



## **FISH**

### **MARYLAND DARTER**

#### **ABOUT**

The Maryland Darter (*Etheostoma sellare*) is the rarest fish in the world. It is thought to be so rare because of its extremely specific habitat requirements. This freshwater fish thrives only in the part of a stream where water tumbles out of hills onto relatively flat coastal plains, and prefers rocks and crevices in clean, well-oxygenated water. It lives in the last fast-flowing areas (riffles) before water reaches the flatlands. This species is found in Maryland and nowhere else. The Maryland Darter is 2-3 inches long and its spawning period is thought to be in late April or early May. Little is known about this fish, but it is believed to live for around 3 years. It is a carnivorous species with a diet consisting of arthropods and mollusks.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

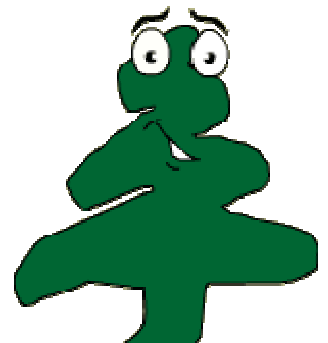
Two biologists discovered the Maryland Darter in 1912, and it wasn't until fifty years later that graduate students further recorded the species. In 1965, a healthy population was found in portions of Deer Creek and Gasheys Run in Harford, Maryland. It is thought to have been abundant in the lower Susquehanna River basin near Aberdeen and Havre de Grace, however it is now limited to Deer Creek. The construction of the Susquehanna River Dam greatly reduced the Maryland Darter's range, swallowing up much of the fish's former habitat and causing extensive silting. This fish is endangered and on the brink of extinction with additional threats to its survival in the runoff of excessive nutrients, pesticides, and other lethal spills from development into a headwater tributary of Deer Creek.

For more information visit: [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) or [www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov).

#### **TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

Where is the Maryland Darter's last known population found?

- a) Havre de Grace
- b) Susquehanna River
- c) Deer Creek
- d) Aberdeen Basin



Answer is C.