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# Bear Lake Sculpin

## *Cottus extensus*

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Actinopterygii — Scorpaeniformes — Cottidae

### CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Critically imperiled (G1)  
Statewide: Critically imperiled (S1)  
ESA: No status  
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status  
BLM: Rangewide/Globally imperiled (Type 2)  
IDFG: Protected nongame

### BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Endemic to Bear Lake.

### TAXONOMY

No subspecies has been proposed.

### DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

This species is endemic to Bear Lake. The population is estimated to be in the millions.

### POPULATION TREND

Monitoring for >10 years suggests the population is stable.

### HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

The Bear Lake sculpin occurs throughout the lake in benthic areas. Individuals spawn near shore in mid–April to mid–May and attach eggs to the undersides of rocks where males guard egg masses (Sigler and Sigler 1987). Adults return to deeper water after spawning. After hatching, fry utilize currents to disperse from the rocky spawning areas. Sculpins are opportunistic bottom feeders on benthic invertebrates and ostracods.

### ISSUES

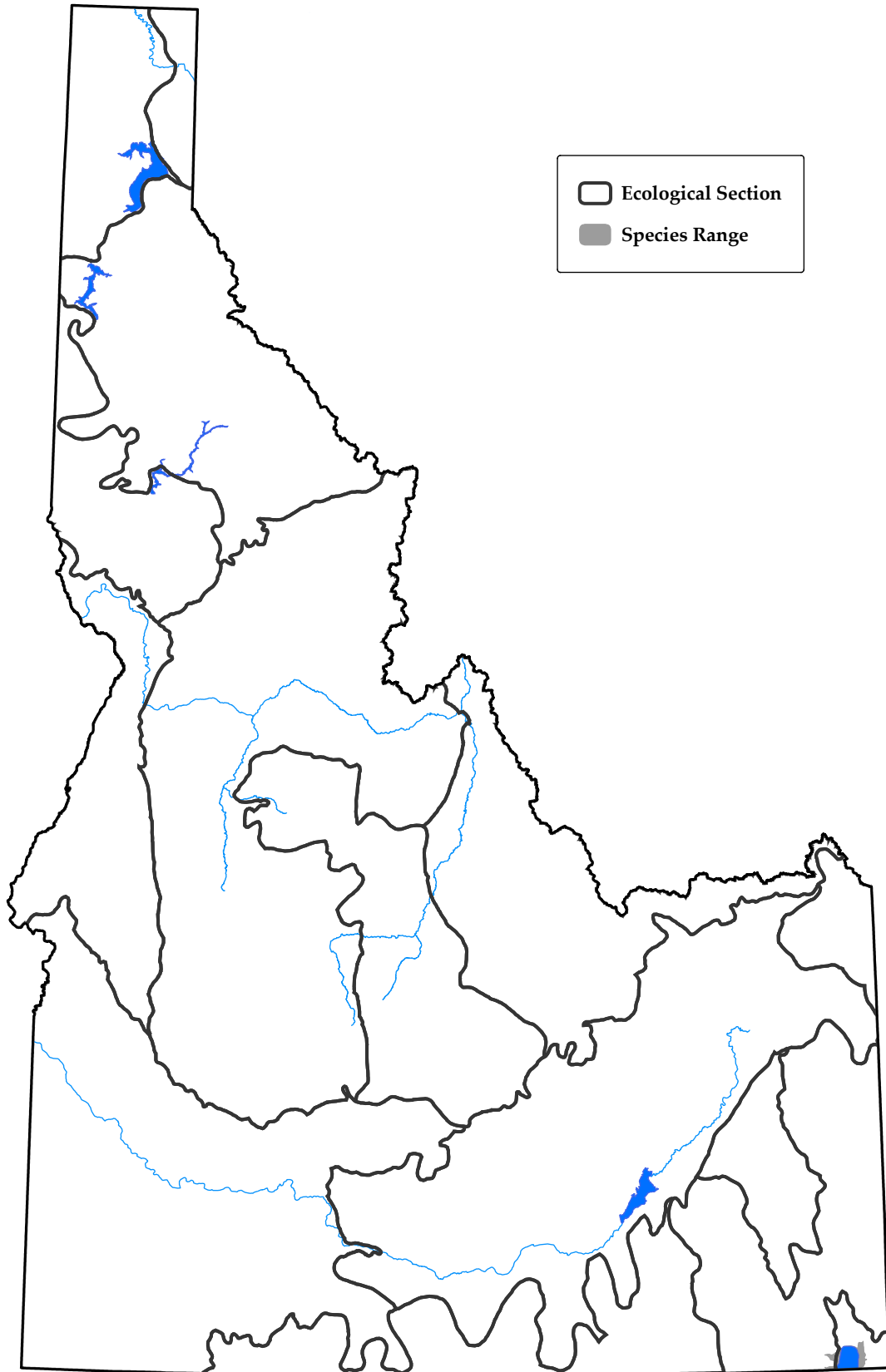
A decline in lake levels due to drought and water management could limit spawning and rearing habitat. Increasing human development around the lake could lead to lowering of water quality due to waste water discharges. Legal and illegal introductions of piscivorous fish could affect populations through an increased predation rate.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Continue programs that (1) monitor the population status and trend; (2) evaluate the relationship between water quality and level and fish populations; (3) stock sterile triploid lake trout; and (4) removal of illegally introduced non–native fish (e.g., walleye) in conjunction with adjacent states.

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10 August 2005  
Fish information is from Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and displayed at the 6th code hydrologic unit.

