

Southern redbelly dace (*Phoxinus erythrogaster*)

Pennsylvania Threatened

Global Rank: G5 (secure)

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled)

Description

The southern redbelly dace has a reported maximum age of 3 years and a maximum length of 9.1 cm (fishbase.org). It has a cream colored lateral band that is layered between dark bands. The top dark band starts at the edge of the gill cover and turns into a series of spots at the base of the tail. The lower band encircles the snout and ends at the tail. Black dots are present along the back before the dorsal fin. Its scales are minute (iowadnr.com).



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Behavior

Breeding males will develop a striking scarlet stripe along their lower sides during the late May, early June spawning season. A single female will spawn with a pair of males on sandy or pebbly riffles in contact with the bottom, over the nest of a hornyhead chub. In large congregations of spawning, up to 4 males were observed spawning in a single group (Cooper 1983). There is no nest guarding in this species.

Diet

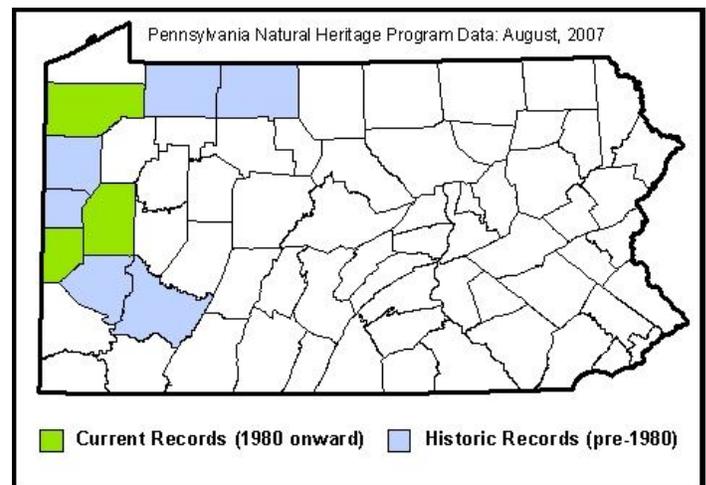
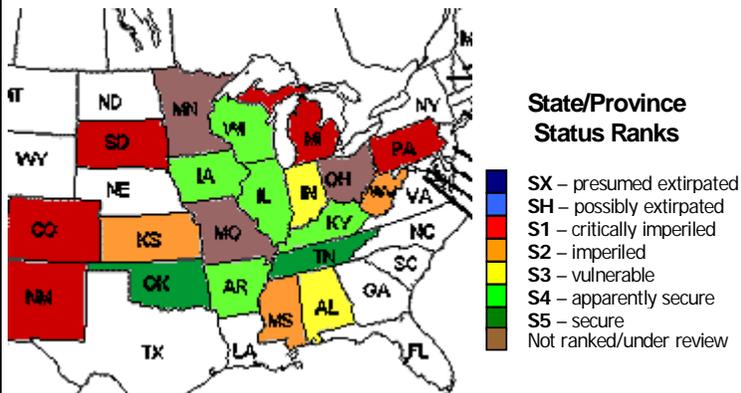
This species is observed to eat less plant material than its relative, the northern redbelly dace (Cooper 1983). Its major diet is algae and detritus; it will also take aquatic invertebrates, especially chironomids (natureserve.org)

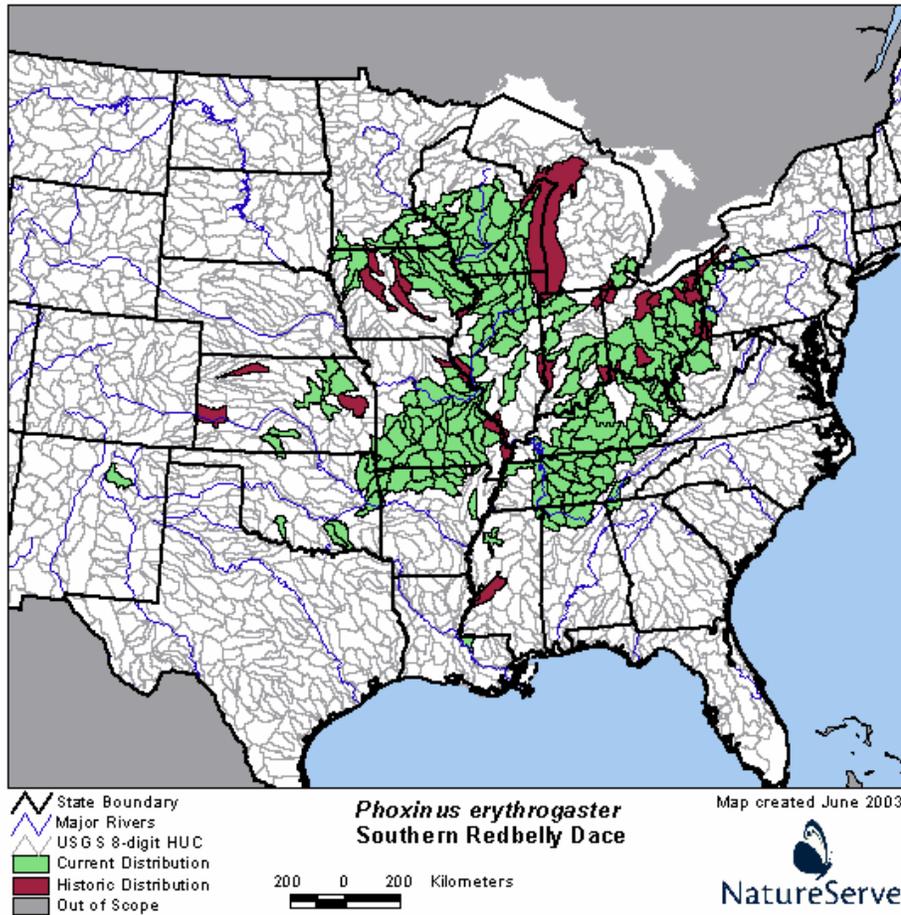
Threats and Protection Needs

This species is globally secure but critically imperiled in Pennsylvania; it is ranked Pennsylvania Threatened (naturalheritage.state.pa.us.) Despite being critically imperiled in many of the states in which it is found, including Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and South Dakota, there is little data available data on threats to the species of protection needs (natureserve.org).

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (September 2007)





Habitat

The southern redbelly dace is found in headwaters and upland creeks (often spring-fed) in generally clear water. It has been found to school under bank overhangs among tree roots in clear ponds with muck bottoms and also over gravel, rubble or sand. It is found in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins from New York to Southern Minnesota, south to Tennessee and Alabama. There are isolated populations in the lower Mississippi river basin as well as Colorado and New Mexico (natureserve.org).

References

- Cooper, Edwin L. Fishes of Pennsylvania and the Northeastern United States. The Pennsylvania State University Press and University Park and London. 1983
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Fish and Fishing. <http://www.iowadnr.com/fish/iafish/srdcard.html>. Accessed: 9/15/05.
- 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).



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program