



## Guide to Desert Fishes Council Records

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
<b>Creator:</b>	Desert Fishes Council
<b>Title:</b>	Desert Fishes Council Records
<b>ID:</b>	MS-00572
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1969-1988
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5.40 Cubic Feet (8 boxes)
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4.54 Linear Feet
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Desert Fishes Council Records (1969-1988) consist of resolutions, meeting minutes, symposium programs, agendas, and press releases of the Desert Fishes Council (DFC). The organization is devoted to the study and preservation of Southwestern desert fishes, notably the desert pupfish. The DFC records reflect efforts to bring the plight of desert fishes to the attention of academics and the public as well as highlight the worth of desert lands within the American environmental movement.

### Preferred Citation Note

Desert Fishes Council Records, 1969-1988. MS-00572. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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## Historical Background

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The impetus for the formation of the Desert Fishes Council (DFC) was regional governmental and university biologists jointly taking note of several key events that damaged the habitats of desert fishes. In 1962 federal agencies caused damage to desert fishes due to an effort to rid the Green River, a tributary of the Colorado River, and a new reservoir on it of "rough fish" and to improve sport fisheries. These actions impacted the native fish populations on more than 700 km of the river. Additionally, in the late 1960s, groundwater pumping for agricultural development in Ash

Meadows, Nevada, began to impact habitats of the endemic fishes of Ash Meadows and nearby Death Valley. Due to these two events, concerned biologists and management agency officials convened a 1969 symposium to address the threats to and protection and preservation of these unique fish. It was at this symposium that the Desert Fishes Council was created, though the designation was not formalized by vote until the second symposium in November 1971.

In the early 1970s, publicity by major national newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting agencies, as well as an increase in the number of scientific reports on desert fishes, increased the visibility of the eradication of desert fishes. Landmark federal legislation such as the passage of the Endangered Species Act in late 1973 also assisted the efforts of the DFC, notably in the 1976 ruling (*Cappert v. United States*) by the United States Supreme Court curtailing pumping near Devil's Hole. At a time when much of the attention and funding in governmental fish and game agencies focused on sport fishes, the DFC diligently pushed for inventories of non-game desert fishes to be created and for conservation of those fishes. Among the species for which the DFC has advocated are the Owens pupfish (*Cyprinodon radiosus*), Devils Hole pupfish (*Cyprinodon diabolis*), Warm Springs pupfish (*Cyprinodon nevadensis pectoralis*), and the Ash Meadows pupfish (*Cyprinodon nevadensis mionectes*).

The DFC continues to host annual symposiums to bring together federal officials and academic researchers interested in the conservation of non-game desert fishes. As the desert areas of the Southwest extend well into northern Mexico, the DFC also includes Mexican scientists and students in their work.

Source:

For more information on the history of the DFC, see W.L. Minckley and J.E. Deacon, eds. *Battle Against Extinction: Native Fish Management in the American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991).

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## Scope and Content Note

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The Desert Fishes Council Records (1969-1988) consist of resolutions, meeting minutes, symposium programs, agendas, and press releases of the Desert Fishes Council (DFC). The organization is devoted to the study and preservation of southwestern desert fishes, notably the desert pupfish. The DFC records reflect efforts to bring the plight of desert fishes to the attention of academics and the public as well as highlight the worth of desert lands within the American environmental movement.

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## Arrangement Note

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The material is arranged chronologically.

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## Administrative Information

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### Access Note

Collection is are open for research.

### Publication Rights

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### Acquisition Note

Materials were donated in 1990 by Phil Pister; accession number 2010-12.

### Processing Note

Material was processed by Megan Sharp Weatherly in 2010. In 2014, as part of a legacy finding aid conversion project, Ian M. Baldwin revised and enhanced the collection description to bring it into compliance with current professional standards and entered the information into ArchiveSpace. In 2019, Joyce Moore further revised the collection description and rehoued the collection.

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## Names and Subjects

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- Desert Fishes Council -- Nevada
- Environmentalism -- Nevada -- Las Vegas
- National Conservation Areas
- Desert Pupfish
- Death Valley (Calif. and Nev.)
- Ash Meadows Springs (Nev.)

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