



TUESDAY
JULY 12, 2005

Agency: Petition to protect chub warrants consideration

APAlert - New Mexico
Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE_The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will further consider petitions to protect the headwater chub and the Lower Colorado River basin population of the roundtail chub under the Endangered Species Act.

The agency is seeking scientific, commercial and historical information before it determines whether to propose adding the chubs to the list of threatened or endangered species.

The chubs occur throughout much of New Mexico Gila River headwaters and much of Arizona.

Tuesday's finding acknowledges that the Center for Biological Diversity's petition to protect the chubs provides a reasonable case.

"However, our finding expresses no view as to the ultimate issue of whether the species should be listed," said H. Dale Hall, the Service's Southwest Regional director. "We will reach a conclusion on the issue only after a thorough review of the species' status. We will perform a rigorous, critical analysis of the best available scientific and commercial information, not just the information in the petition."

The 9- to 14-inch roundtail chub is a gray to silver minnow with a lighter belly. It was historically found in deep pools and large streams throughout its range in the upper and lower Colorado River basins in

Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona. The petition singles out the lower basin for population protection.

The smaller headwater chub is dark gray or brown with silvery sides. It can be found in the tributaries of the Verde River, most of Tonto Creek drainage, much of the San Carlos River drainage and parts of the upper Gila River in New Mexico.

Both species face competition from non-native fish and habitat destruction due to dewatering or channelization.

The agency plans to decide by April 6, 2006 whether the listing is warranted.