

## Ripple Effect #30

### **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 the following fourteen non-game fish species that may inhabit the Red and its tributaries, but their status is unknown:

Chestnut Lamprey - Red and Sheyenne  
Silver Lamprey - Red  
Silver Chub - Red, Sheyenne (protected in Canada as species at risk)  
Pearl Dace - Goose and Forest  
Hornyhead Chub - Forest  
Pugnose Shiner - Red and Sheyenne  
Black Nose Shiner - Sheyenne  
Rosy Sace Shiner - Sheyenne  
Northern Redbelly Dace - several tributaries of the Red  
Finescale Dace - Pembina  
Yellowhead Bullhead - Red  
Trout-Perch - Red and Sheyenne  
Log Perch - Red and two tributaries  
River Darter - Red and Sheyenne

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. Physical loss of dead trees along the banks, pools and riffles also may be a cause for the loss of habitat. The Lake Sturgeon was a fish that was in decline in the Red, but after several low-head dams were retrofitted or removed the Lake Sturgeon was re-introduced with great success.

Nongame species represent an integral component in the balance of nature. Many of these species are on the decline or thought to be at risk. 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. Such declines are often hard to predict, as many of these relationships are not well understood. The cost of protection or restoration of a listed species is far greater than preventing its decline in the first place.

By causing the extinction of a species today, we are depriving future generations of the experiences and values that the species may have provided. We must work cooperatively to find a balance between maintaining the function of natural systems and the use of the landscape for human needs.

Until the next Ripple Effect,

The Red River Basin Commission (RRBC)

The RRBC is a grassroots organization that is a chartered not-for-profit corporation under the provisions of Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and South Dakota law. Our offices in Moorhead, MN and Winnipeg, MB can be reached at 218-291-0422 and 204-982-7254, or you can check out our website at [www.redriverbasincommission.org](http://www.redriverbasincommission.org).