

Swamp darter (*Etheostoma fusiforme*)

Freshwater Fish Extirpated

Global Rank: G4 (apparently secure)

State Rank: SX (presumed extirpated)

Description

The swamp darter is a small species and reaches a maximum size of 5 cm (natureserve.org). Its eyes are positioned near the top of its head. It has a rounded tail and the dorsal and tail fin have red coloring. Its body is elongate and compressed. Its nose is rounded and its mouth is short and terminal. Its body is an olive-brown with dark blotches and speckles (cnr.vt.edu).



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Behavior

Unguarded, adhesive eggs are deposited individually on the stems of aquatic vegetation after a period of courtship, which usually occurs in dense weed beds (Cooper 1983). The swamp darter will usually spawn between March and June, depending on locality (natureserve.org).

Diet

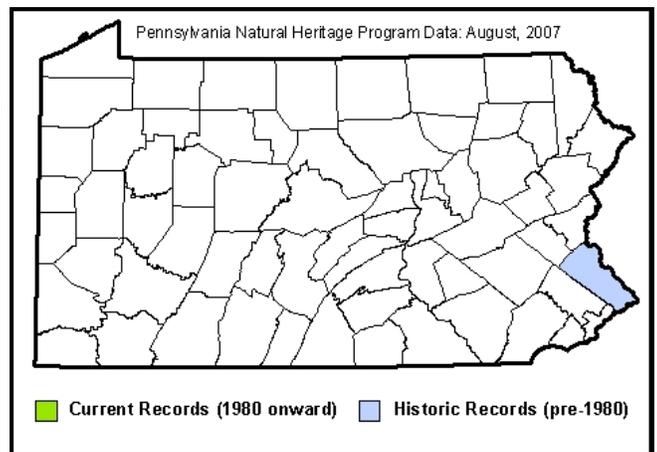
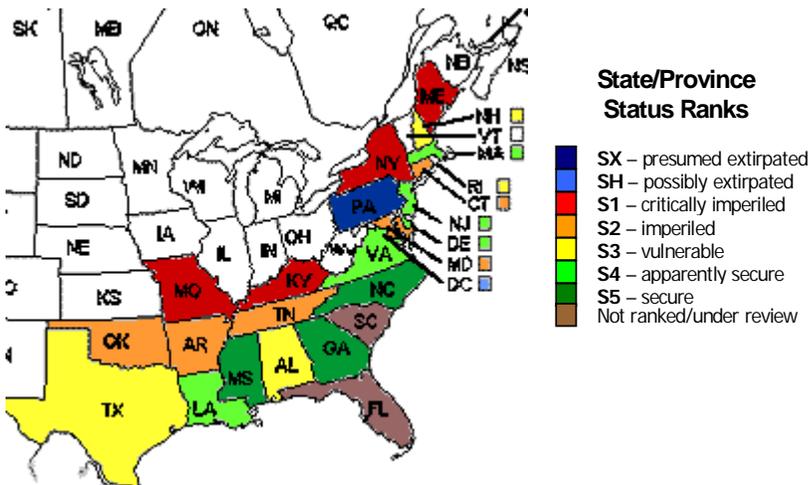
Fly larvae, amphipods, and other small crustaceans and insects make up the diet of the swamp darter (natureserve.org). Zooplankton has been found in the stomach of a few specimens (Cooper 1983).

