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# Pygmy Whitefish

## *Prosopium coulterii*

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Actinopterygii — Salmoniformes — Salmonidae

### CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Secure (G5)  
Statewide: Unranked (SNR)  
ESA: No status  
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status  
BLM: No status  
IDFG: Game fish

### BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Lack of essential information pertaining to status.

### TAXONOMY

The pygmy whitefish was described by Eigenmann and Eigenmann in 1892 (Nelson et al. 2004).

### DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Relict populations occurred historically in deep lakes across northern North America as remnants of the last Ice Age. In Idaho populations occur in Priest, Pend Oreille, and Spirit lakes.

### POPULATION TREND

Current population status and trends are unknown.

### HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

The pygmy whitefish most often occupies deep, oligotrophic lakes, although Spirit Lake is relatively shallow. Fish mature at 2–4 years. Recorded maximum age is 9 years, and normally maximum size does not exceed 15–20 cm (6–8 in). Spawning occurs in late summer to early winter and can likely occur both in lakes and in streams (Wydoski and Whitney 2003). In Priest Lake, spawning was observed in late October with fish moving into shallow water in late afternoon, spawning during nighttime and returning to deep water at daylight. Pygmy whitefish feed primarily on zooplankton but may eat small aquatic invertebrates.

### ISSUES

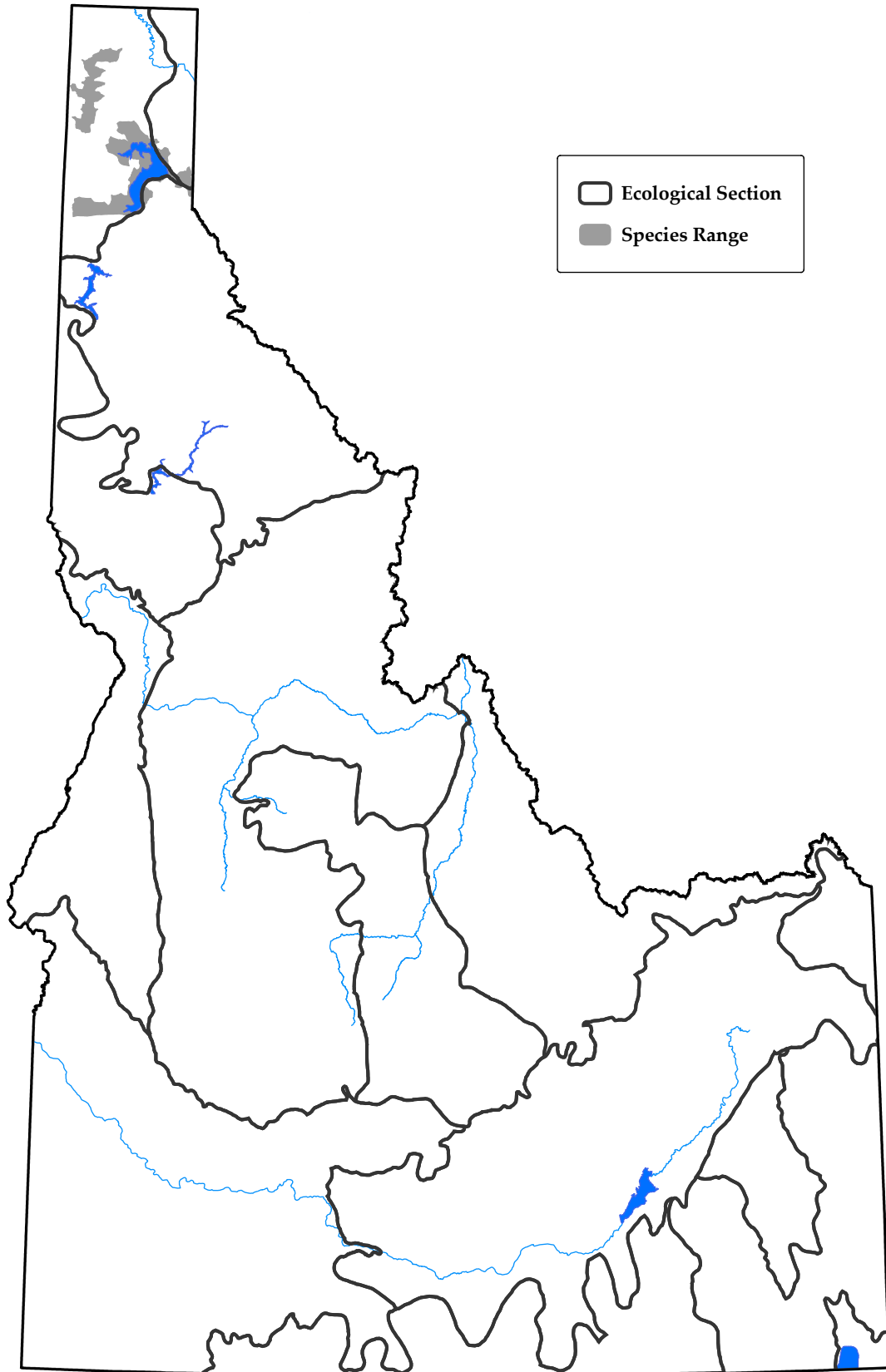
Information regarding current population status and trends in Idaho lakes is lacking. Introductions of non–native fish into larger lakes may affect populations.

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Develop surveys to monitor pygmy whitefish populations. Management of non–native and native fish species need to consider impacts on native nongame species.

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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.

