Colorado Pikeminnow: Forgotten Predator of the Lower Colorado River

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Outline

• Historical context
• A common misperception about Colorado Pikeminnow
• Political Context
• A Call to Action
Historical Context
Celebration at completion of Laguna Dam 1909

Concrete Cap on Laguna Dam stretching from CA to AZ
Catching Colorado pikeminnow above Hoover Dam c.1938

Last Colorado pikeminnow captured in Lake Mohave, November 13, 1962

1976 last pikeminnow caught in Grand Canyon at Havasu Creek
A Common Misperception

- Colorado Pikeminnow will cause detrimental impacts to other endangered fish Conservation efforts through predation
Flathead Catfish

Smallmouth Bass

Bullhead Catfish

Colorado Pikeminnow
A Comparison of Predator Gapes

- Smallmouth Bass
- Brown Trout
- Rainbow trout
- Colorado Pikeminnow
- Flathead Catfish
- Striped Bass
- Black Bullhead Catfish

Maximum Anatomical Gape (mm) vs. Total Length (mm)
Body depth of Humpback Chub
Body depth of Razorback Sucker

![Graph showing the relationship between maximum body depth and total length of Razorback Sucker. The graph indicates a positive correlation, with points scattered along a line.](image)

Maximum Body Depth

Total Length (mm)
Why Have they Been forgotten?

• 2002 Recovery Goals stated that no Conservation actions downstream of Glen Canyon Dam count toward species recovery
  • This decision was to be re-evaluated during 5-year status reviews - but has not occurred
Adult Pikeminnow persist in the Verde River, but no research is conducted because no money is available.
The River is too disjunct!
Segregated native fish management

Marsh and Pacey 2005
Clarkson et al. 2005
Mueller 2005
If we are not going to pursue segregated fish management
Which of our native fish are likely to persist with Non-native fishes?
Colorado Pikeminnow – one of best candidates
Conclusions

• Gape comparisons indicate Pikeminnow pose little threat relative to other introduced predatory fishes (and they have no teeth)

• Arguments against repatriation based on fears of potential negative impacts to other endangered native fishes may be overstated

• Without revision of the recovery goals the fate of Colorado Pikeminnow in the Lower Colorado River basin may be sealed