

WHITE SANDS PUPFISH



Above: Female White Sands Pupfish

Right: Habitat photo of Salt Creek attributable to R. Myers, WSMR



These photos have been approved for public release by White Sands Missile

Range; distribution unlimited. OPSEC review completed on October 26, 2004

White Sands pupfish (*Cyprinodon tularosa* Miller and Echelle 1975) is found only in the Tularosa Basin in New Mexico. It occurs in two springs and two streams on White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base. Because of the extremely limited distribution, White Sands pupfish is classified as Threatened by the State of New Mexico (19 NMAC 33.1).

White Sands pupfish is a small (about 2 inches), silvery fish. During spawning season, males develop iridescent blue coloration. White Sands pupfish lives in a variety of habitats, from deep spring pools to shallow streams. Temperature and salinity vary greatly across these habitats, which has led to micro-adaptations across the populations. White Sands pupfish is the only fish species native to the Tularosa Basin.

Concern for the security of this species led to the development of the Cooperative Agreement for Protection and Maintenance of White Sands Pupfish in 1994. The signatories, Holloman Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, White Sands National Monument, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, work cooperatively to ensure the persistence of this species by protecting habitat, monitoring the populations, and encouraging research on this unique fish.