

ARKANSAS

Wildlife Action

PLAN

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Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus and pallid sturgeon *Scaphirhynchus albus* from the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. White River shovelnose sturgeon are relatively small compared to other *Scaphirhynchus sp.*, and they mature at a smaller size. We recommend that this unique stock be placed on the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission species of greatest conservation need list immediately. State Wildlife Grant funding is needed to (1) determine the scope of the range of this unique stock within the White and Black Rivers; (2) determine if White River shovelnose sturgeon are easily identifiable using morphometrics and meristics; and (3) determine if White River shovelnose sturgeon are genetically differentiated from other shovelnose sturgeon stocks (e.g., Red River, Wabash River, Platt River). Results from these studies will allow us to understand if White River shovelnose sturgeon are a unique species. It would be helpful to have this information soon because of the proposed listing of shovelnose sturgeon under the Endangered Species Act due to similarity of appearance with the endangered pallid sturgeon.

The conservation status of the southern cavefish, *Typhlichthys subterraneus*, in Arkansas

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We investigated the status of the southern cavefish (*Typhlichthys subterraneus*) in Arkansas. Its presence in the state represents the western-southern limits of its distribution. Three localities have been confirmed that contain individuals of this species: Richardson Cave (Fulton County), Alexander Cave/ Clark Spring (Stone County) and Ennis Cave (Stone County). A fourth locality has been cited as a well in Randolph County, but because the exact location is unknown, its presence has not been confirmed. There are also a number of unconfirmed localities for "cavefishes" in the region. Populations of this species in Arkansas seem to be small (less than 100 individuals) which is common among populations of hypogean amblyopsids elsewhere. All the confirmed localities are in areas either under controlled access by the private owners or by the federal government. No immediate threat to these populations was found by either overcollecting or other anthropogenic causes. Yet long-term monitoring of the recharge zones is recommended since pollution of these areas has been the major ecological problem for this and other hypogean amblyopsids species elsewhere. Current work suggests that the populations in Arkansas may represent a new species of *Typhlichthys*.