



Fish and Aquatic  
**CONSERVATION**  
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# Species Gap Analysis: Introduction and Overview

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# Fish and Aquatic Conservation (FAC)

*FAC uses a science-based approach to work with partners and the public to maintain, enhance, and restore fish and other aquatic resources for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

This mission is carried out through a boots-on-the-ground network of field biologists dedicated to the protection, restoration, and recovery of our nation's freshwater ecosystems and everything that lives in them. We work with partners and local communities to:

- Monitor native fish and other aquatic species population status and trends
- Assess the condition of aquatic habitats
- Develop sound plans to conserve native aquatic species and their habitats
- Restore aquatic habitat function and remove barriers to fish migration
- Prevent, eradicate, and control aquatic invasive species
- Evaluate the effectiveness and biological outcomes of aquatic conservation efforts



# Purposes of Gap Analyses

## Assessment, evaluation, and refinement

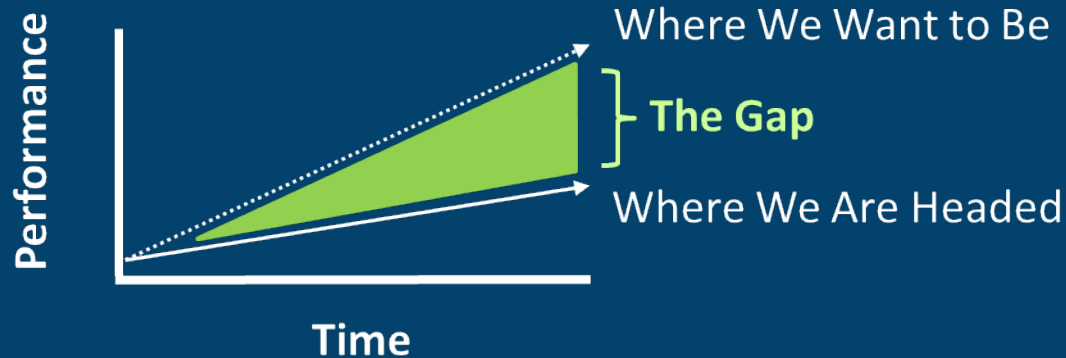
- Evaluate conservation efforts for priority species
- Identify gaps to achieving conservation objectives
- Identify and make program refinements

## Communication, messaging, and building support

- Engage with partners on shared priorities

# Gap Analysis Framework

- Describes the conservation gap between the current and desired state
- Identifies actions that are largely achievable by the Service and partners
- Recommendations for reaching the desired state





