

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL

The Prairie Chub



Photo: Zachary Shattuck

A TINY PRAIRIE FISH IN TROUBLE

Prairie chubs historically inhabited all of the rivers and streams within the upper Red River basin, which expands across the Texas panhandle, through southwestern Oklahoma, and along the Red River border between Oklahoma and Texas. Human activity has made the Red River basin waterways less hospitable for the prairie chub. Prairie chubs are now extinct from the streams such as the Washita River and the upper North Fork of the Red River that they once inhabited. Without federal protection, this small swimmer could be lost forever.

PROTECTING PRECIOUS PRAIRIE RIVERS

Prairie Chubs have adapted to harsh and volatile conditions characteristic of southern prairie streams in the arid west. Historically, the fish recovered after periods of drought. Though freshwater fish, they can tolerate salty waters. Yet they may not be able to withstand the increasing human threats to the Red River basin that include dam building, chemical run-off from agriculture and towns, cattle grazing that erodes stream banks, and climate change.

KNOW YOUR CHUB

- **A Home in the River:** Prairie chubs live in shallow waters of the Red River basin streams and rivers.
- **Don't Dam It:** Damming changes a river's structure, chemical conditions, temperature, flood cycles, and more. These changes can kill off native fishes, including the prairie chub, who are adapted to pre-dam conditions.
- **Protection by Proxy:** Federal protection under the Endangered Species Act for the prairie chub would also protect the imperiled waters of the Red River basin for other aquatic life.

CLIMATE CHAOS

Scientists predict that climate change will increase drought severity and length in the already arid southern Great Plains. Climate change may leave the prairie chub high and dry with less water more of the time.

