

# Pirate perch (*Aphredoderus sayanus*)

## *Freshwater Fish Extirpated*

Global Rank: G5 (secure)

State Rank: SX (presumed extirpated)

### Description

The Pirate perch is a small fish reaching a maximum length of 14 cm and 4 years of age (fishbase.org). Like the Bowfin, the Pirate perch is the only living species in its family, Aphredoderidae. The Pirate perch has a compressed body with an arched back, and a rounded snout with a terminal or supraterritorial mouth. It has a single dorsal fin and iridescent silver-blue cheeks. Its anus is located behind the the head in the jugular (cnr.vt.edu).



### Behavior

The Pirate perch is a nocturnal fish, becoming active just after dark and peaking in activity at dawn (natureserve.org). Little has been directly observed in regards to the reproduction of the Pirate perch, but it is assumed to build a nest, which is guarded by both parents (Cooper 1983). The Pirate perch live births it's young and broods them in its gill chambers (fishbase.org).

### Diet

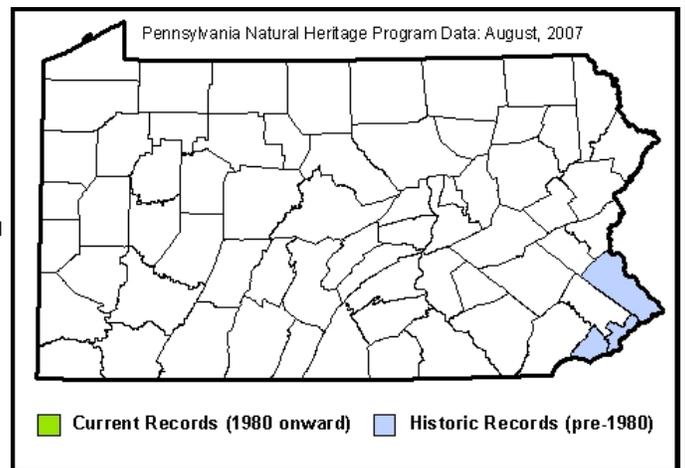
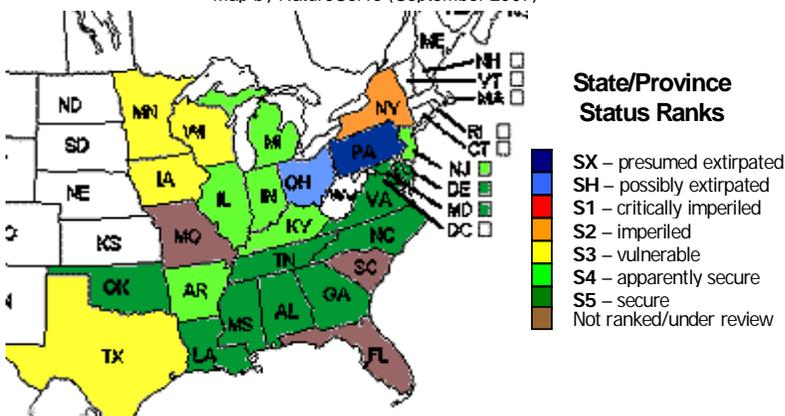
Although the Pirate perch was named because of its strictly piscivorous habits when in aquaria, in the wild it primarily eats aquatic insects (Cooper 1983).

