

# Pallid Sturgeon in the Platte River Basin



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**  
**Ecological Services - Nebraska Field Office**  
**PRRIP Governance Committee Meeting**  
**June 8, 2015**

# **Pallid Sturgeon in the Platte River Basin**

## **Summary:**

- **The Service does not support two thumbs up for Big Question 9 because of lingering uncertainties**
- **The Service believes a Program workshop/symposium involving experts knowledgeable about pallid sturgeon biology is an essential step toward addressing these uncertainties**

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## Proposed Questions for the Pallid Sturgeon Workshop:

1. What is pallid sturgeon use of the Platte River?
2. What is the relationship between pallid sturgeon use and flow?
3. To what extent does Program water management affect flow?
4. What is an adverse impact for pallid sturgeon on the Platte River?

# Pallid Sturgeon in the Platte River Basin

A person wearing a yellow jacket and a tan hat with a fish logo is holding a large, long, silver fish (pallid sturgeon) in the water. The background is a body of water with ripples.

**Big Question 9: Do Program flow management actions in the central Platte River avoid adverse impacts to pallid sturgeon in the lower Platte River?**

- **Big Question 9 concludes no adverse impact**
- **Did not specify type of impact(s)**
- **Service suggests a clear description of a criterion (or criteria) to define impact**
- **Then assess if Program water management has impacted the pallid sturgeon**

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## Big Question 9

### Program Water Effects to Habitat:

- Program water management activities would be very small to undetectable
- Decreases in pallid sturgeon habitat is generally around 3 percent
- The maximum potential reduction in habitat is 9 percent

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## Big Question 9

**Inability to detect Program water does not equal “no adverse impact”:**

Species Impact		
Flow Detection	Detect Flow, Impact	Detect Flow, Not Impact
	Not Detect Flow, Impact	Not Detect Flow, Not Impact

**Big Question 9 only addresses flow detection**

# **Pallid Sturgeon in the Platte River Basin**

## **Big Question 9**

### **Program Water Effects to Habitat:**

- **Downstream of the Elkhorn River confluence – 3 to 9 percent habitat loss equates to 192 to 640 acre reduction in pallid sturgeon habitat**
- **Pallid sturgeon is documented upstream of the Elkhorn confluence**
- **Downstream of the Loup River confluence - 3 to 9 percent habitat loss equates to 640 to 1,984 acre reduction**



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## **Additional Research**

- 1. Pallid sturgeon research on Platte River (M. Hamel, UNL)**
- 2. Synthesis of pallid sturgeon research (USGS)**
- 3. Missouri River pallid sturgeon effects analysis (USACE, USGS)**

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A wide, calm river flows towards a distant sandy bar. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The word "Questions?" is superimposed in the center of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font with a subtle drop shadow.

# Questions?