



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Neosho Madtom

Oklahoma Ecological Service Field Office

Neosho Madtom

Noturus placidus

Description

The Neosho madtom is a small catfish, like most North American catfish, that lacks scales and has sensory barbells on the head. In the wild, adults average less than three inches (8 cm) in length and have an overall mottled appearance.

Distribution

The Neosho madtom occurs in Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. In Oklahoma, the Neosho madtom is currently found in the Neosho and Spring River drainages in Craig and Ottawa counties in the northeastern corner of the State.

Life History

Neosho madtoms are found year-round but only rarely survive more than three years in the wild. Little is known about their reproductive habits. They reach sexual maturity in one year and are believed to spawn in June and July. Eggs are deposited in nests excavated under small stones. Some parental care is provided. Adults will bury themselves in the gravel during the day and emerge during the night to feed. Aquatic insect larvae are the major food source of Neosho madtoms. The preferred habitat of adult Neosho madtoms is shallow riffles with loose, uncompacted gravel bottoms. They are occasionally found in areas with sandy bottoms covered with leaf litter. Young Neosho madtoms may be found in deeper pools, downstream from riffles.



Neosho madtom. Daniel Fenner / USFWS

Conservation

The Neosho madtom was federally listed as threatened on May 22, 1990 (55 FR 21148). Critical habitat has not been designated. The Neosho madtom has declined due to habitat destruction. Construction of dams, dredging of gravel, and an increase in water demands have contributed to habitat loss. Pollution caused by runoff from mining operations and livestock feedlots has impacted the fish as well.

What Can You Do to Help

Top recovery tasks for the Neosho madtom include further investigations on the biology of the fish, protecting current populations, and developing a reintroduction plan. Removal of in-

stream dams can restore habitat and facilitate movement into suitable areas. Conservation and restoration of riparian areas can improve habitat conditions. Please consult the Neosho madtom recovery plan and numerous other scholarly publications for specific details on ecology, threats, and conservation needs.

For Further Information

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