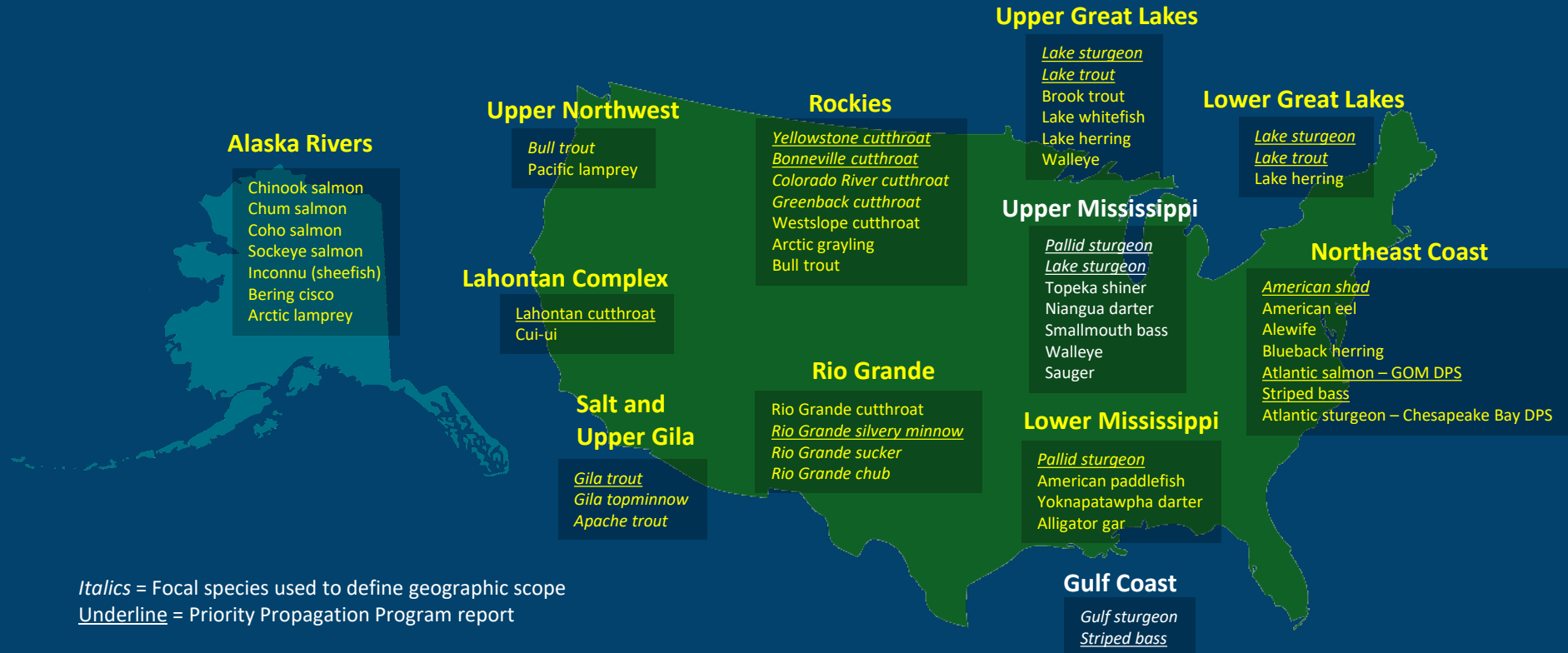
## Units of Study: Species Groupings

- Consider multiple species within a 'habitat area'
- Funding investment
- Relevant to FAC field activities
- Regional management feedback

### *Other factors discussed by Assistant Regional Directors*

- Connection to other USFWS efforts (e.g., propagation programs)
- Opportunity for USFWS to affect change

# Species Groupings



*Italics* = Focal species used to define geographic scope  
Underline = Priority Propagation Program report

## Some Recommendation Themes

- Numerous local-scale technical recommendations
- Improve range-wide planning for non-ESA-listed species
- Improve coordination on stocking of nonnative sportfish
- Increase partner engagement and coordination
- Address gaps in technical capacity
- Emphasize proactive conservation

# Some Rocky Mountain Region Recommendations



- Reconvene a range-wide coordination team for Western cutthroat trout conservation
- Build intra-agency communication / collaboration
- Validate contributions of fish passage projects
- Seek increased funding for fish habitat restoration
- Conduct a review and evaluation of Service practices for rearing and stocking nonnative salmonids
- Convene summit on cutthroat trout lineages and introgression





## How Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Can Help

- Support collection and synthesis of information
- Identify GSMFC and partner contacts
- Review gap analysis report drafts
- Provide feedback on analyses and recommendations
- Facilitate briefings for technical committees as needed
- Connect with region and field offices to identify opportunities



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I crave human contact.

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# Some Lower Great Lakes Report Recommendations

- Articulate USFWS goals and objectives that stem from the Great Lakes Fish Commission lake committee objectives
- Restore pre-COVID 19 communications protocols with partners
- Lower Great Lakes FWCO should lead more deep-water habitat assessment work for lake trout and coregonines
- Focus fish passage activity on historic spawning habitats for lake sturgeon in the Lake Ontario basin
- Encourage a more aggressive timeline to advance steps towards coregonine restoration

