

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE - SPOTLIGHT SPECIES ACTION PLAN

**Common Name:** Railroad Valley springfish

**Scientific Name:** *Crenichthys nevadae*

**Lead Region:** 8

**Lead Field Office:** Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office (NFWO)

### **Species Information:**

Status: Threatened

Recovery Priority Number (RPN): 2C

Recovery Plan: Railroad Valley Springfish Recovery Plan; March 17, 1997.

Most Recent 5-year Review: In process

Other: N/A

**Threats:** Current threats to Railroad Valley springfish (RRVS) include nonnative species, potential groundwater withdrawal, water diversions, oil pumping, and isolated livestock impacts.

**Target:** The 5-year goal for RRVS is to improve the status of the species. Due to the recent State acquisition of Lockes Ranch (four of six historical populations), implementation of a Safe Harbor Agreement with the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe for Big Warm Spring, and ongoing habitat restoration and management at Little Warm Spring and Lockes Ranch, many known threats are now being addressed through partnership efforts and therefore the species has a high potential for significant status improvement over the next 5 years.

**Measure:** Change RPN from 2C to 8. The new RPN will reflect a species under a moderate degree of threat with a high potential for recovery. Conflicts have already been reduced through changes in land ownership and management, as well as new partnership efforts.

**Actions:** The following five actions will be implemented over the next 5 years to meet the target. In particular, implementation of the first and second actions is necessary in order for the Service to change the species' RPN. Recovery of RRVS is a multi-agency effort under direction of the Railroad Valley Recovery Implementation Team (RRVRIT). Agencies on the RRVRIT include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Discipline (USGS-BRD), and the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe (Tribe). Various agencies are the primary coordinators and/or funding sources for some of these actions.

- 1) Continue to implement and manage habitat restoration at Lockes Ranch to further the expansions of four historical populations of RRVS. This action addresses listing Factors A (Present or Threatened Destruction, Modification, or Curtailment of Habitat or Range) and E (Other Natural or Manmade Factors Affecting Its Continued Existence). Threats that are being addressed include nonnative fish, livestock trespass impacts, and prior water diversions. The NDOW's acquisition of Lockes Ranch was partially funded by the FWS using a Recovery Lands Acquisition Program

grant. NDOW will continue to take the lead for implementation of restoration actions with financial support from the FWS's Section 6 Program under the Endangered Species Act.

- 2) Continue to assist the Tribe in implementation of the Safe Harbor Agreement for Big Warm Spring and with new habitat restoration and management efforts at Little Warm Spring. The FWS will continue taking a lead role in collaborative conservation activities with the Tribe, utilizing the FWS's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, and Tribal Landowner Incentives Program to further these activities. The FWS will attend regular Tribal Council meetings and other meetings pertaining to RRVS recovery. This action addresses listing Factors A and E; threats that will be addressed include nonnative fish, water diversions, and livestock impacts.
- 3) Develop a standardized, range-wide population survey and estimation protocol and ensure that surveys are completed annually to document species' abundance and distribution, determine population trends, and observe habitat conditions. Through regular monitoring, this action addresses threats from potential nonnative species expansions/introductions and habitat modifications under listing Factor A. Protocol development will be led by the RRVIT and annual surveys will be led by NDOW.
- 4) Determine potential effects of groundwater pumping under existing Southern Nevada Water Authority water right applications in Railroad Valley on RRVS-occupied spring systems and other potential recovery habitats through modeling. This action addresses the threat of groundwater withdrawal under listing Factor A and will be implemented by a team that includes representatives of Federal and State agencies on the RRVIT.
- 5) Conduct aquatic species and habitat surveys of all springs and streams located on the Duckwater Shoshone Reservation and private lands throughout Railroad Valley to determine presence/absence of native aquatic species and evaluate habitat suitability for potential RRVS population expansion or establishment. This action generally addresses listing Factor A, but no specific threats are identified herein due to the lack of survey data at this time. Surveys will be coordinated by the RRVIT.

*Estimated costs of the actions:*

1) Lockes Ranch habitat restoration and management

FWS - \$84,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 2 biologists)

NDOW - \$170,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 24 days x 5 years x 2 biologists)

USGS-BRD - \$42,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 1 biologist)

2) Tribal assistance

FWS - \$84,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 2 biologists)

NDOW - \$42,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 1 biologist)

USGS-BRD - \$42,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 1 biologist)

3) Develop survey protocol

FWS - \$3,480 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 5 days x 1 biologist)

NDOW - \$42,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 1 biologist)

USGS-BRD - \$4,875 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 5 days x 1 biologist)

4) Effects of groundwater pumping

Southern Nevada Water Authority - \$10,000

5) Aquatic species habitat surveys

FWS - \$84,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 2 biologists)

NDOW - \$168,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 24 days x 5 years x 2 biologists)

USGS-BRD - \$42,000 (\$696.04 bio day rate x 12 days x 5 years x 1 biologist)

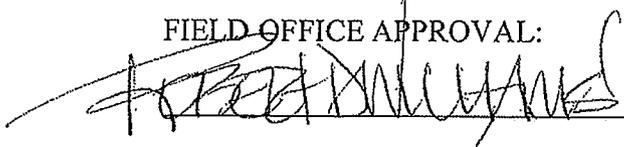
**Role of other agencies:** The RRVrit is critical in the recovery of RRVS. NDOW is the lead agency tasked with RRVS population monitoring. The FWS intends to continue providing funding to NDOW through section 6 for work at Lockes Ranch, monitoring of RRVS populations, and surveys of other waters. The FWS and USGS-BRD are providing assistance to NDOW for monitoring activities and will likely assist in other surveys. The Tribe is responsible for performing actions in compliance with the Safe Harbor Agreement and the FWS is assisting those efforts. The Natural Resources Conservation Service is also working with the Tribe and FWS to improve the irrigation system associated with Little Warm Spring.

**Role of other ESA programs:** Section 7 consultations will be completed for funding and implementation of various habitat restoration and management activities. Section 6 funding will continue to be provided to NDOW for population monitoring and other recovery actions.

**Role of other FWS programs:** The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has been instrumental in recovery of RRVS through their coordination with the Tribe, and development and implementation of a Safe Harbor Agreement that enabled habitat restoration and species reestablishment in historical habitat. Additionally, they have secured grants that have been instrumental in other habitat restoration efforts on the Duckwater Shoshone Reservation and at Lockes Ranch. The Partners and Ecological Services Programs will continue to coordinate with the Tribe on recovery actions and funding opportunities (Tribal Landowner Incentive Program, Tribal Wildlife Grants).

**Additional funding analysis:** No other actions are scheduled to be implemented if additional funding becomes available.

FIELD OFFICE APPROVAL:

 Date 8/14/09

State Supervisor, NFWO, Fish and Wildlife Service

REGIONAL OFFICE CONCURRENCE:

 Date 10/23/09

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Fish and Wildlife Service