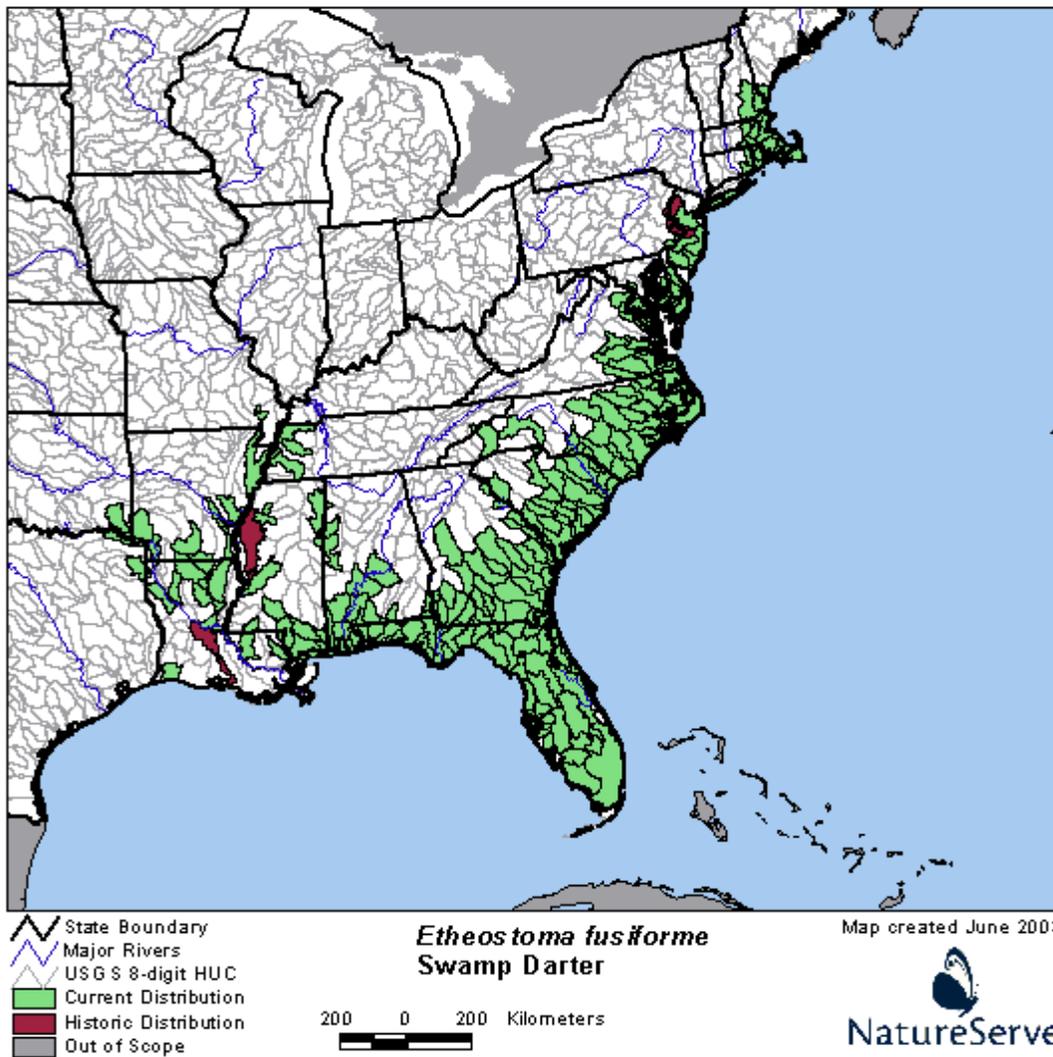
Threats and Protection Needs

The swamp darter is Pennsylvania Extirpated (naturalheritage.state.pa.us). In the 1920's, this species was collected from Mill Creek near Bristol, Pennsylvania, but it has not been captured more recently. Habitat destruction and modification are presumed to play a large role in this species Pennsylvania demise. Extensive development of suitable habitat had now made it difficult to even locate the small pond and swamp habitats for the swamp darter. It does, however, continue to be abundant in acid water ponds in nearby New Jersey Pine Barrens. This species is very tolerant of acid conditions and low dissolved oxygen levels (Cooper 1983).

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (September 2007)





Habitat

This hardy species can be found from southern Maine down the Atlantic Coast to Tennessee and into the Mississippi drainage. It is tolerant of acidic waters, low dissolved oxygen, and if found in the sluggish waters of swamps, ponds, and rivers (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. 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).
- Virtual Aquarium, the. Virginia Tech College of Natural Resources. <http://www.efish/families/bandedsunfish.html>. Accessed: 9/08/2005.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program