

Checklist for Pallid Sturgeon Conservation Propagation and Stocking Program Compliance with US FWS Controlled Propagation Policy

RE: USFWS/NMFS Policy Regarding Controlled Propagation of Species Listed Under the Endangered Species Act [Federal Register: September 20, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 183)]

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Relevant Information

The body of information that guides the Pallid Sturgeon Conservation Propagation and Stocking Program (CPSP; controlled propagation and stocking of pallid sturgeon to support recovery) includes the following documents which are referenced in compliance with this policy:

- Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan (USFWS 2014)

- Upper Basin Genetics Management Plan for Pallid Sturgeon (USFWS 2013) and annual Genetics Assessments

- Range-wide Pallid Sturgeon Propagation (USFWS 2019)

- Range-wide Pallid Sturgeon Stocking Plan (USFWS 2019)

- Range-wide Pallid Sturgeon Tagging and Marking Plan (USFWS 2019)

- Range-wide Pallid Sturgeon Handling Protocols and Procedures (USFWS 2019)

- Annual reporting on population sampling

- Missouri River Recovery Program and associated documents as part of Section 7 for water operations (Army Corps of Engineers)

- Upper Missouri River recovery efforts as part of Section 7 for water operations (Bureau of Reclamation and associated power administrations)

- State and Federal programs for conserving TES species (Section 6 Programs)

Checklist criteria excerpted from the Controlled Propagation Policy (USFWS 2000)

Pallid Sturgeon Propagation is:

1. Used as a recovery strategy only when other measures employed to maintain or improve a listed species' status in the wild have failed, are determined to be likely to fail, are shown to be ineffective in overcoming extant factors limiting recovery, or would be insufficient to achieve full recovery. All reasonable effort should be made to accomplish conservation measures that enable a listed species to recover in the wild, with or without intervention (e.g., artificial cavity provisioning), prior to implementing **controlled propagation** for reintroduction or supplementation.

2. Coordinated with conservation actions and other recovery measures, as appropriate or specified in recovery plans, that will contribute to, or otherwise support, the provision of secure and suitable habitat. **Controlled propagation** programs intended for reintroduction or augmentation must be coordinated with habitat management, restoration, and other species' recovery efforts.

See Missouri River Recovery Program and Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Program

3. Based on the specific recommendations of recovery strategies identified in approved recovery plans or supplements to approved recovery plans whenever practical. The recovery plan, in addressing **controlled propagation**, should clearly identify the necessity and role of this activity as a recovery strategy.

See Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan 2014

4. Based on specific consideration of the potential ecological and genetic effects of the removal of individuals for **controlled propagation** purposes on wild populations and the potential effects of introductions of artificially bred animals or plants on the receiving population and other resident species. Assessments of potential risks and benefits will be addressed, as required, through sections 7 and 10 of the Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, 42 U.S.C. 4332) for proposed **controlled propagation** actions.

This was conducted in the Range-wide Pallid Sturgeon Stocking and Augmentation Plan 2008 and as part of Section 7 and Section 10.

5. Based on sound scientific principles to conserve genetic variation and species integrity. Intercrossing will not be considered for use in **controlled propagation** programs unless recommended in an approved recovery plan; supported in an approved genetic management plan (if information is available to develop such a plan, and which may or may not be part of an approved recovery plan); implemented in a scientifically **controlled** and approved manner; and undertaken to compensate for a loss of genetic viability in listed taxa that have been genetically isolated in the wild as a result of human activity. Use of intercross individuals for species

conservation will require the approval of the FWS Director or that of the NMFS Assistant Administrator, in accordance with all applicable policies.

See Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan, Pallid Sturgeon Stocking Plan and Upper Basin Genetics Management Plan

6. Preceded, when practical, by the development of a genetics management plan based on accepted scientific principles and procedures. **Controlled propagation** protocols will follow accepted standards such as those employed by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA), the Center for Plant Conservation (CPC), and Federal agency protocols such as fish management guidelines to the extent practical. All efforts will be made by us and our cooperators to ensure that the genetic makeup of propagated individuals is representative of that in free-ranging populations and that propagated individuals are behaviorally and physiologically suitable for introduction. Determination of biological "suitability" may include, but should not necessarily be limited to, analysis of geomorphological similarities of habitat, genetic similarity, phenotypic characteristics, stock histories, habitat use, and other ecological, biological, and behavioral indicators. All **controlled propagation** programs will address the issue of disposition of individuals found to be:

- (a) Unfit for introduction to the wild;
- (b) Unfit to serve as broodstock;
- (c) Surplus to program needs; or
- (d) Surplus to the recovery needs for the species (e.g., to preclude genetic and ecological swamping).

Controlled propagation activities should not be initiated without including consideration of these issues and obtaining required permits and other authorizations as necessary. Disposition of individuals surplus to program needs may include use for research or other appropriate purposes. Programs involving the **controlled propagation** of listed species for research purposes identified in final recovery plans and in which progeny will not be reintroduced to the wild are exempt from this policy. Examples of exempt actions include research involving the determination of germination rates in plants and spawning success rates in fish. This exemption does not extend to the need for these activities to comply with any other applicable Federal or State permitting or regulatory requirements.

See Pallid Sturgeon Propagation Plan and Stocking Plan

7. Conducted in a manner that takes all known precautions to prohibit the potential introduction or spread of diseases and parasites into **controlled** environments or suitable habitat.

See fish health and fish disposition protocols in the Pallid Sturgeon Propagation Plan

8. Conducted in a manner that will prevent the escape or accidental introduction of individuals outside their historic range.

See Pallid Sturgeon Propagation Plan and Hatchery Operations Plans



9. Conducted, when feasible, at more than one location in order to reduce the potential for catastrophic loss at a single facility when a substantial fraction of a species or important population segment is brought into captivity.

See Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan and Stocking Plan



10. Coordinated, as appropriate, with organizations and qualified individuals both within and outside our agencies. We will cooperate with other Federal agencies and State, Tribal, and local governments.



11. Conducted in a manner that will meet our information needs and that will be in accordance with accepted protocols and standards. In the case of listed species for which traditional [[Page 56921]] studbooks or registrations are not practical, records of eggs, larvae, or other life-stages will be maintained. 12. With limited exceptions, implemented only after a commitment to funding is secured.

See Pallid Sturgeon Propagation Plan and Stocking Plan



13. Prior to releases of propagated individuals, tied to development of a reintroduction plan, unless this information is already contained in an approved recovery plan, species survival plan, or equivalent document that has received the approval of the appropriate Service. **Controlled propagation** and reintroduction plans will identify measurable objectives and milestones for the proposed **propagation** and reintroduction effort. The **controlled propagation** and reintroduction plan should be based on strategies identified in the approved recovery plan. It should include protocols for health management, disease screening and disease-free certification, monitoring and evaluation of genetic, demographic, life-history, phenotypic, and behavioral characteristics, data collection, recordkeeping, and reporting as appropriate. On implementation, periodic evaluations must be made to assess project progress and consider new scientific information and the status of habitat conservation efforts.

See Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan and Stocking Plan



14. Conducted in accordance with the regulations implementing the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Animal Welfare Act, Lacey Act, Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, and the Services' procedures relative to NEPA.

See package of materials with final documents

