

Species Status Assessment

Class: Actinopterygii
Family: Percidae
Scientific Name: *Percina evides*
Common Name: Gilt darter

Species synopsis:

The gilt darter is a small freshwater fish that can grow up to 3 inches long. Its preferred habitat is riffles in streams or rivers (NYSDEC 2013). It is a widely distributed species across the United States, occurring as far west as Minnesota and as far south as Mississippi (NatureServe 2012). Populations in the Northeast are in decline (NYSDEC 2013). It has only been found once in New York in 1937 in the Allegheny River and is considered possibly extirpated. In the fall of 2012, NYSDEC and SUNY Cobleskill released 1,200 juveniles into the Allegheny River with the goal of restoring the population of gilt darter in New York.

I. Status

a. Current and Legal Protected Status

- i. **Federal** Not Listed **Candidate?** No
- ii. **New York** Endangered

b. Natural Heritage Program Rank

- i. **Global** G4
- ii. **New York** SH **Tracked by NYNHP?** Yes

Other Rank (e.g. Partners in Flight):

Species of Northeast Regional Conservation Concern (Therres 1999)

Status Discussion:

The gilt darter is listed as Globally Secure because of its widespread distribution (NatureServe 2012). In NY the gilt darter is state listed as Endangered and has only been found in the Allegheny River (NYSDEC 2013).

II. Abundance and Distribution Trends

a. North America

i. Abundance

X declining ___increasing ___stable ___unknown

ii. Distribution:

X declining ___increasing ___stable ___unknown

Time frame considered: Past 10 years (NatureServe 2012)

b. Regional

i. Abundance

X declining ___increasing ___stable ___unknown

ii. Distribution:

X declining ___increasing ___stable ___unknown

Regional Unit Considered: Region 5 - Northeast

Time Frame Considered: Past 10 years (NatureServe 2012)

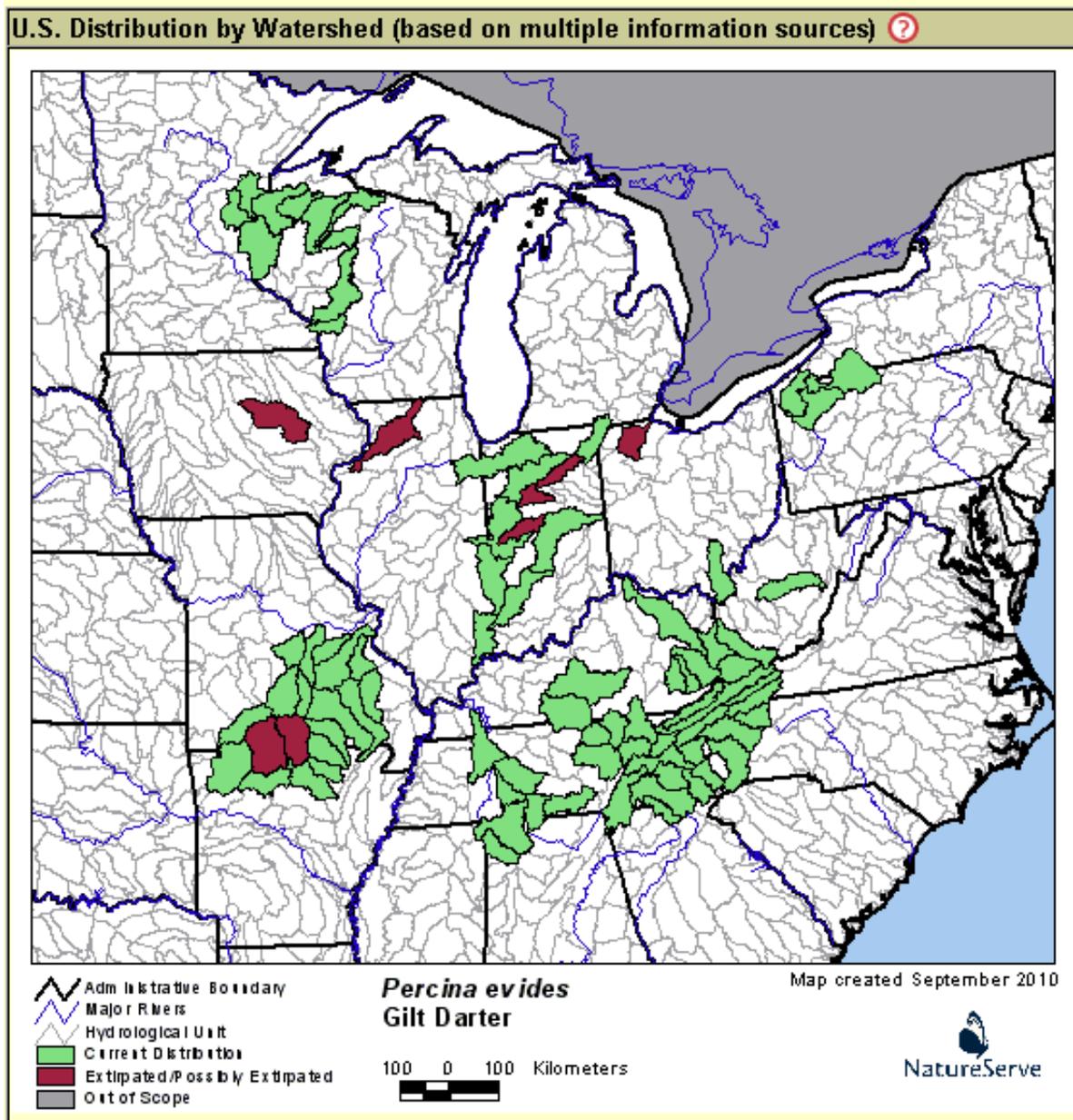


Figure 2: Distribution of the gilt darter in the northeast U.S. by watershed (NatureServe 2012).

