

Best Management Practices

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



Swamp darter

Etheostoma fusiforme

Common name • Swamp darter
Scientific name • *Etheostoma fusiforme*
State status • Endangered

Ecology

Swamp darters are found in swamps, bayous and oxbow lakes along the eastern coast of the United States and as far north as Missouri along the Mississippi River. In Missouri, they are limited to locations in the southeastern corner of the state. Swamp darters prefer bodies of water that have no current and a substrate of mud and detritus, almost always in association with dense aquatic vegetation. Their diet consists of micro-crustaceans, midge and mosquito larvae and amphipods. Spawning likely occurs in late May and is complete within a few days. Adults reach a maximum length of about 2.3 inches.

Reason for Decline

The swamp darter probably was never common or widespread in Missouri. However, conversion of wetlands to agricultural fields and urban areas in its current range has decreased habitat for this fish.

Specific Recommendations

Swamp darters are very specific in their habitat requirements, which explains their limited range in Missouri. Because of this, alterations to existing habitat could eliminate this species from part of its natural, historical range.

→ Projects should not occur below current water levels between May 15 and June 15 to allow adequate time for reproduction.

→ Limit clearing of vegetation, including both standing and downed timber, to that which is absolutely necessary for construction purposes.

→ Riparian areas located down slope of construction zones should be physically screened with sediment controls, such as silt fences or filter strips. Erosion and sediment controls should be implemented and monitored for the duration of the project.

→ Avoid stream crossings. If unavoidable, temporary crossings should be employed. Temporary crossings should not restrict or interrupt natural stream flow. If temporary in-channel fill is necessary, culverts of sufficient size should be employed to avoid water impoundment and allow for fish passage.

→ Draining or reducing known wetland habitat should be avoided within the range of the swamp darter.

General Recommendations

Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers and Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Wetlands.

Information Contacts

For further information regarding regulations for development in rivers, streams and wetlands, contact:

Missouri Department of Conservation
Policy Coordination Section
P.O. Box 180
2901 W. Truman Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573/751-4115

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 573/526-3315

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896
Telephone: 816/983-3990

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101
Telephone: 913/551-7307

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
608 E. Cherry Street, Room 200
Columbia, MO 65201
Telephone: 573/876-1911

Disclaimer

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from other state agencies, contractors and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal, state or local laws may affect construction practices.