

LEAST BROOK LAMPREY (*Lampetra aepyptera*)

Freshwater Fish Species of Concern

State Rank: S3 (vulnerable) Global Rank: G4 (apparently secure)

Description

The least brook lamprey has an eel-shaped body with a deeply notched dorsal fin which separates it into two distinct fins. The mouth is disc-shaped and surrounded by teeth. Adults are dark and tan above and lighter below. During spawning, adults become blue-black in color (dnr.state.oh.us.). The least brook lamprey reaches a length of 18 cm and the maximum reported age is 8 years (fishbase.org)



© Noel Burkhead. Natureserve.org

Behavior

The least brook lamprey is a non-parasitic species that spawns in late winter or spring. The larval stage lasts about 5-6 years. Larvae metamorphose in late summer. Adults over-winter, spawn, and then die. The brood is hidden in nests in gravelly riffles and the eggs are not guarded (natureserve.org).

Diet

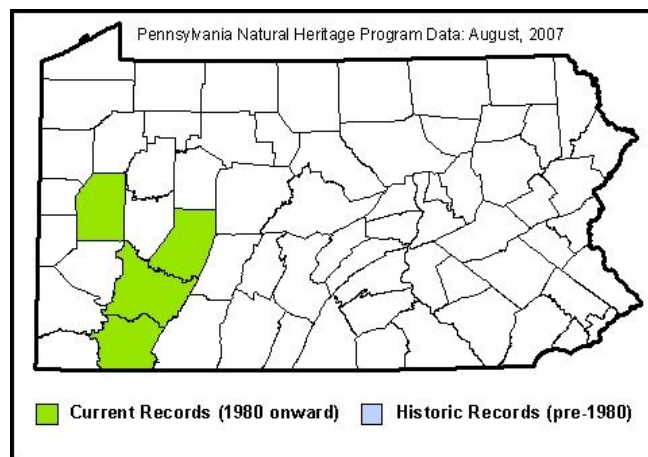
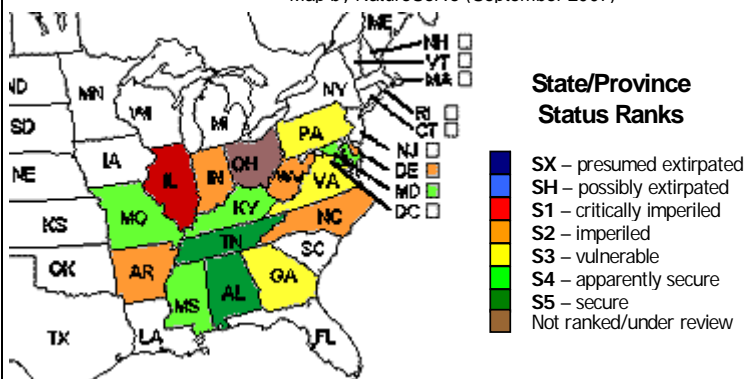
The least brook lamprey is herbivorous in its immature stages and feeds on minute drifting microscopic organic material. In its adult stage, the least brook lamprey does not feed (natureserve.org).

Threats and Protection Needs

The least brook lamprey is a Candidate Rare species in Pennsylvania. The species is restricted to the southern stretches of the Susquehanna watersheds and the Ohio watershed (naturalheritage.state.pa.us). Little available data is out on threats and protection needs for the least brook lamprey. Perhaps some of this is due to the sea lamprey and the intensive efforts to eradicate it from its non-native range. Unlike the least brook lamprey, the sea lamprey is a parasitic lamprey that devastates native fish populations and the similarity between the species

North American State/Province Conservation Status

Map by NatureServe (September 2007)



Habitat

The least brook lamprey prefers clean, clear gravel riffles and runs of creeks and small rivers. Larvae burrow in the bottom of quiet waters. They are found along the Atlantic Slope from the Susquehanna River drainage in southeastern Pennsylvania to North Carolina. In the Mississippi basin they are found from southwestern Pennsylvania to south-central Missouri and northern Arkansas, south to northern Alabama to Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi.

References



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

- Cooper, Edwin L. Fishes of Pennsylvania and the Northeastern United States. The Pennsylvania State University Press and University Park and London. 1983
- Fishbase.org. FishBase, MC P.O. Box 2631, 0718 Makati, Philippines.
- 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).
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Division of Wildlife. Columbus Ohio. 2005. <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/wildlife/Fishing/aquanotes-fishid/lbrampiry.htm>. Accessed 9/12/2005.