

# Virgin River Chub Recovery



Pioneering partnerships rescue the endangered Virgin River Chub from the brink of extinction & help re-establish healthy, self-sustaining populations in the Virgin River.



## Desert Denizen

Beautiful and elusive, the Virgin River Chub is the **top native predator** in the Virgin River. It is a fast, streamlined fish with a sloped forehead, humped back, and thin, rounded tail. Chub can grow to a length of 18 inches and live more than **10 years** in the wild.

## Conservation Success Story

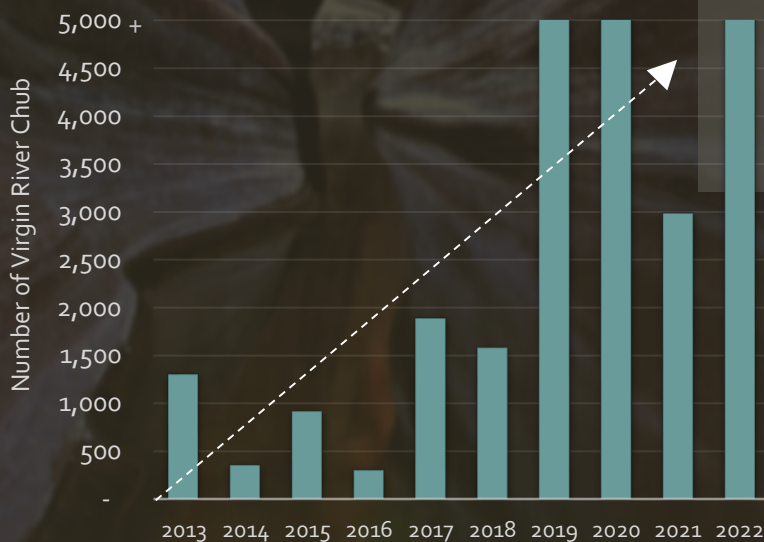
The **Virgin River** is a linear oasis that flows from its headwaters in southwestern Utah through Arizona and Nevada until it empties into Lake Mead. This river provides essential resources for both people and animals as it flows through an otherwise arid red-rock landscape located near the convergence of the Mojave Desert, Great Basin, and Colorado Plateau.

The **Virgin River Chub** (*Gila seminuda*) is a unique species found only in the Virgin River and Muddy River systems. Unfortunately, threats from **non-native fish species** and **habitat loss** caused Virgin River Chub populations to decline, and the fish was federally listed as an **endangered species** under the Endangered Species Act in 1989.

In response, local, state, and federal partners worked together to create the **Virgin River Program**. The partners began implementing conservation actions in 1998 to protect fish populations in the Virgin River, including **removing non-native species**, **improving streamflow**, **protecting habitat**, and establishing a robust **monitoring** program.

These efforts have been **successful**. Despite periods of extreme drought, wildfires, and flooding, Virgin River Chub populations are rebounding. Regular monitoring conducted by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources shows that **healthy, self-sustaining** chub populations have returned to the Virgin River.

## Virgin River Chub



Virgin River Program recovery actions have steadily improved Virgin River Chub populations.



UDWR biologists use a hoop net to monitor Virgin River Chub.

# VIRGIN RIVER CHUB CONSERVATION ACTIONS:

Protecting & restoring chub habitat throughout the Virgin River

Controlling & eradicating non-native fish species, especially the highly invasive Red Shiner

Maintaining genetic refuge at Wahweap Hatchery to supplement wild populations

Improving water quality & temperature in the river by providing water releases

Providing outreach & education for local communities & schools

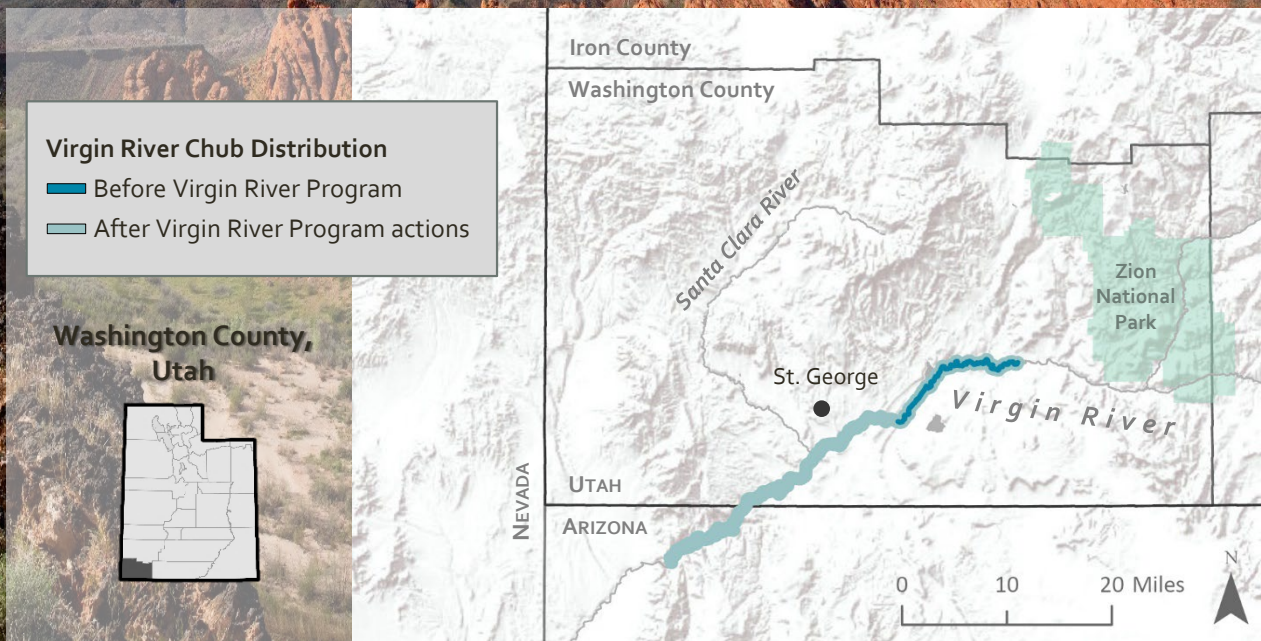
Monitoring Virgin River Chub population health to evaluate recovery actions.



## Virgin River Chub vs. Red Shiner

Non-native Red Shiner are the **primary threat** to native fish species in the Virgin River Basin. After over three decades of conservation work by the Virgin River Program and its partners, Red Shiner were **100%** eradicated from the Virgin River in Utah, restoring nearly 40 miles of Virgin River Chub habitat.

Red Shiner photograph © MO Dept. of Conservation



## Collaborative Conservation

By taking a proactive and strategic approach to conservation, the **Virgin River Program** has made substantial headway toward restoring self-sustaining Virgin River Chub populations. While active management will be necessary to address the multi-faceted threats this species faces, continuing **collaborative efforts** led by the Program will protect this endemic fish while accommodating the needs of water users in the Virgin River Basin.



For more information, please contact:

Virgin River Program  
(435) 673-3617

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
(435) 879-8694



The Nature Conservancy

