

Gilt Darter (*Percina evides*)

Pennsylvania Threatened Fish Species

State Rank: S1S2 (critically imperiled to imperiled) Global Rank: G4 (apparently secure)

Identification

The gilt darter attains a maximum length of 3 1/2 inches. The robust body is dark olive above, shading to lighter yellow-green on the sides and belly. Seven to nine dark blotches above join to a series of similar blotches along each side to form vertical bands. A bar of dark color extends downward from each eye. Breeding males are adorned with bright orange-red to yellow and blue-green markings on the head, sides, lower body and first dorsal fin. The midline of the belly in males bears a row of large, spiny scales.



Biology-Natural History

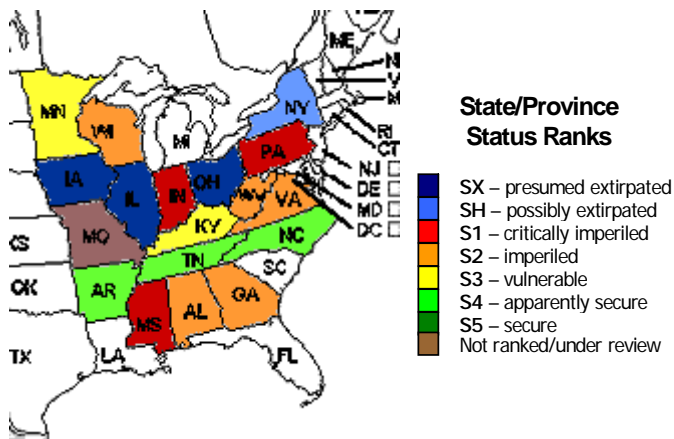
Little is known about this species. Spawning apparently takes place in deep riffles during the spring. Brightly colored males have been found well into the summer months within its Southern and Midwestern range.

Habitat

Gilt darters require clean rivers, whether small or large, with moderate to fast current, flowing over gravel-rubble bottoms. It prefers the middle and lower parts of riffles and clean pools.

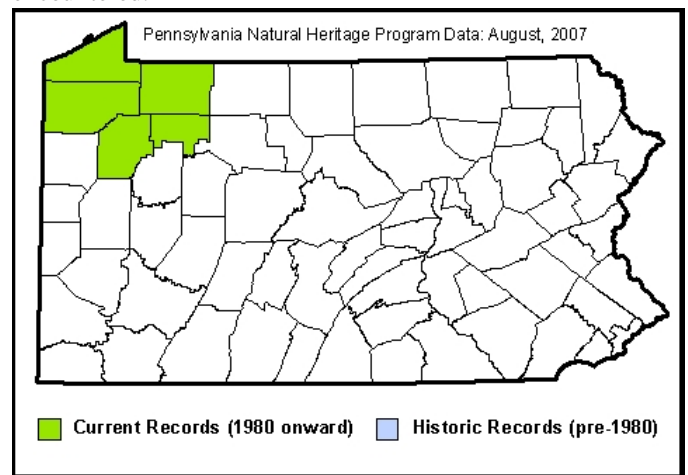
North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (August 2007)



Reason for Being Threatened

The species is known in Pennsylvania only from the upper Allegheny River, where it has persisted for many years. This locality is the smallest of four other disconnected areas in the upper Mississippi River basin, the Ozark region, Indiana, and major southern tributaries of the Ohio River. It seems to be declining throughout its range. Though associated with a number of other darter species, relatively few individuals of the gilt darter are encountered.



Management Practices

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.

