

Banded sunfish (*Enneacanthus obesus*)

Freshwater Fish Pennsylvania Endangered

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled)

Global Rank: G4 (apparently secure)

Description

The banded sunfish is similar to the blackbanded sunfish and has very compressed and deep body. Its sides are iridescent and dark colored. There are dark bands on its side and nuptial males and females will develop blue specks on their bodies. Its mouth is upturned and its pectoral and tail fins are rounded (cnr.vt.edu). It will grow to an approximate length of 9.5 cm (fishbase.org).



Behavior

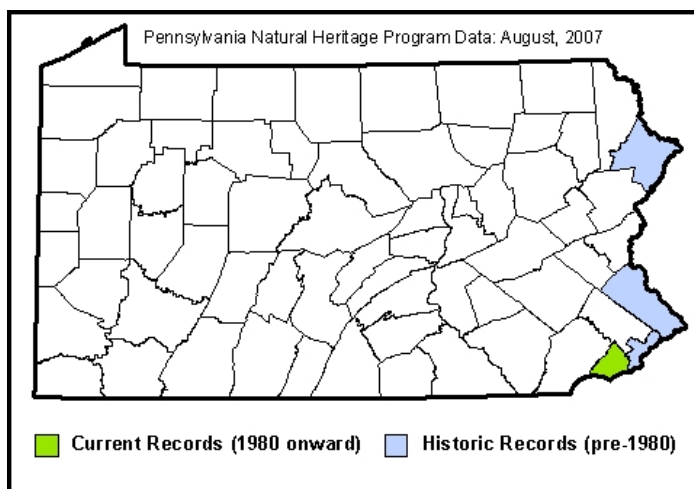
Spawning occurs April through July for this sunfish and some females are known to spawn after one year. The male will construct a nest in gravel or sand and the eggs will be laid on plants or the bottom (cnr.vt.edu). The banded sunfish does not guard its eggs its buoyant eggs and the eggs eventually drift in the water column from the nest. The banded sunfish have a very restricted home range and will not swim great distances (Cooper 1983).

Diet

Diet studies on this fish are limited, but food is assumed to be similar to other sympatric sunfishes such as the blue-spotted and blackbanded sunfish (Cooper 1983). More recent sources indicate a diet of insects and microcrustaceans (cnr.vt.edu).

