

Threats to Fishes – The Cycle of Habitat Degradation

Channelization



Channelization is the straightening of naturally winding streams with machinery or erosion. When this happens, most fish habitats are lost, and many species are displaced.

Impervious Surfaces



Impervious surfaces such as parking lots, streets and roofs create areas where water does not soak into the ground. This water runs into ditches and streams, contributing to bank erosion and water pollution.

Dams



Dams help with some erosion problems. However, they form a single habitat behind their wall and block the movement of fish to their spawning habitat upstream.

Chemicals



Chemicals are used to increase agricultural yields and make our landscaping lush and pest free. These chemicals kill larval fish, the invertebrates fish eat, and choke streams with algae.

Each of these factors influences the others - Ultimately, habitat for fish and the organisms they depend on for food, is lost. They also cause many problems for people, such as flooding, bank erosion, and drinking water quality, which can be expensive to fix. Perhaps worst of all, dams create a dangerous and **DEADLY** situation for children or weak swimmers if they fall into the water below the dam.

Threats to Fishes – Exotic Species

Exotic species, or species that do not naturally occur in a watershed, are a threat to native fishes because they compete for the same habitat and resources.



Common Carp

Cyprinus carpio - 1-5 / C / T

The **common carp** quickly grows to a size where it has no predators and competes with natives food. The carp also destroys habitat by eating submerged plants and disturbing silt by digging through the mud.



Round Goby

Neogobius melanostomus

Lower Lake Erie Tributaries / C / ST

The **round goby** is extremely aggressive and kills native fish while defending its territory. It even raids the nests of larger predator species. The goby is a recent introduction from water in ships used to balance their loads called *ballast*.



Wild Goldfish

Carassius auratus - 1-5 / C / T

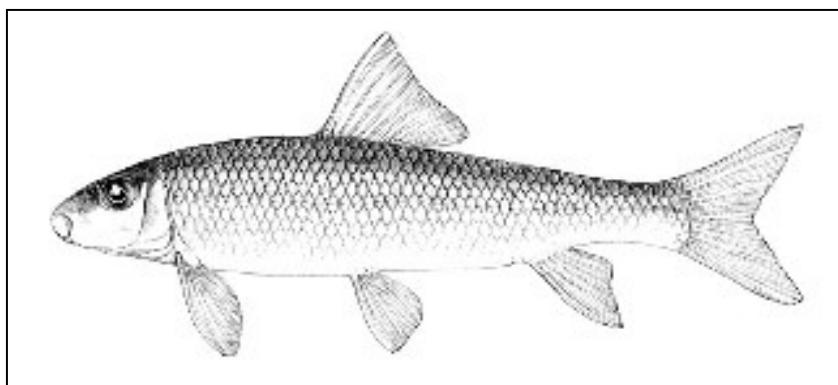
The **goldfish** can return to the wild type color, brown, in a single generation, camouflaging itself from predators. The goldfish is very tolerant of poor conditions and will out compete many native species in tough conditions.

Threats to Fishes – Species in Peril

Biologists use different words to describe the status of fishes in geographic areas.

Extinct

No Longer Exists *Anywhere*



Harelip Sucker

Lagochila lacera - 2-4 / UC / I

The **harelip sucker** is believed to have been extinct since 1890. The Blanchard River watershed, in the Findlay area, was one of the last places it was found, in clear prairie streams turned silty by farming.

Extirpated

No Longer Exists in a Watershed



Gilt Darter

Percina evides - 2-5 / UC / I

The spectacular **gilt darter** was found in the Maumee River into the 1890s. The species was once widely distributed across North America, but is now found only in the most high quality streams across the central US.

Threatened and Endangered

At Risk of Extinction or Extirpation



Eastern Sand Darter

Ammocrypta pellucida - 2 - 4 / UC / I

Once one of the most common fishes in the Maumee River, the **eastern sand darter** has been pushed into high quality tributaries in Indiana. The sand darter is one of the only North American fish that buries itself when startled.

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