

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

Northern Leatherside Chub



Photo: Eric Wagner, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

A FISH OUT OF WATER

The Northern Leatherside Chub (*Lepidomeda copei*) is an extremely rare minnow that swims in the Bear River and Snake River drainages in Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, and Idaho. Its populations are declining, and habitat fragmentation is the main culprit. Factors behind this fragmentation include irrigation, water diversion, habitat destruction, and invasion of its habitat by non-native fish. There are many areas where this fish swims no more.

PROTECTING AQUATIC HABITAT

The Northern Leatherside Chub lives in pools and riffles with intact streambanks and healthy streamside vegetation. Protecting this fish under the Endangered Species Act would also safeguard its aquatic and streamside habitat. Streams and rivers are arteries of life in the West's Sagebrush Sea. Some of the species that would enjoy collateral benefits from Chub protection include the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout, Mountain Whitefish, Paiute Sculpin, Boreal Toad, Mottled Sculpin, Utah Chub, Speckled Dace, and many other fishes.

KNOW YOUR CHUB

- Fish Leather: the very small scales on the Chub's trim, tapered body create its leathery appearance.
- Small and Vulnerable: at three to five inches long, the Chub can't put up much of a fight against non-native fish predators.
- Slipping Through the Cracks: the Chub was a candidate for Endangered Species Act protection until 1996, but was then dropped from the government's radar screen.

SAGEBRUSH SEA STAT

Although they comprise less than 1 percent of the Sagebrush Sea, streams and streambanks are critically important to a majority of species on the landscape. Extensive field observations from the late 1980s suggest streamside areas throughout much of the West were in the worst condition in history.

