years. This success is due to the strong partnership and recovery efforts established under the June Sucker Recovery Implementation Program in 2001. Partners in this recovery program have actively worked to increase the population through habitat management, and reduction in threats.

"The June sucker is uniquely Utah, and progress has been made to strengthen its presence at Utah Lake. All of the program's success has been achieved while also allowing for the continued water use and development of the area for human needs," **said Utah Department of Natural Resources executive director Brian Steed**. "This isn't possible without the tremendous partnerships and trust that have been evident throughout this process. We've seen great success working collaboratively with our partners, and we look forward to seeing the June sucker removed from the threatened and endangered species list one day."

While recovery of June sucker has come a long way, there are still threats to the fish that need continued management. Habitat alterations from changes in river flows and persistent drought, as well as competition and predation from invasive fish species such as common carp and northern pike, still pose a risk to the June sucker and will require us to continue to collaborate in management with all the partners.

The Service, alongside many conservation partners, continue to mitigate these threats and monitor the population. The Provo River Delta Restoration Project is a major undertaking to further recovery efforts for the June sucker by improving rearing habitat for juveniles in the most important spawning tributary. This project is a result of the collaborative efforts of the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, Central Utah Water Conservancy District, U.S. Department of Interior, and the June Sucker Recovery Program. This nearly 260-acre project recently broke ground where the Provo River flows into Utah Lake. More information about this important project [can be found here](#).

The final rule to downlist the June sucker will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 4, 2021 and is available for public inspection today in the *Reading Room*. Interested parties can view the rule and supporting documents at <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the search box, enter docket number FWS-R6-ES-2019-0026.

To learn more about the June sucker visit:

<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?spcode=E050>

###

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#), and [YouTube](#).

– FWS –