

Roanoke Logperch

Percina rex

Description

This species presently occurs in five populations in widely separated segments of the upper Roanoke, Pigg, Smith, Nottoway, and Meherrin Rivers. This small fish can grow up to 4.5 inches in length. Its back is dark green and its sides are greenish to yellowish, both with dark markings; the belly is white to yellowish.

Life History

The logperch typically inhabits medium-to-large, warm, usually clear streams and small rivers of moderate to low gradient. Adults usually inhabit the main body of stream pools, runs, and riffles and select areas with exposed, silt free gravel substrate. In the Roanoke and Pigg Rivers, adults were found primarily in runs and riffles. In the Nottoway River, adults were found primarily in pools. Young are usually found in slow runs and pools with clean sandy bottoms. Spawning occurs in April or May in deep runs over gravel and small cobble and logperch typically bury their eggs with no subsequent parental care. This species commonly lives five to six years. Logperch actively feed during the warmer months by flipping over stones with their snout and ingesting the exposed prey that consists of bottom-dwelling insects.

Conservation

The Roanoke logperch was listed as an endangered species on August 18, 1989. It appears that massive habitat loss associated with the construction of the large impoundments of the Roanoke River Basin in the 1950s and 1960s (Roanoke Rapids, Gaston, Kerr, Leesville, Smith Mountain, and Philpott Reservoirs) was the original cause of significant population declines of this species. These reservoir systems resulted in major disruptions in the ability of this species to move throughout its

historic range. The populations in the Roanoke and Nottoway basins probably represent remnants of much larger populations that once occupied much of the Roanoke and Nottoway River drainage upstream of the fall line. All the populations are small and no genetic exchange occurs among them because they are separated by large impoundments and wide river gaps. Each population is vulnerable because of its relatively low density and limited range. Current threats are nonpoint source pollution and spills and accidents associated with chemical releases and destruction and degradation of habitat. Small logperch populations could go extinct with minor habitat degradation. Water withdrawals may pose a serious threat to the species in the future as the human population of the Roanoke River basin increases.

What you can do to help

If you own property that borders a stream or other waterway, avoid using chemicals or fertilizers. To help control erosion and reduce runoff, maintain a buffer of natural vegetation along the stream bank. Install fencing to prevent livestock from entering the stream, this will reduce siltation and input of waste products.

To find out more about the Roanoke logperch contact:

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References

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