

Blackbanded sunfish (*Enneacanthus chaetodon*)

Freshwater Fish Extirpated

Global Rank: G4 (apparently secure)
State Rank: SX (presumed extirpated)

Description

The blackbanded sunfish is small, growing to a maximum length of 10 cm (fishbase.org). It has an extremely compressed, deep body with a small mouth. There are six black bars on each side, the first running through the eye, and the sixth on the caudal peduncle. Its dorsal, anal, and caudal fins are black-mottled. Its sides have yellow flecks and its ear flap has a black spot. The dorsal fin usually has 10 spines and 11-12 rays with the middle spine as the longest (natureserve.org).



© Noel Burkhead & Virginia Dept of Game and Inland Fisheries (Fishes of Virginia).
Natureserve.org

Behavior

The spawning behavior for this sunfish is similar to other centrarchids except that the blackbanded sunfish has a site preference for weed beds. The nest is prepared by the male (Cooper 1983). Spawning occurs in the spring and there is no parental care of the eggs. Although the eggs are deposited in a nest, they are sufficiently buoyant to be carried away from the substrate by water currents.

Diet

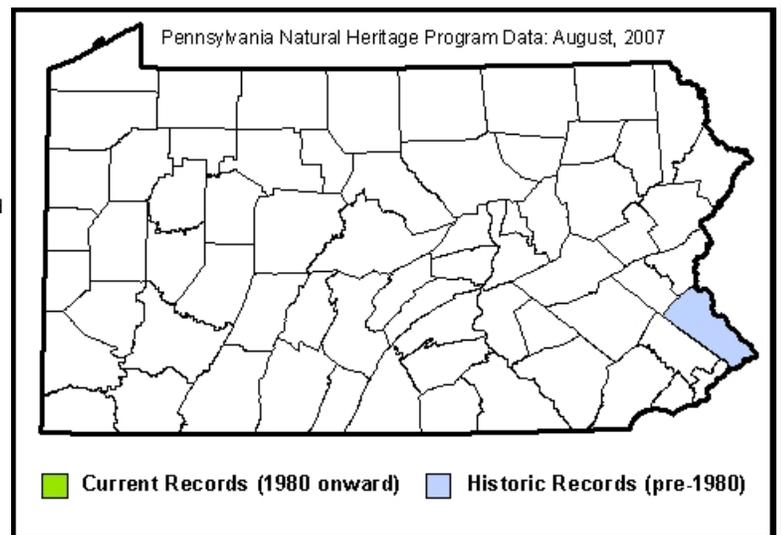
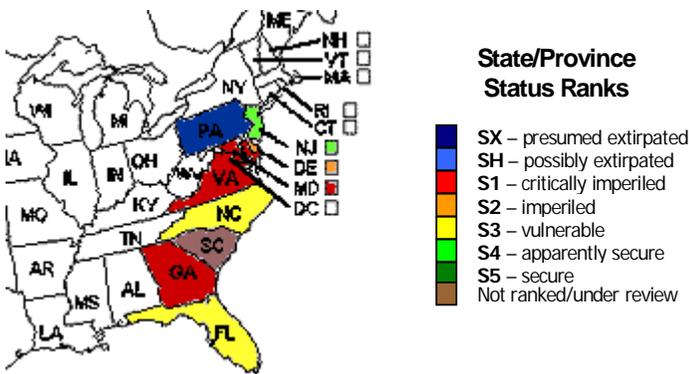
In most locations midge larvae are the predominant food items. The blackbanded sunfish also consumes a wide variety of zooplankton, aquatic insects, and crustaceans (Cooper 1983).