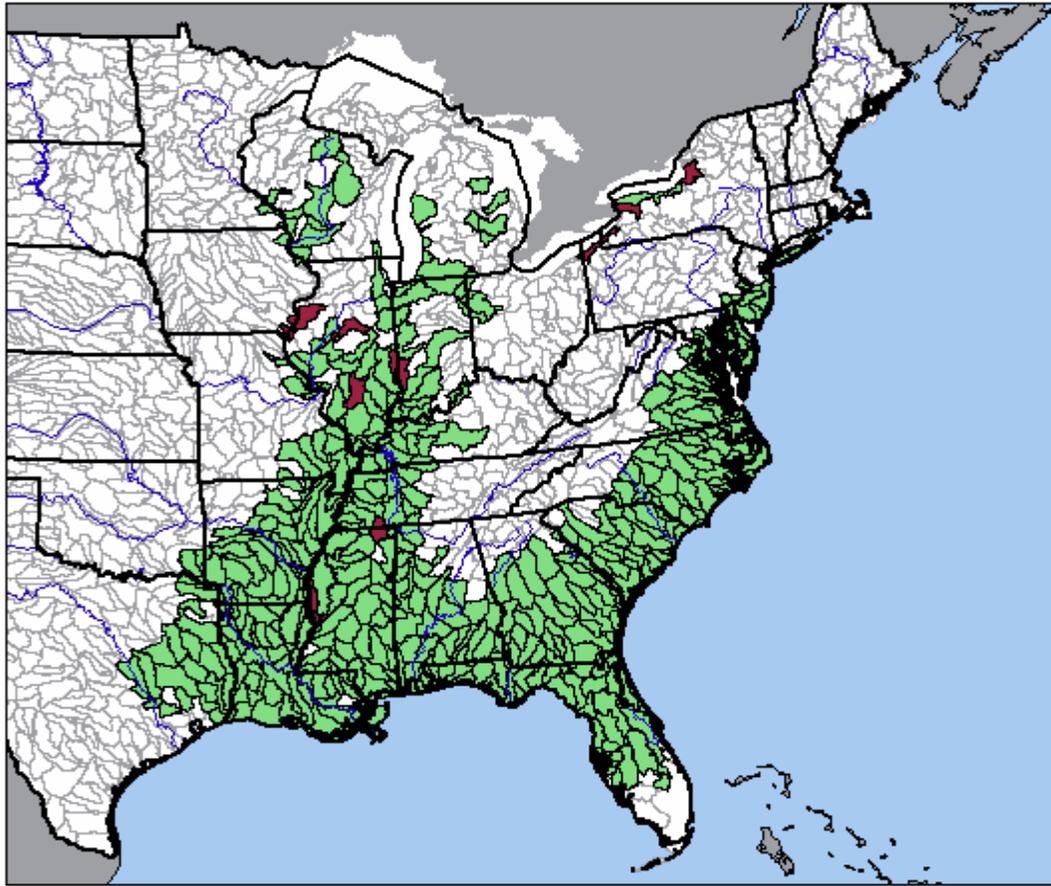
### Threats and Protection Needs

Pirate perch populations are doing well in most of their range. Their range has been historically very limited in Pennsylvania and as a result there is little information on threats and protection needs. The pirate perch is Pennsylvania extirpated, as mentioned, the pirate perch is found elsewhere, often in abundance, but it has disappeared from Pennsylvania since the 1600's (naturalheritage.state.pa.us).

### North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (September 2007)





*Aphredoderus sayanus*  
Pirate Perch

Map created June 2003



## Habitat

The Pirate perch has an extended distribution in lowland streams and ponds south along the Atlantic Coast from Long Island to Florida, up into the Mississippi River drainage to Minnesota, and into parts of the Great Lakes (Cooper 1983). The Pirate perch is presumed extirpated from Pennsylvania (natureserve.org). But, it was formerly found below the Fall Line in southeastern Pennsylvania. It is usually found in abundant vegetation or areas of debris in quiet backwaters of low gradient streams (Cooper 1983).

## References

- Cooper, Edwin L. Fishes of Pennsylvania and the Northeastern United States. The Pennsylvania State University Press and University Park and London. 1983
- Fishbase.org, P.J.P 1985. FishBase, MC P.O. Box 2631, 0718 Makati, Philippines.
- NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: September 4, 2007 ).
- The Virtual Aquarium. Virginia Tech. <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/efish/families/aphredoderidae.html>



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program