

Spotted Darter (*Etheostoma maculatum*)

Pennsylvania Threatened Fish Species

State Rank: S2 (imperiled) Global Rank: G2 (imperiled)

Identification

This darter reaches a maximum length of 2 3/4 inches. The snout is sharp-pointed and narrow, the gill cover scaled, and the tail fin somewhat rounded. The body is variably dusky with small red spots scattered over the sides. Dark horizontal bands may be found on the hind portion of the sides. The margins of the dorsal, tail and anal fins are unmarked, but these fins are dusky (males) or spotted (females) basally.

Biology-Natural History

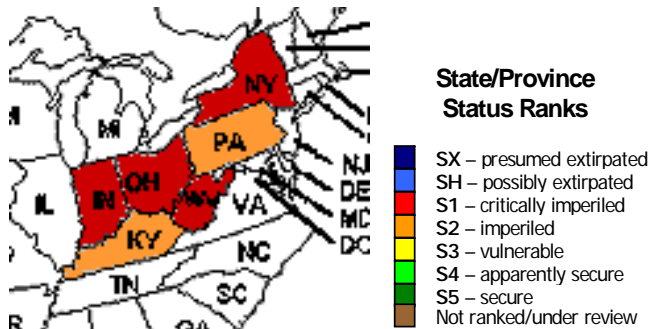
In June, males defend territories about a yard apart at the head of deep, swift large stream riffles. The space beneath larger rocks making up a gravel-rubble bottom is selected as the site for spawning. Eggs are deposited in small, wedge-shaped batches on the underside of rocks during two to four spawnings. Some hatchlings may be consumed by adults; otherwise adults and young feed heavily on small aquatic insect larvae.



Photo Credit: Rob Criswell

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Habitat

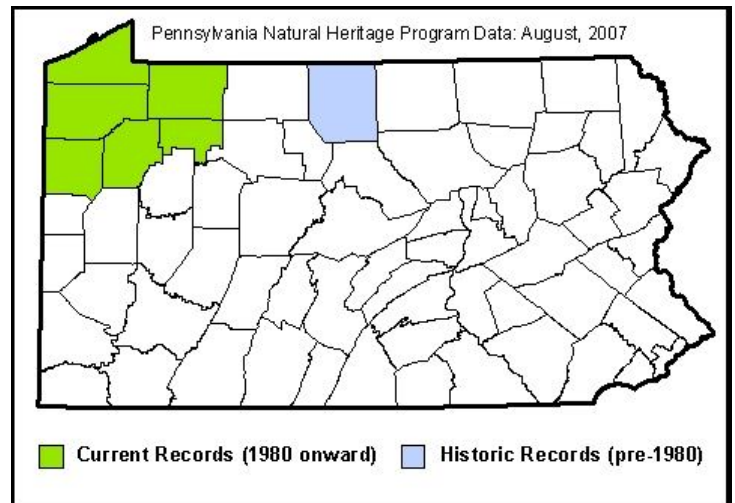
This species requires large unpolluted streams, spending most of its time in deep riffles, or pools just downstream, where a gravel-rubble bottom predominates, and bottom current velocity is low.

Reasons for Being Threatened

The spotted darter is known in Pennsylvania only from the upper Allegheny River and French Creek. This disjunct locality is one of only three widely separated constituting its known distribution.

Management Practices

Strict watershed management is required to safeguard against the physical and chemical deterioration of the upper Allegheny River system. As the quality of this habitat goes, so go the species dependent upon it. The spotted darter and other animals associated with it in this habitat are excellent, sensitive barometers of the health of this stream system.



References:

- NatureServe. 2007. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application]. Version 6.2. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: August 21, 2007).



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

Fact Sheet adapted from: Felbaum, Mitchell, et al. Endangered and Threatened Species of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA: Wild Resource Conservation Fund, 1995.

