

## **Ripple Effect Water Minute #9 - Endangered Fish**

The Red River is known for its incredible catfish fishery. However, it once used to be home for many fish that weren't used for eating. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has identified fourteen non-game fish species that may inhabit the Red River and its tributaries, but their current status is unknown.

Losses of these fish indicate that the river systems have changed and the necessary habitat to support them no longer exists. The predominant loss of habitat is due to high sediment loading and high nutrients that cause a loss of oxygen and spawning habitat.

Nongame species represent an integral component in the balance of nature. Preventing species from becoming endangered or lost is important. From an ecological perspective, loss of a seemingly insignificant species can cause other animals to decline, or vanish.

The cost of protection or restoration of a listed species is far greater than preventing its decline in the first place. Many programs have been established in the states and province to help prevent further loss of healthy fish habitat in the Red River Basin waters. Keep our rivers clean and keep the fish swimming!

This Ripple Effect is brought to you by the Red River Basin Commission.