

**Fish**



# DESERT SUCKER

*Catostomus clarkii utahensis*  
Sucker Family (Catostomidae)

Evaluation Species



**Description:** A medium-sized (maximum length of 33 cm [13 in.]) fish with a round, sucker-shaped mouth located on the ventral surface of the head. The dorsal color is brown, while the coloration is lighter ventrally. The caudal fin is forked. The eyes are located high on the head.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds on the substrate by scraping algae, detritus, and small invertebrates from stones and other submerged objects.

**Habitat:** Small to moderately large streams with pools and riffles, mainly over a bottom of gravel with sandy silt. Adults remain in the deeper pools during the day, then move to riffles to feed at night or when the water is turbid. Young tend to stay in lower velocity water along banks.

**Range:** The species occurs throughout the lower Colorado River drainage system in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona. This subspecies occurs in the Virgin River.

**Comments:** Three subspecies of the Desert Sucker occur in Nevada: *Catostomus clarkii intermedius* (White River Desert Sucker) occurs in the pluvial White River, *C. c. utahensis* (Virgin River Desert Sucker) occurs in the Virgin River watershed, and an unnamed subspecies (Meadow Valley Desert Sucker) occurs in Meadow Valley Wash and Clover Creek. Also referred to as *Pantosteus clarki*.

# FLANNELMOUTH SUCKER

*Catostomus latipinnis*  
Sucker Family (Catostomidae)

Evaluation Species



**Description:** A large (maximum length of 56 cm [22 in.]) fish with a round, sucker-shaped mouth located on the ventral surface of the head. The lower lip is unusually large and has a long, deep cleft on the midline. The overall color is silvery, the dorsum has olive shading, the ventral surface is light, and the fins have red-orange coloration during spawning. The caudal peduncle is long and narrow, and the caudal fin is forked. The eyes are small and located high on the head. Migrates upstream to spawn in riffles, usually over a substrate of coarse gravel. The young generally are found in water shallower than that used by adults.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds on the substrate by scraping algae, detritus, and small invertebrates from stones and other submerged objects.

**Habitat:** Deep, swift-water channels in moderate to large rivers and tributaries; also found in riffles, pools, and backwater. Found occasionally in small creeks, but generally absent from impoundments.

**Range:** This species occurs in the Colorado River and Gila River drainage basins. In Clark County, Nevada, these fish occur in the Virgin River, but they are found infrequently in Lake Mead and the Colorado River below Davis Dam.

# MOAPA DACE

*Moapa coriacea*  
Minnow Family (Cyprinidae)

Evaluation Species



**Description:** A small (maximum length of 12 cm [4.7 in.]) fish with a short head, a terminal mouth, and thick lips. The dorsal fin starts above or slightly behind the insertion (i.e., the front edge) of the pelvic fins, and the caudal fin is forked. The dorsal surface is brownish, the sides are brownish with light golden areas, and the ventral surface is light. There is a dark spot on the tail and a dark line on each side of the body. The scales are small and deeply embedded, and the skin has a leathery appearance. While some species of dace have a small maxillary barbel, this species does not. Breeds all year, but mostly during the spring. Spawning thought to occur in shallow, sandy bottom areas of spring outflows where water temperatures are 30 - 32° C (86 - 90° F).

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds on invertebrates, detritus, and algae in the water column and on substrate (branches, roots, rocks).

**Habitat:** Spring pools, outflows, and the main stem of the Muddy River where the water is clear and warm (28 - 32° C [82 - 90 ° F]). Habitat use varies with age. Juveniles tend to occur in spring pools and outflows where water velocities are slower and temperatures are warmer. Adults tend to occur in outflows and in the Muddy River, where water velocities are faster and temperatures are slightly cooler.

**Range:** Endemic to Clark County, Nevada. This species occurs only in the warm springs and 9.5 km (5.9 mi.) of stream and spring outflows along the upper Muddy River. Cool water temperatures limit the downstream distribution.

**Special Remarks:** Federally Endangered.

# MOAPA SPECKLED DACE

*Rhinichthys osculus moapae*  
Minnow Family (Cyprinidae)

Evaluation Species



**Description:** A small (maximum length of 11 cm [4.3 in.]), fusiform fish with a pointed snout, subterminal mouth, and dark but vague speckling on the sides and dorsal surface. The dorsum is olive-colored with small, diffuse dark spots that may coalesce into a black line on the side, occasionally forming a black spot on the caudal peduncle. The ventral surface is light cream-colored or yellow. There is one dorsal fin, and the tail is deeply forked. During the breeding season, males develop red-orange colors on the fins and around the face (mouth and gill covers). A small maxillary barbel is present at the corner of the mouth.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Primarily feeds on the surface of substrate or on food items drifting within the water column. Diet includes algae, invertebrates, fish eggs, and detritus.

