

Presentation title: Colorado River fish monitoring in Glen and Grand Canyons

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Abstract

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), working under the guidance of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program, undertakes several monitoring and research activities throughout the Colorado River. Beginning near Glen Canyon Dam, Lees Ferry is considered the premier rainbow trout fishery in the state and is managed to maintain a self-sustaining population of trout for recreational anglers. AGFD monitoring efforts began at Lees Ferry in 1984 and has continued through present. In contrast to Lees Ferry, the downstream portion between Lees Ferry and Lake Mead is managed for native fish. AGFD conducts two river-wide monitoring trips per year to assess the status and trends of the downstream fish community. Results of this project are then used to inform managers about changes in fish abundance and if further experimental actions are needed. Additionally, AGFD conducts a month long monitoring survey in the Little Colorado River (LCR). This project is specific to only the lower 1,200 meters of the LCR and provides updates of status and trends of native fish species. It has been conducted since 1987 and represents one of the most consistent, standardized monitoring efforts in the Colorado River. Lastly, AGFD conducts a mechanical removal project where non-native species are removed from the mainstem Colorado River in order to improve conditions for native species near the mouth of the LCR. This project originally lasted between 2003-2006 but was conducted once in 2009 due to managers' concerns of a rebounding non-native fish population.