



Redfin Shiner Fact Sheet

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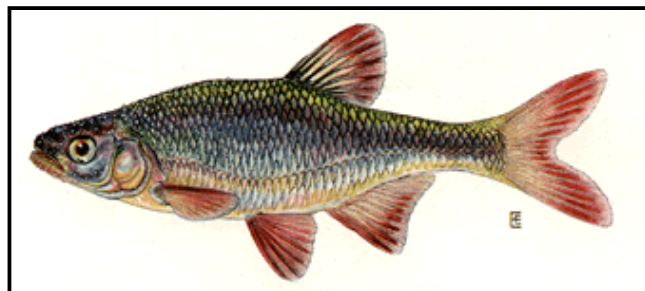
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Redfin Shiner *Lythrurus umbratilis*

New York Status: **Special Concern**

Description

Although only reaching 3.5 inches in length, the redfin shiner is sometimes quite noticeable with its deep compressed body, large eyes and attractive colors. Its body is light olive to steel blue above, with a dusky stripe along the back. The sides are silvery with an occasional reddish tint in breeding males. Probably the most consistently reliable field marking of the redfin is the small dark spot found at the base of the dorsal fin.



Life History

The redfin shiner spawns in spring and summer (late April or early May through late August) in the southern part of its range. Its reproductive schedule is closely associated with some sunfish species, primarily the green sunfish. It is believed that the redfin is attracted to the sunfish nests and stimulated to spawn by the scent of fluids released from the sunfish during spawning. The male redfin shiner defends territory above a sunfish nest until a female redfin comes along, then spawning occurs.

Distribution and Habitat

The redfin shiner occurs in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin; western New York to Minnesota, and; south to Louisiana and Gulf drainages west to Texas. It lives in small to medium-sized streams in a variety of ecological settings, from a slow-flowing bay to high gradient upland reaches. The redfin shiner is basically a pool dweller, but also prefers streams that have a moderate or low gradient with sand and gravel bottoms and some vegetation.

Population Status

The extent of declines in redfin shiner populations remains unknown, and few studies have been done in New York. It has been found at only a few sites in Tonawanda Creek and the Niagara River, although not since 1977. The most recent catches (1999 and 2000) were in Johnson Creek within 1 mile of Lake Ontario.

Management/Research Needs

The redfin shiner is not highly sensitive to environmental change in other parts of its range, but its remaining habitat needs to be protected and its status elsewhere in New York needs to be determined.

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