

**Finescale Dace (*Phoxinus neogaeus*)**

**Status: NSS1; NatureServe G5 S2**

**Abundance:** Rare

**Introduction:** Body is elongate, fins rounded and head short. The mouth is large and lacking a barbel. The finescale dace feeds on algae, mollusks and aquatic insects. In Minnesota, where this fish has been studied, spawning occurs in early spring. It's believed that the eggs are deposited in mud or sand under the cover of submerged objects. Adult size is about 3 inches

**Habitat:** The finescale dace ranges widely but populations existing in Nebraska and Wyoming are considered to be glacial relics. Finescale dace commonly occur in the Niobrara River, and also occur at several sites in Crook County where they are native to the North Fork Cow Creek in the Cheyenne River drainage. Finescale dace typically occur in cool, boggy lakes and sluggish, acidic streams. They are commonly found in lakes and ponds and are often associated with beaver ponds. They are tolerant of low oxygen levels and commonly occur in lakes that are prone to winterkill.

**Problems:**

They are considered to be widespread, abundant, and globally secure but are considered threatened in South Dakota and of special concern in North Dakota, Nebraska, and Wyoming. Reasons for these declines have yet to be specifically identified. Although finescale dace appear stable when viewed on a drainage or subdrainage scale, distribution is believed declining on site and stream scales. Relic populations have the potential for decreased fitness. Finescale dace habitat is bounded by private land so assessment and management activities are predicated upon good relations with private landowner.

**Conservation Actions:**

- A better understanding of the habitat and flow requirements of this species is needed to assess the impacts of water and land use activities.
- Monitoring protocols and sites should be identified and routinely sampled.
- Surveys are needed to provide baseline data and monitor distribution and population trends. These data may be used to identify specific threats and identify management needs and priorities.

**References and Additional Reading:**

- Baxter, G.T., and M.D. Stone. 1995. Fishes of Wyoming. Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Cheyenne. 290pp.
- Page, L.M., and B.M. Burr. 1991. Freshwater fishes. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York. 432pp.
- Stasiak, R.H. 1977. Morphology and variation in the finescale dace, *Chrosomus neogaeus*. Copeia. 1977:771-774.

Weitzel, D. L., 2002. Conservation and Status Assessments for the Finescale Dace (*Phoxinus neogaeus*), Pearl Dace (*Margariscus margarita*), and Plains Topminnow (*Fundulus sciadicus*): Rare Native Fish Species of the Niobrara and Platte River Basins, Wyoming.

### Finescale Dace Distribution

