

## Checkered Sculpin (*Cottus n.sp.*)

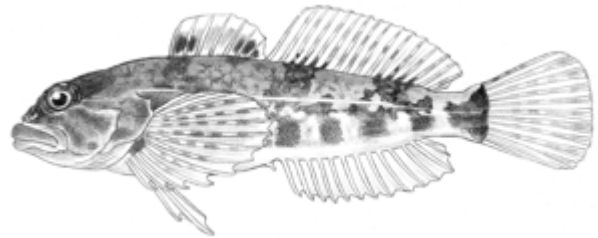
### *Freshwater Fish Species of Concern*

Global rank: G4Q (apparently secure, questionable taxonomy)

State rank: S1 (critically imperiled)

### **Description**

The Checkered Sculpin (*Cottus n. sp.*) is an undescribed cottid that was formerly assigned to the slimy sculpin (*C. cognatus*), but there is now consensus among ichthyologists familiar with this group that Potomac specimens are distinctive and deserve species status. This species has only five known populations in Pennsylvania, and all sites where this species lives have obvious threats or concerns. The habitats that are inhabited by this species should be considered for conservation efforts.

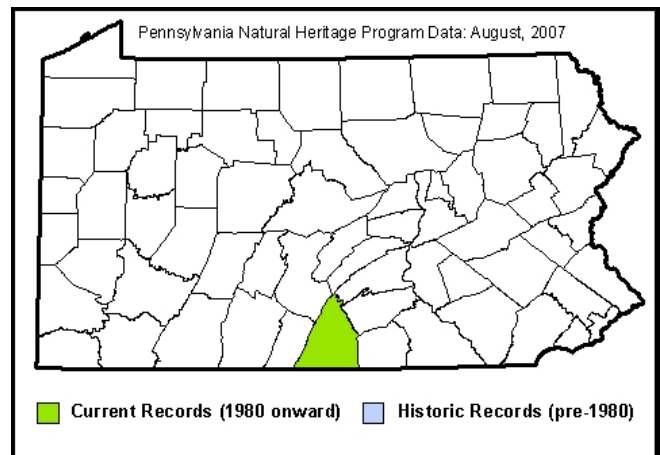


### **Range**

This species is apparently endemic to the Potomac drainage of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

### **Habitat**

This species appears to be confined to limestone and spring runs.



### **Conservation and Status**

Checkered Sculpins are rare due to their restricted range and habitat requirements of limestone springs. This species occurs only in the Potomac River drainage and since only a few counties in Pennsylvania occur within this drainage, this species will probably continue to be a rare species in this state and throughout its range.

This species depends on limestone springs in the Potomac drainage watershed of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland. Since it has the potential to occur in a few counties in Pennsylvania, it is important that this species habitat is conserved to secure its future in the state. Many springs in Franklin County are in a more agricultural setting, and the planting of buffers around these springs would benefit this species.



Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program

### **References**

Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Biological Stream Survey. Distribution of Checkered Sculpin (*Cottus sp.n.*), 2003.

[http://mddnr.chesapeakebay.net/mbss/SA\\_spec6.cfm?species=Checkered%20sculpin](http://mddnr.chesapeakebay.net/mbss/SA_spec6.cfm?species=Checkered%20sculpin)

Criswell, Robert W. Report: Status Survey of the Checkered Sculpin (*Cottus sp.n.*) in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. 2002.