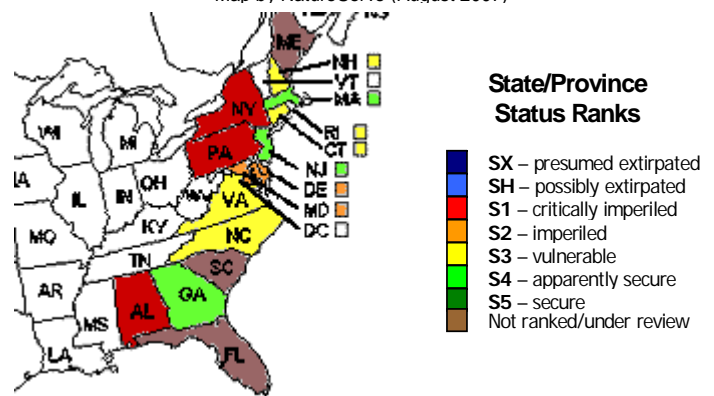
Threats and Protection Needs

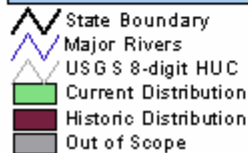
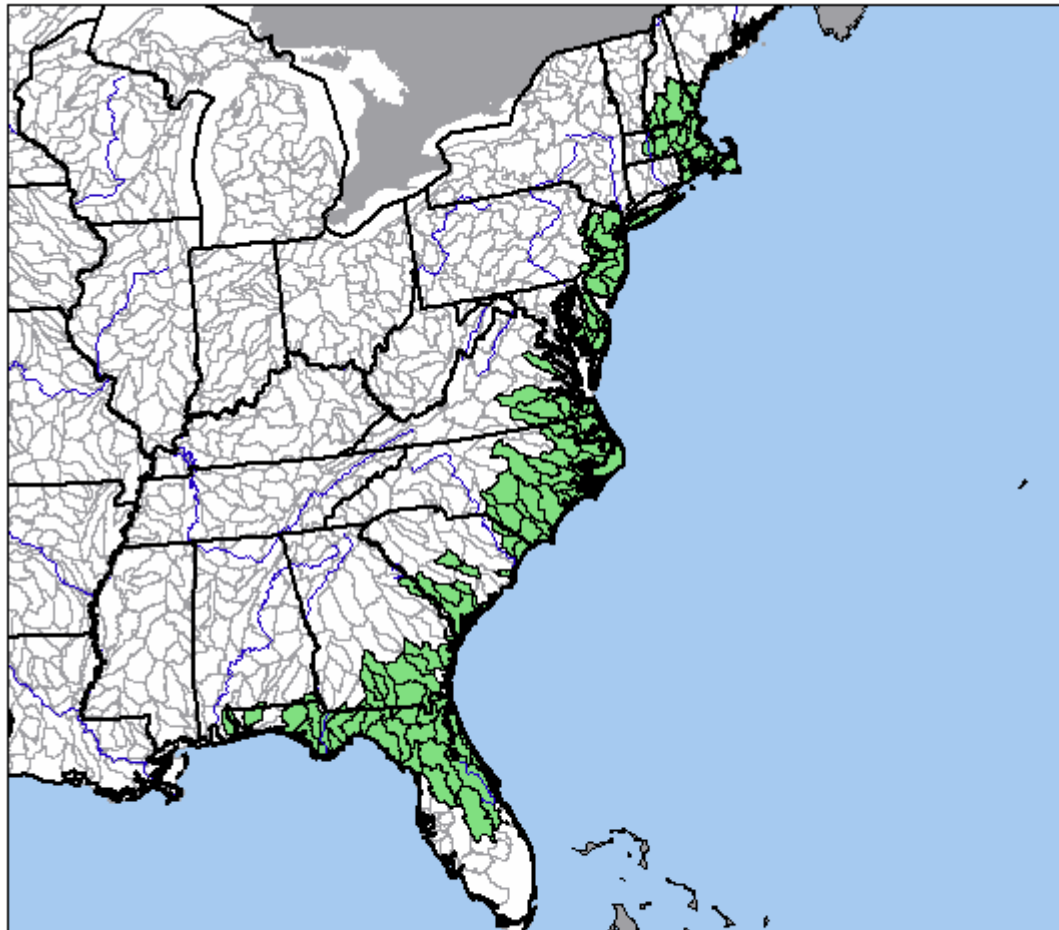
The banded sunfish is rare in Pennsylvania and known to be present only in the lower Delaware River watershed, near Philadelphia (Steiner 2000). The species is critically imperiled in Pennsylvania and listed as endangered in the state. There is no federal listing for the species (naturalheritage.state.pa.us). Although the banded sunfish is critically imperiled in some of its range (Alabama, New York, and Pennsylvania), and imperiled in others (Maryland and Delaware), it is apparently secure in states from Georgia to North Carolina to Massachusetts and is said to be globally common (natureserve.org). For this reason, there is little available data on protection needs.



North American State/Province Conservation Status

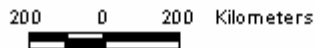
Map by NatureServe (August 2007)





Enneacanthus obesus
Banded Sunfish

Map created June 2003



Habitat

The banded sunfish can be found in the Atlantic coastal region from New Hampshire south to central Florida. It is found in small ponds and backwaters of creeks to small and large rivers and boggy brooks over sand or mud in sluggish, acidic, heavily vegetated waters (natureserve.org).

References



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

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- 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).
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