

Scientific Name

Catostomus clarki

Bison code 010500

Common Name

desert sucker

Official status

Endemism

State AZ: threatened

Colorado River Basin

Status/threats

Introduced species and habitat alteration

Distribution

Presently occurs in the Virgin, Bill Williams, Salt, Verde, San Pedro, Blue, and Gila Rivers in Arizona. Occurs only in the Gila River headwaters in New Mexico and in the San Francisco River.

Habitat

Occupies low to high gradient riffles (0.5 to 2.0 % gradient) over pebble to cobble substrates containing water velocities of 0.5 to 1.5 cm sec. Preferred temperature of 17.5 C in Virgin River and calculated critical thermal maximums of 32-37 C.

Life history and ecology

Morphological complex in this species renders taxonomy difficult, however, probably more than one species exists across its range in Arizona and New Mexico. Two forms are apparent in the Virgin River basin, one in the Bill Williams basin and another form in the Bill Williams and Gila basins. Detailed genetic and morphological studies and frequent hybridization between the genera *Pantosteus* and *Catostomus* have resulted in *Pantosteus* being relegated to sub-generic status.

Breeding

Generally occurs in riffles, however, not specifically studied.

Key Habitat Components: Low to high gradient riffles of moderate to swift velocity current, moderate depth (< 0.5 m), and over pebble to cobble-boulder substrate. Also in pools with moderate current.

Breeding season

Late winter (Jan-Feb) to early spring (March-April).

Grazing effects

The widespread, adaptable, and ubiquitous in addition to its generally low to high gradient riffle habitat of cobble to boulder substrates renders grazing of little potential impact to this species.

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