

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Recovering Our Most Imperiled Fish

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Culminating a 20-year partnership with the state of Oregon, the Army Corps of Engineers, and private landowners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed removing the Oregon chub from the federal endangered species list. If it goes through, this would be the first fish delisted due to recovery. Fewer than 1,000 fish were known to exist when it was placed on the endangered species list. Today, the population stands at more than 150,000 fish.

Among biologists, the Southeast is known as a hotbed of aquatic diversity. We've nearly 500 different kinds of fish. Unfortunately, a disconcerting number of those are imperiled. Hopefully the future will see us celebrating the recovery of some of our rare fish. Recent years have seen the establishment of a population of the threatened spotfin chub in the Cheoah River. The spotfin chub was one of four fish on the endangered species list reintroduced to Abrams Creek in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. State, tribal, federal, and private biologists are working hard to keep the rare sicklefin redhorse off the endangered species list.

There are a lot of smart, dedicated people working on fish conservation in the Southern Appalachians. Two of the easiest things we can do to help those efforts is keep chemicals, including fertilizer and pesticides, out of streams; and plant trees and shrubs along streams to help hold banks in place.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.