



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Longnose Dace *Rhinichthys cataractae*

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

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: The Longnose Dace has a barbel at each corner of the mouth, and a band of tissue (frenum) connects the upper lip to the snout. It is similar to the Blacknose Dace, but has a subterminal mouth and usually lacks the dark band around the snout and along the body. It can be positively identified by the length of the snout, eye size, and the position of the eye in relation to the mouth. The stripes on the snout and the mid-lateral area are diffuse and are not prominent. Breeding males are orange-red at the base of the pectoral and pelvic fins, on the cheek, throat, and lips; an orange wash is sometimes present on the mid-lateral area and on the dorsal and anal fins. Longnose Dace lack the papillae found on the lips of suckers. Adults are normally about 3 inches long, but some specimens get close to 6 inches. They can live to five years, and spend most of their adult lives on or near the bottom in turbulent water or adjacent pools. Their diet consists primarily of immature aquatic insects that cling to rocks and boulders. The species is one of the chief predators of larval blackflies and midges, but they will also prey on other small aquatic invertebrates.

DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE: In western Massachusetts, the species is common in clear streams with riffles, boulders, and gravel, but has also been sampled in large numbers from lower-gradient mainstem rivers. The species is absent from almost all of the eastern part of the state except in upland tributaries to the Nashua River. It is sometimes abundant, appearing in densities of almost one fish per square foot.

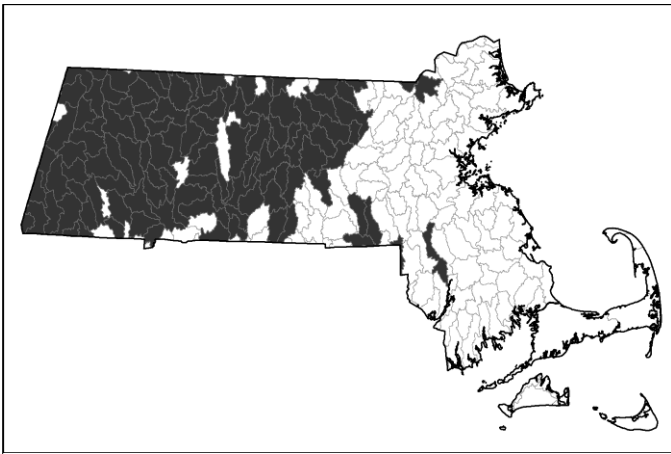
HABITAT DESCRIPTION: Longnose Dace are usually associated with steep-gradient, cold-water streams, but they are sometimes found in lower-gradient, warm-water rivers.

THREATS:

Water pollution and dams are possible threats to this species.

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

Updated 2015

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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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