**Habitat:** Stream bottoms in shallow cobble riffles. These fish occur in low-velocity areas behind rocks. Spawning habitat consists of small patches of bare rocks and pebbles that the males clear of debris.

**Range:** The species occurs throughout the western United States from the Columbia River southward to the Colorado River. This subspecies is endemic to Clark County, Nevada, and is found only in the middle Muddy River north of Interstate 15.

**Comments:** Muddy River fishes are more plain, with little or no mottling.

# MOAPA WHITE RIVER SPRINGFISH

*Crenichthys baileyi moapae*  
Splitfin Family (Goodeidae)

Evaluation Species



**Description:** A small (maximum length of 7 cm [2.75 in.]), deep-bodied fish with a large head; a small terminal mouth; dorsal and anal fins that are set far back on the body (almost on the tail); and no pelvic fins. The dorsal surface is dark olive to dusky, the sides are tan with two rows of dark spots (that may form lines), and the ventral surface is yellowish to whitish. The tail is square, rather than forked. During breeding season, males develop brighter coloration. Tolerant of warm water temperatures and low oxygen concentrations.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds on filamentous algae and small aquatic invertebrates.

**Habitat:** Primarily in spring pools, pools and their outflows, and rarely in the upper Muddy River.

**Range:** Five subspecies occur throughout the pluvial White River drainage system in southeastern Nevada. This subspecies, Moapa White River springfish, is endemic to Clark County and occurs only in and around five warm-water springs in the upper Muddy River.

# VIRGIN RIVER CHUB

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***Gila seminuda* (Muddy River population)** Evaluation Species  
Minnow Family (Cyprinidae)



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**Description:** A medium-sized (length up to 43 cm [to 18 in.]) fish with a slender body, a slight hump on the dorsal surface behind the head, and small and deeply embedded scales (that may be absent). The caudal peduncle is long and narrow, and the tail fin is fairly long and deeply forked. The overall coloration is silvery with olive shading on the dorsum, and the mouth and fins may have yellow-orange coloration. The mouth is relatively large.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds on invertebrates and algae. Larger individuals also eat other fish.

**Habitat:** Deep runs and pools with slow to moderate velocities and sand, large rocks, cover in the form of overhanging banks and tree roots.

**Range:** Found only in the Muddy River between the Warm Springs area and the Wells Siding diversion to Bowman Reservoir.

**Comments:** Formerly referred to as an unnamed subspecies of the Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta* spp.).

**Special Remarks:** Species of Concern. Due to recent DNA studies, the Muddy River population may be the same as the Virgin River population.



# VIRGIN RIVER CHUB

*Gila seminuda* (Virgin River population) Evaluation Species  
Minnow Family (Cyprinidae)



**Description:** A medium-sized (maximum length of 46 cm [18 in.]) fish with a slender body, a slight hump on the dorsal surface behind the head, and small and deeply embedded scales (that may be absent). The caudal peduncle is long and narrow, and the tail fin is fairly long and deeply forked. The overall coloration is silvery with olive shading on the dorsum, and the mouth and fins may have yellow-orange coloration. The mouth is relatively large and trout-like.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds on invertebrates and algae. Larger individuals also eat other fish.

**Habitat:** Creeks to large rivers. Deep runs and pools with slow to moderate velocities, sandy bottoms, and in-stream cover.

**Range:** Found only in the Virgin River from Pah Tempe Springs (just above LaVerkin, Utah) south to the confluence with Halfway Wash.

**Comments:** Formerly referred to as a subspecies of the Roundtail Chub (*Gila robusta seminuda*).

**Special Remarks:** Federally Listed as Endangered.

# WOUNDFIN

*Plagopterus argentissimus*  
Minnow Family (Cyprinidae)

Evaluation Species



**Description:** A small (maximum length of 7.5 cm [3.0 in.]) fish with a slender, fusiform body, and a flattened head and belly. The overall color is silvery. The mouth is large, subterminal, and there is a small maxillary barbel at the corner of the mouth. These fish have no scales. The caudal fin is large and deeply forked. The name of this species refers to the two bony rays that extend into the anterior tip of the dorsal fin and form a sharp spine.

**Diet:** Omnivorous. Feeds in the water column and on the bottom consuming small invertebrates, algae, and detritus.

**Habitat:** Most often found in or adjacent to swift, turbid, shallow channels with sandy substrates, or in waters adjacent to riffles. Young stay at the edge of streams in shallow backwater areas.

**Range:** This species formerly was widespread throughout the larger rivers and streams in the lower Colorado River Basin (i.e., the Colorado, Verde, Salt, Gila, and Virgin rivers). Now occurs only in the Virgin River from Halfway Wash below Riverside, Nevada, to Pah Tempe Spring (just above LaVerkin, Utah).

**Special Remarks:** Federally Listed as Endangered.

# WATCH LIST SPECIES

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Virgin spinedace

*Lepidomeda mollispinis mollispinis*