



Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Spotfin Killifish *Fundulus luciae*

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

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: The Spotfin Killifish has an elongate body with pectoral fin origins that are further forward than the dorsal fin origin. Its snout and upper jaw are relatively short and rounded. This species can be told from other *Fundulus* by a more posterior dorsal fin that has only 8 rays, where the base of the dorsal fin is shorter than the base of the anal fin. Spotfin Killifish are most similar to young Mummichogs, but have a dorsal midline stripe from the nape to the dorsal fin origin. The caudal fin is square with rounded edges. It is the smallest member of the genus *Fundulus*. Adults rarely reach 2 inches in length. Spawning is mostly likely associated with the cycle of high tides in late spring and summer. Their diet consists of small invertebrates, which are picked from the substrate, fish eggs, and larvae.

Rehoboth and Swansea in later records. These are the only known records for this species in Massachusetts. The lack of records is most likely due to the species' preference for high tidal marsh habitats that biologists seldom sample for fishes. It is also probable this species is often mistaken for the young of other killifish.

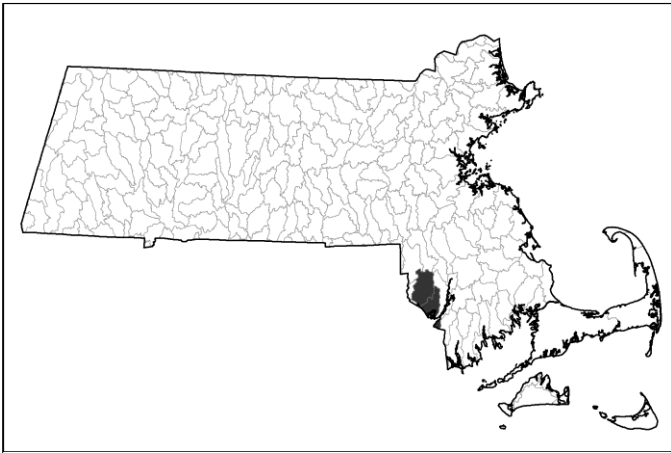
HABITAT DESCRIPTION: The Spotfin Killifish inhabit quiet bays and estuaries. They are typically found in the upper regions of salt marshes and on rare occasion in tidal freshwater. Their preferred habitat seems to be high intertidal marshes that do not flood on every tide. In these locations, this species is found in shallow, often temporary pools and have been observed swimming in areas of marsh vegetation covered by as little as one-quarter inch of water.

THREATS: As current knowledge of population levels of Spotfin Killifish in Massachusetts is limited, it is unknown if this species is in decline and what causes would be to blame.

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: Southern Massachusetts is the northernmost part of the Spotfin Killifish range. The first Massachusetts record came from the Palmer River in Rehoboth, where seven individuals were collected from a shallow mosquito ditch and over a *Spartina* marsh flooded to 1 to 2 inches by a high spring tide. This species was found to be common in similar habitat along the Palmer River in

Updated 2015

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

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

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