

Executive Summary for 2019 Aquatic Species Management Plan

Preparation of an [Aquatic Species Management Plan](#) (Plan) is a requirement of the Pima County [Multi-species Conservation Plan](#) (MSCP). The primary goals of the Plan include maintaining existing populations of target species and their habitats, and identifying areas with potential habitat for future releases of target species. The Plan focuses on the following target species:

- Gila topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis occidentalis*)
- Gila chub (*Gila intermedia*);
- Longfin dace (*Agosia chrysogaster*);
- Desert sucker (*Catostomus clarki*);
- Sonora sucker (*Catostomus insignis*);
- Chiricahua leopard frog (*Lithobates chiricahuensis*)
- Lowland leopard frog (*Lithobates yavapaiensis*)
- Northern Mexican gartersnake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*)
- Huachuca water umbel (*Lilaeopsis schaffneriana* var. *recurva*)

The plan supports implementation of Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AZGFD's) priorities from their [Santa Cruz Watershed Management Plan](#), as well as recovery objectives established by U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Plan was reviewed and approved by USFWS in July 2019.

The Plan provides a baseline population status and habitat condition assessment at sites (streams, springs, stock tanks, and a few other large ponds) managed for conservation by either Pima County or Pima County Regional Flood Control District (RFCD). Sites were sorted into three tiers of management priority based on the type of water source, environmental conditions, and other considerations.

The Plan identifies opportunities for releasing target species where they do not (as of 2019) currently occur; the number of sites for releases varies among species. Species with the most release opportunities are the Gila topminnow (15 sites) and Huachuca water umbel (14 sites). The most widespread target species on County conservation lands is the lowland leopard frog; there are eight additional sites available for future releases of this species.

The Plan does not direct, authorize or fund any particular action on land owned or managed by Pima County or RFCD. Implementation will depend on partnerships with AZGFD and other conservation partners over the 30-year term of the MSCP. Additional site evaluations and permissions may be needed before releases occur. Additional inventories of above-ground metal or concrete stock tanks are ongoing.

As part of this planning effort, USFWS has prepared [guidelines for construction](#) of wildlife-friendly water features. These guidelines may be of interest to private property owners who wish to maximize benefits and minimize risks to Arizona's wildlife.