



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Common Shiner *Luxilus cornutus*

State Status: **None**
Federal Status: **None**

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: The Common Shiner is a relatively deep-bodied minnow with a combination of 9 anal rays (rarely 8 or 10); deeper-than-wide anterior lateral scales; and more than five scales above the lateral line. It has distinctive horizontal stripes that appear in three bands: a pale mid-dorsal band, a darker stripe below it, and a second pale stripe below that. In breeding males the stripes become golden and the body bronze; dark crescent-shaped marks appear on the body; the head darkens to blue-gray; and the fins darken with a pink to red distal edge. This species often reaches 5 to 6 inches in length; some Massachusetts specimens reach 7 inches. The Common Shiner feeds mainly at the surface or in midwater, but it is an opportunistic feeder. Aquatic insects, including both adults and larvae, are the primary food source, but small fishes and some plant material are also eaten occasionally.

Hoosic and Housatonic rivers. In addition, there are scattered records from the Nashua, Merrimack, French, Blackstone, Taunton, and Charles river drainages. It is absent from all coastal streams, Cape Cod, and the Islands. The species may be declining.

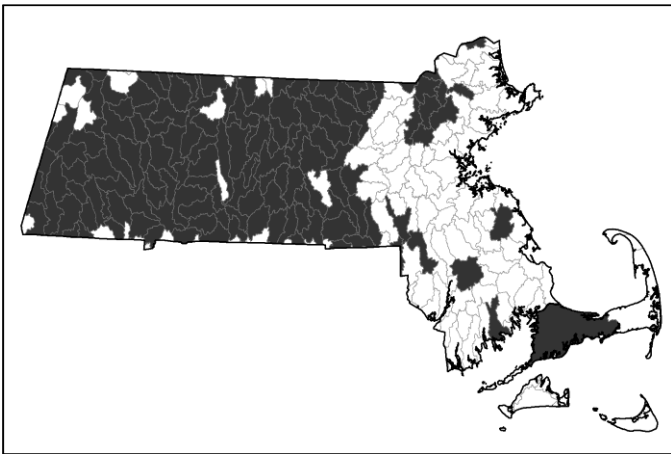
HABITAT DESCRIPTION:

The Common Shiner is common in many lotic and lentic environments in Massachusetts, but spawning sites are usually over gravel beds in running water.

THREATS: It appears that the Common Shiner has declined in relative occurrence in the central and eastern portions of the state during the past century. The causes are unknown.

REFERENCE:

This species description was adapted, with permission, from: Karsten E. Hartel, David B. Halliwell, and Alan E. Launer. 2002. *Inland Fishes of Massachusetts*. Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, Massachusetts.



Data from DFW Fisheries Surveys and Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: In Massachusetts, Common Shiners are most often found in large rivers to small streams with relatively clean water. In Massachusetts, this minnow is most common from the Connecticut Drainage west, where it is found in all of the major Connecticut River tributaries and in the

Updated 2015

A Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Massachusetts State Wildlife Action Plan

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

1 Rabbit Hill Rd., Westborough, MA; tel: 508-389-6300; fax: 508-389-7890; www.mass.gov/dfw