

Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program



Balancing Resource Use and Conservation

FISH AUGMENTATION SUMMARY

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (LCR MSCP) fish augmentation plan incorporates the use of multiple Federal and State hatcheries, existing native fish populations, and created and seminatural isolated backwaters as a portfolio of tools to produce and stock native fishes to meet its program goals. This fact sheet presents a summary view of how many native fishes have been produced since program implementation and how many wild-caught razorback sucker larvae have been collected to maintain species genetic diversity.

Native Fish Stockings

The target goals for LCR MSCP native fish stockings include 660,000 razorback suckers and 620,000 bonytail within Reaches 2–5¹ over the 50-year lifespan of the program. These fishes are produced from either captive spawning of hatchery broodstock or from wild razorback sucker larvae collected directly from Lake Mohave.² Juvenile fishes are reared to subadult size and stocked into the lower Colorado River (LCR), its reservoirs, backwaters, or off channel habitats within the program area. The current minimum size for stocked fish is 300 millimeters (mm) (approximately 12 inches) long; however, stocked fishes range in size and can be larger than 500 mm. The hatcheries currently partnering with the program to produce native fishes include the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery, Achii Hanyo Native Fish Rearing Facility, and the Southwestern Native Aquatic Resources and Recovery Center (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); the Bubbling Ponds State Fish Hatchery (Arizona Game and Fish Department); and the Lake Mead State Fish Hatchery (Nevada Department of Wildlife).

The following tables summarize the total number of native fishes that have been stocked through the LCR MSCP. The totals are presented by species, year, and program river reach.

Razorback Sucker Stocking Totals						
River Reach	Year					Total
	2005–2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Reach 2	97,727	15,899	7,898	1,385	3,107	126,016
Reach 3	66,665	6,348	6,105	8,497	6,471	94,086
Reaches 4 and 5	75,096	5,291	6,005	6,519	6,266	99,177
Total	239,488	27,538	20,008	16,401	15,844	319,279

¹ LCR MSCP river reaches associated with native fish stockings include: Reach 2 – Lake Mohave, Reach 3 – LCR between Davis and Parker Dams, and Reaches 4 and 5 – LCR between Parker and Imperial Dams.

² Wild bonytail larvae are not collected for production fish due to the extreme scarcity or non-occurrence in the wild within the program area.

Bonytail Stocking Totals						
River Reach	Year					Total
	2005–2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Reach 2	0	0	913	684	513	2,110
Reach 3	42,716	5,729	1,522	5,011	4,061	59,039
Reaches 4 and 5	18,233	4,864	1,289	6,687	8,039	39,112
Total	60,949	10,593	3,724	12,382	12,613	100,261

Collection of Wild-Caught Larvae

The adult razorback sucker population in Lake Mohave is considered the most genetically diverse population in the wild. For this reason, wild razorback sucker larvae are collected from Lake Mohave each year, reared in captivity until reaching subadult size, and stocked back into Lake Mohave and the LCR to maintain the genetic diversity of extant populations. Maintaining the existing genetic diversity of this species is a critical component of the LCR MSCP fish augmentation plan.

Razorback sucker larval collection goals are established annually at the Lake Mohave Native Fish Work Group meeting in January. Collections are conducted on Lake Mohave from late January through early May and are distributed across five collection zones: Nine Mile, Tequila, Yuma, Liberty, and Willow Beach. A robust approach such as this allows for larval collections to represent a greater number of potential pairings between adult fish that spawn at different times, locations, or at multiple times and locations. The following table summarizes the total number of wild-caught razorback sucker larvae collected from Lake Mohave through the LCR MSCP.

Lake Mohave Razorback Sucker Larvae Collections						
Zone	Year					Total
	2005–2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Nine Mile	81,418	3,779	5,111	8,019	8,062	106,389
Tequila	131,036	4,950	5,002	7,589	7,933	156,510
Yuma	102,810	5,987	5,492	12,660	8,542	135,491
Liberty	24,475	367	1,040	750	1,611	28,243
Willow Beach	367	2,758	1,405	5,523	4,456	14,509
Total	340,106	17,841	18,050	34,541	30,604	441,142

Updated January 2019