

Plains Topminnow (*Fundulus sciadicus*)

Status: NSS2; NatureServe G4 S3

Abundance: Uncommon

Introduction: Little is known about the life history of the plains topminnow. They are known to feed at or near the surface in shallow water often in water that is less than 2 inches deep. Their diet consists of insect larvae, including mosquito larvae. One study notes that spawning occurs in early summer, with the eggs deposited on submerged vegetation or algae.

Habitat: The plains topminnow prefers shallow water in clear streams with sand or gravel substrate and much vegetation. It is also seen in vegetation-filled sloughs and backwaters. Extreme conditions often exist in shallow pools making them inhospitable to most fish species. Plains topminnows are well suited to life in shallow pools. They are tolerant of high water temperatures and low oxygen.

Problems:

The plains topminnow is considered to be of special concern in Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. In Wyoming plains topminnows are considered rare and their distribution appears to be declining. The plains topminnow occupies habitats that are impacted by natural and anthropogenic dewatering. Introductions of western mosquito fish have been implicated in current restricted distribution of plains topminnow in Nebraska.

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.

Pflieger, W.L. 1975. The fishes of Missouri. Mo. Dept. Conserv., Jefferson City, MO.

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.

Plains Topminnow Distribution

