



September 7, 2023

Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2022-0115
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: PRB/3W
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Submitted via Regulations.gov

RE: Removing the Apache Trout from the Endangered Species List

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposal to delist the Apache trout.

AZSFWC is the leading 501c-3 non-profit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, youth recruitment and retention, as well as providing educational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. AZSFWC member, affiliate, and associate groups reach across the spectrum of hunting, angling, shooting, outdoor recreation, and businesses from across Arizona. Our member groups represent well over 28,500 people from Arizona.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to remove Apache trout from the Federal list of Endangered and Threatened Species is a victory for fish and wildlife conservation. This would be the first native trout species and gamefish to be removed from the list due to conservation efforts and is a fitting tribute to Arizona's State Fish!

The Apache trout is exclusively found on both public and Tribal land in the streams throughout the White Mountains of eastern Arizona. It gained protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973, the same year the ESA was enacted. Over the last five decades, a collaborative conservation effort was undertaken by multiple Federal, State, and Tribal agencies, conservation organizations and private citizens, culminating in the successful recovery of this native fish.

An Apache Trout Cooperative Management Plan (CMP) developed in 2021, outlines the management actions and step-down activities that were needed to achieve recovery and also provides for long-term management of the Apache trout if it is delisted. The CMP outlines the continued commitment by the recovery partners to conserve and manage the species into the future. The most recent 5-year review on the species' status, including the best available scientific information, recommended delisting this species due to recovery.

AZSFWC and 20 of our member organizations (list below) enthusiastically support the delisting of the Apache trout!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Unmacht", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Unmacht
Executive Director

AZSFWC Support for Delisting of Apache Trout from the Endangered Species List – 9-7-23



AZSFWC Member Organizations
Supporting the Removal of Apache Trout
from the Endangered Species List

Anglers United
AZ Antelope Foundation
AZ Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
AZ Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation
AZ Chapter of Safari Club International
AZ Council of Trout Unlimited
AZ Deer Association
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society
AZ Flycasters Club
AZ Houndsmen's Association
AZ Outdoor Sports
AZ Predator Callers
Christian Hunters of America
Conservation First USA
Diablo Trust
Fly Fishers Arizona
Southern AZ Quail Forever
Outdoor Experience 4 All
Mule Deer Foundation
Valley of the Sun Quail Forever