

Eastern Sand Darter (*Ammocrypta pellucida*)

Pennsylvania Endangered Fish Species

State Rank: S1 (critically imperiled) Global Rank: G3 (vulnerable)

Identification

The sand darter is a small member of the Perch Family, averaging 2 1/2 inches in length. Adults are pale yellow above and silvery below, with a row of green spots along the top and sides. The flesh has a somewhat transparent quality.

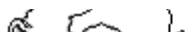


Biology-Natural History

Sand darters spawn from early June until late July in the Ohio River basin, somewhat later in the Great Lakes. The young are white or silvery and, like the adults, feed primarily on small insect larvae or other invertebrates. Sand darters conceal themselves in sand, with only their eyes and snout protruding, and dart out to capture prey.

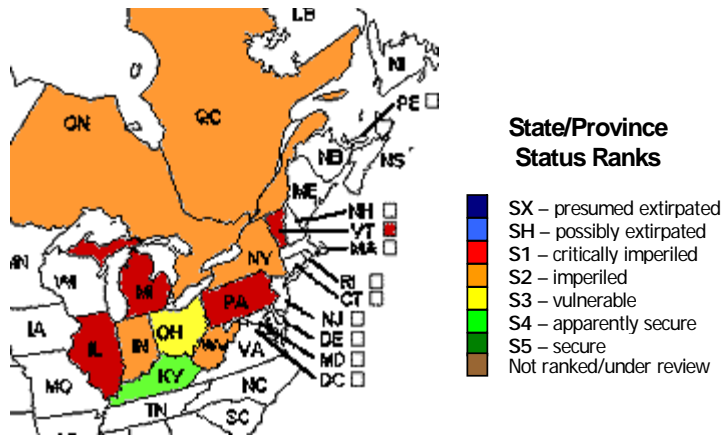
Preferred Habitat

Sand darters are found in streams ranging in size from small creeks to large rivers, with a bottom of sand, silt, mud or gravel, and in the wave-protected sandy beaches of Lake Erie. Sandy raceways of large rivers are preferred.



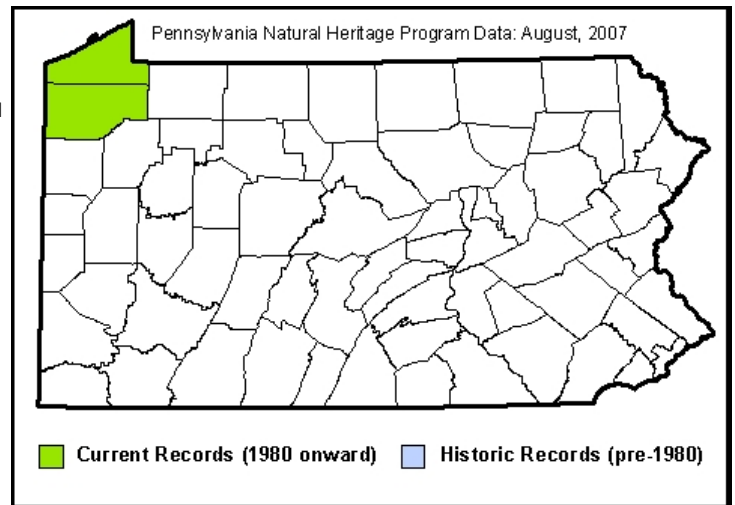
North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Reasons for Being Endangered

Agricultural and industrial pollution, especially siltation, have rendered many areas unsuitable for sand darters. Dam construction and dredging have also eliminated suitable habitat for them.



Management Practices

As a threatened species, sand darters are protected by regulations against taking, selling, importation or exportation. One of the streams where it exists is designated as an exceptional quality water by the Department of Environmental Protection.

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).



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

