

**scientific name****common name***Catostomus insignis*

Sonora sucker

**Bison code 010520**

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**Official status****Endemism**

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**State AZ: threatened****Colorado River Basin**

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**Status/threats**

Dams, diversions, groundwater pumping and introduced species

**Distribution**

The species is widespread and abundant in the Gila and Bill Williams river drainages in Arizona and the Gila and San Francisco drainages in southwestern New Mexico. The species is widespread and abundant in the Verde and Gila headwaters.

**Habitat**

Streams and rivers from 300 to 3000 m in elevation, primarily in pool habitats. Pool habitats over sand gravel substrates.

**Life history and ecology**

Can attain a size of 0.8 m and a weight of greater than 2.0 kg. Used as food by early, primitive human populations. Food habits vary with availability. In one stream, Aravaipa Creek, it is principally a carnivore, whereas elsewhere in pool habitats diet consists of plant debris, mud, and algae. Observed to "suck" cottonwood seeds at surface as is common for the common carp. Young often feed in large schools at stream margins on micro-crustaceans, protozoans and other animal and plant groups.

**Breeding**

Similar to most slim-bodied suckers, the species spawns in smaller streams over gravel substrates. Males darken in color and often display extreme tuberculation. Males & (usually 2) flank a single, larger female. Gametes are emitted with considerable to extreme substrate agitation and fall into gravel interstices. Cleaning of gravels occurs much as reported for salmonid species.

**Key Habitat Components:** pools with sand-gravel substrates for adults and shallow, low velocity riffles and backwaters for young

### **Breeding season**

Protracted, from as early as January to February at low elevations to as late as July.

### **Grazing effects**

The species is widespread and abundant and when combined with pool-inhabiting behavior grazing probably has little real effect on the species. Trampling of spawning gravels could occur, but again the widespread abundance and distribution of the species renders impacts by livestock minuscule relative to alteration of habitats and co-inhabiting of pools by large predatory species such as bass and channel and flathead catfish.

### **Selected references**

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