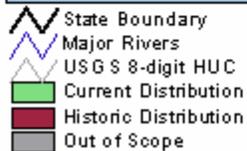
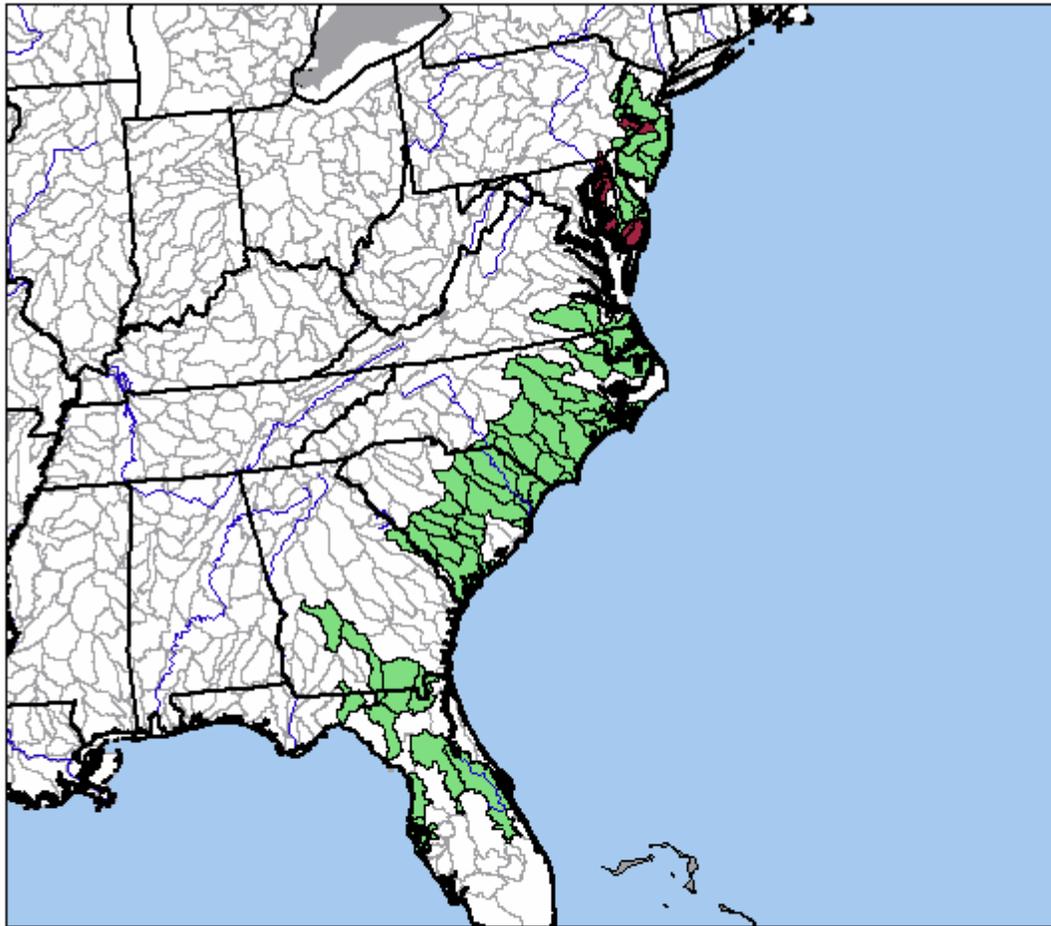
Threats and Protection Needs

The blackbanded sunfish is critically imperiled and vulnerable in much of its range along the Atlantic. Drying of ponds and swamps as well as contamination of water by pesticides is a major threat to survival. It is also noted that the taking of individuals for aquariums poses a threat for populations in Virginia (natureserve.org). This sunfish is Pennsylvania extirpated and is not currently listed federally (naturalheritage.state.pa.us).

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)





Enneacanthus chaetodon
Blackbanded Sunfish

Map created June 2003



Habitat

There are two recognized subspecies of the blackbanded sunfish along the Atlantic Coast from New Jersey to Florida. This sunfish is largely restricted to acidic waters in weedy ponds and sluggish streams. In Pennsylvania, there are old records of its occurrence in the lower Delaware Valley below the Fall Line, but recent attempts have failed to collect the fish (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.
- Pennsylvania National Heritage Program: information on conservation of biodiversity[web application]. Version 1.0.6.2. Website: <http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us/>. Accessed: 9/08/2005.
- 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).