III. New York Rarity, if known:

Historic	<u># of Animals</u>	<u># of Locations</u>	<u>% of State</u>
prior to 1970	_____	_____	_____
prior to 1980	_____	_____	_____
prior to 1990	_____	1 watershed	<1%

Details of historic occurrence:

In New York, the gilt darter is historically found only in the Allegheny River, where it was documented in 1937. No records have been reported since.

Current	<u># of Animals</u>	<u># of Locations</u>	<u>% of State</u>
	_____	1 watershed	<1%

Details of current occurrence:

Because of stocking efforts, the gilt dart now occurs in the Upper and Lower Allegheny sub-watersheds of the Allegheny River.

New York's Contribution to Species North American Range:

% of NA Range in New York	Classification of New York Range
___ 100 (endemic)	___ Core
___ 76-99	<u>X</u> Peripheral
___ 51-75	___ Disjunct
___ 26-50	Distance to core population:
<u>X</u> 1-25	_____

IV. Primary Habitat or Community Type:

1. Headwater/Creek
2. Small River
3. Rocky Headwater Stream

Species Demographics and Life History Discussion:

The gilt darter spawns during the spring-summer months depending on the location (NatureServe 2012). Fish will spawn in fast riffles over gravel, during this time males will turn a bright red with two orange spots (Smith 1985, NatureServe 2012). Most females will spawn between 2-3 years of age and only spawn twice per lifetime (NatureServe 2012). Gilt darters feed on aquatic invertebrates (Skyfield and Gossman 2008). Siltation is a common cause of mortality (NatureServe 2012).

VI. Threats:

The main threat to the gilt darter is siltation from excess runoff and erosion (Skyfield and Grossman 2008, NatureServe 2013). The Kinzua Dam has isolated the NY population from the PA population in the Allegheny River, preventing interaction and gene flow (NYSDEC 2013). Mortality can also be caused by extremely low or high flows (Skyfield and Grossman 2008).

Are there regulatory mechanisms that protect the species or its habitat in New York?

No Unknown

Yes

The gilt darter is listed as an endangered species in New York and is protected by Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) section 11-0535 and the New York Code of Rules and Regulations (6 NYCRR Part 182). A permit is required for any proposed project that may result in a take of a species listed as Threatened or Endangered, including, but not limited to, actions that may kill or harm individual animals or result in the adverse modification, degradation or destruction of habitat occupied by the listed species.

The Protection of Waters Program provides protection for rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds under Article 15 of the NYS Conservation Law.

Describe knowledge of management/conservation actions that are needed for recovery/conservation, or to eliminate, minimize, or compensate for the identified threats:

To compensate for siltation, conservation measures to improve water quality should be implemented within the watershed, especially those which reduce erosion and excess runoff.

Conservation actions following IUCN taxonomy are categorized in the table below.

Conservation Actions	
Action Category	Action
Land/Water Management	Habitat/Natural Process Restoration
Species Management	Species Recovery
Species Management	Species Reintroduction
External Capacity Building	Alliance & Partnership Development

The Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (NYSDEC 2005) includes recommendations for the following actions for extirpated fishes, which includes the gilt darter.

Habitat Monitoring:

---- Inventories will be completed in all areas where restoration might be practical.

Relocation/reintroduction:

---- Re-establish, if feasible, populations of those endangered fish species now believed to be extirpated from New York.

VII. References

Carlson, D. and J. Foster. 2012. SWG progress report and evaluation October 1, 2011-September 30, 2012 - restoration of gilt darter (*Percina evides*) and the lotic-benthic community in the Allegheny River, New York . NYS Department of Environmental Protection.

NatureServe. 2012. NatureServe Explorer: An online encyclopedia of life [web application].Version7.1. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available at: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>. (Accessed: February 5, 2013).

NYSDEC. 2013. Gilt darter fact sheet. NYSDEC Bureau of Fisheries. Available at: <<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/26039.html>> (Accessed: February 5, 2013).

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PFBC. 2012. Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission 2012 Annual Summary. State Wildlife Grants Program. Available at : <fishandboat.com/promo/grants/swg/summary2012swg.pdf> (Accessed: February 15, 2013).

Skyfield, J.P. and G.D. Grossman. 2008. Microhabitat use, movements and abundance of gilt darters (*Percina evides*) in southern Appalachian (USA) streams. Ecology of Freshwater Fish 17: 219-230.

Smith, L.C. 1985. The Inland Fishes of New York State. NYSDEC. Albany, NY.

Therres, G.D. 1999. Wildlife species of regional conservation concern in the northeastern United States. Northeast Wildlife 54:93-100.

Date last revised: July 12th, 2013