

Longnose sucker (*Catostomus catostomus*)

Pennsylvania Endangered

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G5 (secure)

What it looks like:

The longnose sucker has a cylindrical body with a distinctive horizontal mouth and a long, rounded snout. Its color varies from olive to gray above and white or cream below; breeding males are darker, and females may be green to gold above. Both sexes have red lateral stripes.

Where it lives:

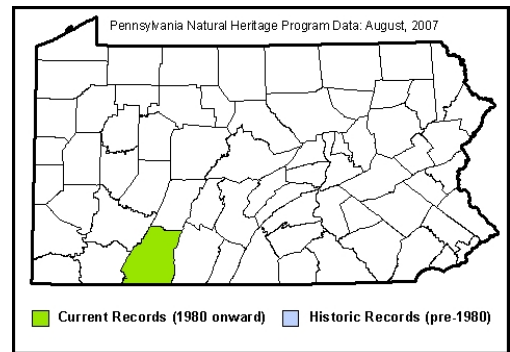
Longnose suckers prefer cold, clear waters, living on the bottom of streams and lakes, and down to depths of 180 meters in the Great Lakes. They feed on aquatic insects, mainly benthic species; a study of longnose suckers taken from the Missouri River in North Dakota found that the largest portion of their stomach contents was made up of midge larvae.

Why it is rare:

The longnose is the most widespread sucker species in North America, ranging from coast to coast and north into Canada. Pennsylvania is at the southern edge of the species' range, and the populations documented here, mainly in the Youghiogheny River system, may represent relicts from when glacial action altered the river northward course to connect it with the Ohio River drainage. This population has suffered from the effects of severe acidification caused by mine drainage.

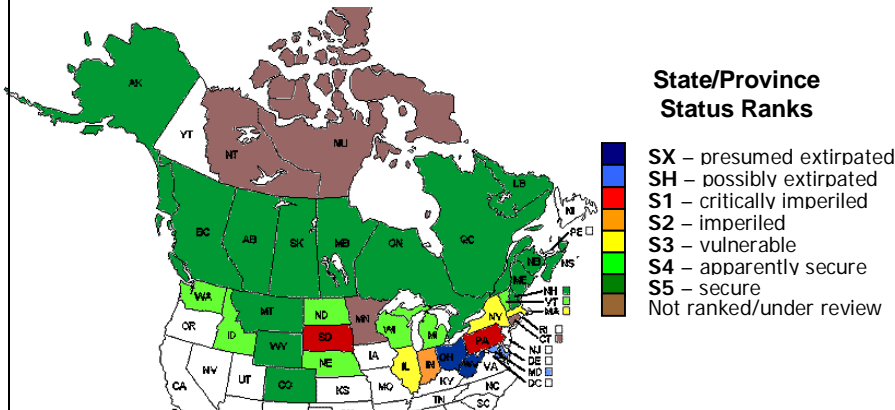


Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1998



North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Conservation considerations:

The longnose sucker's requirement for cold, clear water makes it particularly sensitive to human alteration of streamflow and turbidity. It may have mixed reactions to dam construction; in a study of Missouri River fish species, the turbid conditions upstream of a dam made longnose suckers less abundant, but the clear conditions downstream allowed them to become one of the dominant species. Because they feed on aquatic insects, suckers are potentially very sensitive to water pollution, whether from point sources like paper mills and municipal sewage outfalls or non-point sources like fertilizer runoff from residential lawns or agricultural fields.

References:

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- Hendricks ML, JR Stauffer, Jr., and CH Hocutt. 1983. "The zoogeography of the fishes of the Youghiogheny River system, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and West Virginia." *American Midland Naturalist*, 110(1): 145-64.
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Saving the places