

Ohio Lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon bdellium*)

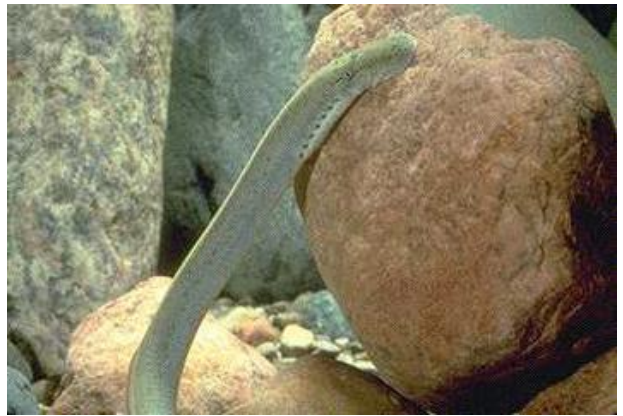
Pennsylvania Candidate Species

State rank: S2 (imperiled), Global rank: G3G4 – (vulnerable to apparently secure)

What it looks like:

Lampreys are a group of boneless, jawless fish found in fresh and salt waters throughout the world. Their blind larvae, called an *ammocoetes*, live by filtering microorganisms from the water, but the eel-like adults are often parasites, using their toothed oral discs to attach to large fish and rasping holes in their hosts' sides.

The Ohio lamprey, *Ichthyomyzon bdellium*, is a parasitic species found throughout the Ohio River drainage. Its single dorsal fin is notched, and it is blue to gray above with a lighter, mottled underside. Its oral disc is lined with sharp, well-developed teeth, and as wide or wider than its head when expanded. A black lateral line runs down each side from head to tail.



Ohio DNR Native Fish Conservancy, Animal Diversity Web

Where it is found:

Ohio lamprey adults are found in medium to large rivers; they lay their eggs in nests constructed in gravel streambeds. The ammocoete larvae burrow into the muddy bottoms of tributary streams to feed by filtration. This species remains in larval form for about four years, and lives for two more as an adult.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

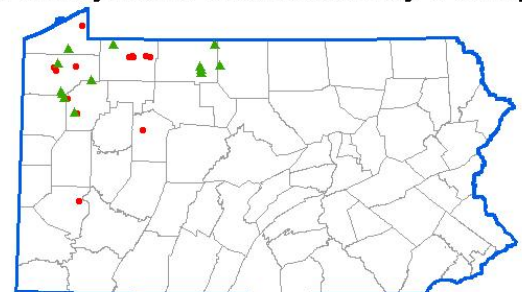
Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



State/Province Status Ranks

■ SX	– presumed extirpated
■ SH	– possibly extirpated
■ S1	– critically imperiled
■ S2	– imperiled
■ S3	– vulnerable
■ S4	– apparently secure
■ S5	– secure
■	Not ranked/under review

Pennsylvania Distribution by County



▲ current data • records > 30 years old (1975)
Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program data 2005

Why it is rare:

Ohio lampreys are widespread throughout their range, but they are known only from scattered occurrences. NatureServe suggests that more intensive sampling would reveal previously undocumented occurrences.

Conservation considerations:

Because its larval state is a filter-feeder, the Ohio lamprey is sensitive to changes in water chemistry

and quality. Environmental changes that adversely affect its host fish populations will also affect the lamprey; and human-built barriers may cut lampreys off from spawning grounds.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program



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References

- Branson BA. 1970. "Measurements, counts, and observations on four lamprey species from Kentucky (*Ichthyomyzon*, *Lampetra*, and *Entosphenus*)." *American Midland Naturalist*, 84(1): 243-7.
- "*Ichthyomyzon bdellium*." Animal Diversity Web [web application]. University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Available at http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Ichthyomyzon_bdellium.html. Accessed 22 April 2005.
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