



## Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

## Swamp Darter *Etheostoma fusiforme*

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

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** The Swamp Darter has an incomplete lateral line that curves upward within three scales of the first dorsal fin and two anal spines. The body is brownish tan with about 10 dark-brown blotches that often merge into a continuous band along the midside, and a small spot at the base of the tail. Overall coloration varies; fishes from weedy and tannic waters are quite dark, while those from sandy-bottomed clear ponds are somewhat lighter in color. Adults range from 1 to 2 inches. Swamp Darters often rest on aquatic vegetation and dart out to capture small aquatic organisms. Copepods seem to be their most common prey.

**DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE:** In Massachusetts, Swamp Darters are found in all major drainages in the eastern part of the state, on Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard. Swamp Darters are still common in many areas of eastern Massachusetts. However, their overall distribution has been reduced due to development of the large eastern cities and towns.

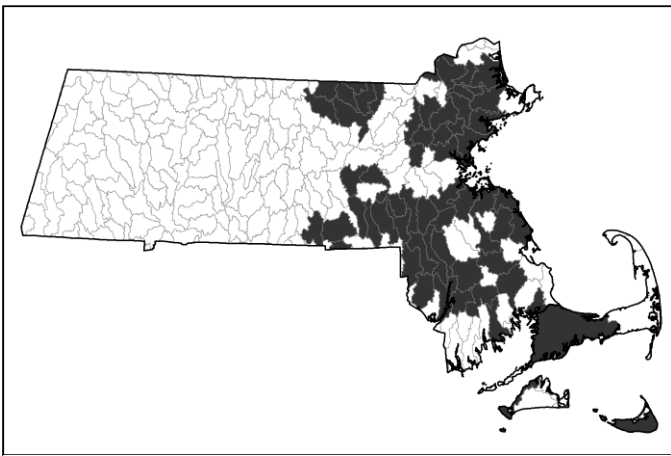
### **HABITAT DESCRIPTION:**

Swamp Darters typically inhabit still or slow-flowing water where vegetation is abundant over mud and detritus bottoms. On Cape Cod and the Islands, however, they are found in clear-water ponds with only moderate vegetation.

**THREATS:** Pollution or other alterations to its habitats appear to be the major potential 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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