

Tippecanoe Darter (*Etheostoma tippecanoe*)

Pennsylvania Threatened Fish Species

State Rank: S2 (imperiled) Global Rank: G3G4 (vulnerable)

Identification

The tippecanoe darter is one of our smallest fishes, reaching a length of only 1 1/3 inches. The body and fins of males are basically dusky, with scattered dark spots and vertical banding rearward; the fins in both sexes are marginally pale, but basally spotted in the female. The top of the head between the eyes is very dark. Breeding males develop a bright orange throat, belly and fin margins. The scales along the midline of each side bearing sensory pores (lateral line scales) end at about the level of the soft dorsal fin front margin. The belly bears very few scales.



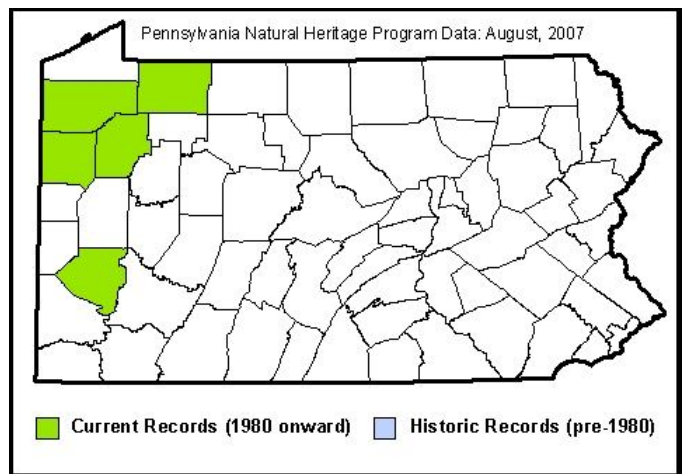
Photo Credit: Rob Criswell

Biology-Natural History

Males apparently establish territories in late spring to early summer within riffle areas. Brightly colored males and spent females were found in Kentucky in August. This species is apparently more sensitive to turbidity than other darters. The number of individuals in a population varies greatly from year to year, depending on the survival of the young. In one study, adult males lived up to three years, females two.

Habitat

This little darter prefers riffle areas four to 20 inches deep, in clean rivers and large creeks with a bottom of pea-sized, clean gravel and a high bottom current velocity.

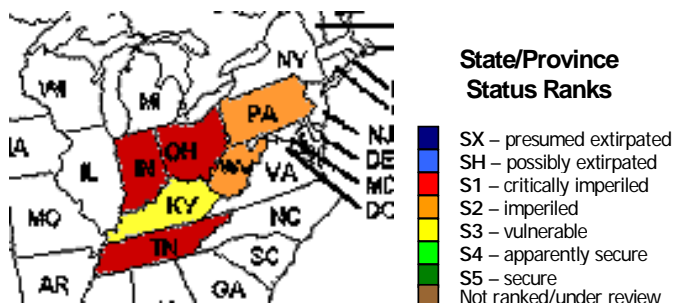


Reason for Being Threatened

The tippecanoe darter has a distribution similar to that of the spotted darter, i.e., a disjunct upper Allegheny River and French Creek occurrence, and a separate Kentucky-Green-Cumberland and Tennessee River basins occurrence.

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Management Practices

As the tippecanoe darter is apparently more sensitive to changes in turbidity, land-use practices contributing to increased siltation should not be permitted. Strict watershed management is required to safeguard against the physical and chemical deterioration of the upper Allegheny River system. This darter and other animals associated with it in this habitat are excellent 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).

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

