

---

## **Bluehead Sucker**

### *Catostomus discobolus*

---

Actinopterygii — Cypriniformes — Catostomidae

#### **CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION**

Rangewide: Apparently secure (G4)  
Statewide: Unranked (SNR)  
ESA: No status  
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status  
BLM: No status  
IDFG: Unprotected wildlife

#### **BASIS FOR INCLUSION**

Lack of essential information pertaining to status.

#### **TAXONOMY**

Bluehead sucker was described by Cope in 1871 (Nelson et al. 2004).

#### **DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE**

Bluehead sucker are widely distributed in the Colorado River drainage from western Arizona northward into Colorado and Wyoming. It is more abundant in the northern areas (Sigler and Sigler 1987). In Idaho it naturally occurs in the Snake River drainage above Shoshone Falls. Abundance information in Idaho is unknown.

#### **POPULATION TREND**

Population trends are currently unknown.

#### **HABITAT AND ECOLOGY**

Bluehead sucker inhabits both larger rivers and small streams (Sigler and Sigler 1987). It prefers cooler water but can tolerate temperatures <28 C (<83 F). They can reach lengths of 41 cm (16 in), although 25–30 cm (10–12 in) is most common in Idaho (Simpson and Wallace 1982). Bluehead sucker use cartilaginous scraping edges of the jaws to feed on algae from rocks and other fixed objects. Small aquatic insects in the algae are also consumed. Spawning is likely to occur in spring and early summer with fish maturing at 2 years of age (Sigler and Sigler 1987).

#### **ISSUES**

There is a lack of information on distribution and population status. Barriers created by dams, diversion structures and road crossings can result in habitat loss and reduce genetic exchange between populations. Non–native fish may have an impact on populations.

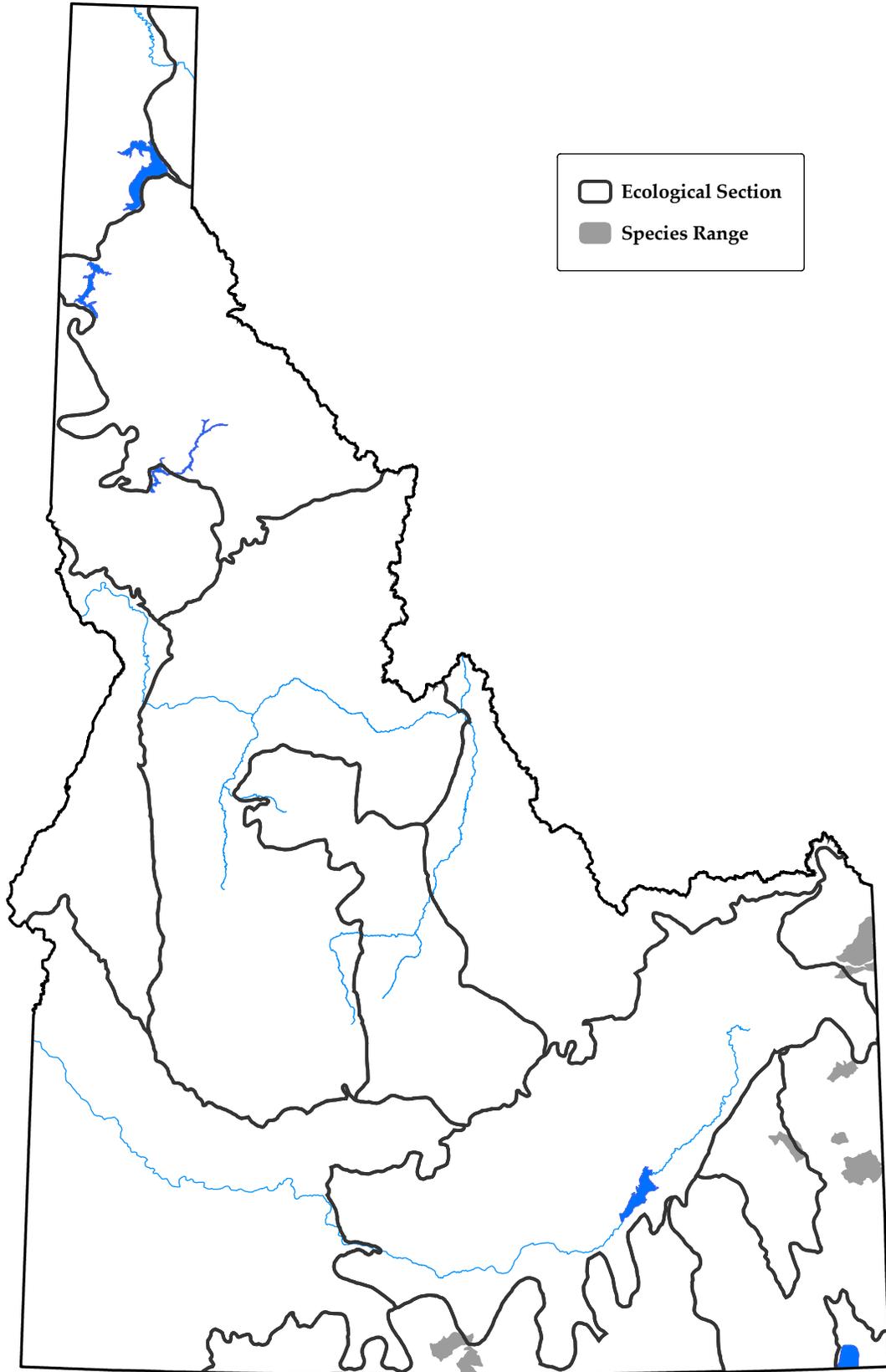
#### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

Develop monitoring programs to provide information on populations, distribution, and trends. Coordinate with agencies and private landowners to improve instream and

riparian habitat conditions, including fish passage. Management of non–native fish species need to consider impacts on native nongame species.

# Bluehead Sucker

*Catostomus discobolus*



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.

