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NEWS RELEASE

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Public comments sought on Environmental Assessment for continued fish stocking in Arizona

Proposal would continue federal funding to support AZGFD sport fish stocking program

PHOENIX — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) today made available for public review a [draft Environmental Assessment \(dEA\)](#) of Arizona's sport fish stocking program.



The dEA is part of a process to continue to allow federal Sport Fish Restoration funding to support AZGFD's long-standing program of stocking fish for public recreational opportunities, and for hatchery operations and maintenance. The deadline to submit comments is **5 p.m. (Arizona time) on June 11, 2021**.

Each year, thousands of anglers in Arizona take advantage of the fish stocking program, which is funded in part by federal dollars from the Sport Fish Restoration Program and augmented by state dollars from fishing license sales.

Every 10 years, USFWS and AZGFD evaluate the social, economic and environmental effects of Arizona's stocking program, and pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), prepare a dEA that analyzes possible actions or alternatives. The preferred alternative for the agencies, also known as the **Proposed Action**, would allow AZGFD to continue its stocking program for the next 10 years and also includes conservation measures to reduce potential impacts on federally listed or sensitive native aquatic or semi-aquatic species.

Members of the public are encouraged to review and provide comments on the dEA. Written comments can be submitted from May 11, 2021 through 5 p.m. (Arizona time) on June 11, 2021. Comments can be either:

- Emailed to fw2fa@fws.gov, or
- Sent by U.S. Mail to Arizona Game and Fish Department, Attention: Dave Weedman, 5000 W. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, AZ 85086 (must be postmarked no later than June 11, 2021).

Your written comments—including personal identifying information, such as name, address, phone number, and email address—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask that personal identifying information be withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

An **informational event** on the dEA will be held via Facebook Live at **6 p.m. (Arizona time) on June 1** and **6 p.m. on June 2** at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fishaz/about>.

More information is available at <https://www.azgfd.com/Fishing/FisheriesManagement/>.

- View the [draft Environmental Assessment](#)

Additional information

Recreational angling in Arizona created a statewide economic impact of more than \$1.4 billion in 2013, according to the 2013 Economic Impact of Fishing in Arizona by Responsive Management (the last year such a survey was done). In fiscal year 2020, AZGFD sold 273,902 fishing licenses, generating revenue of nearly \$14 million. During the last six years, AZGFD has stocked approximately 3 million fish per year. The majority of stockings were cold water species, such as Rainbow, Apache, Brook, Cutthroat, and Brown Trout. The AZGFD also stocked warm water species including Channel Catfish, Largemouth Bass, Black Crappie, Redear Sunfish, and Bluegill.

In 2013, there were 5,979,637 angler days of fishing in Arizona. Sport Fish Restoration funding will make it possible for AZGFD to continue to meet part of this demand for public recreational angling opportunities on Arizona's waters.

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