

Canada's Aquatic Species at Risk

You might find these small fish living near you.

They need good quality water and habitat.

Learn how to recognize them and help protect them.

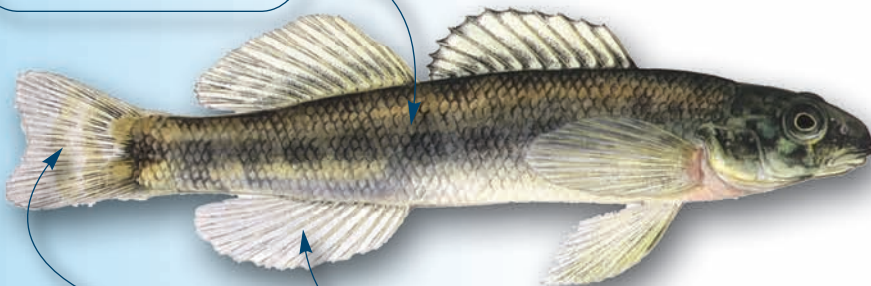
The **Species at Risk Act (SARA)** was created in order to prevent wildlife species in Canada from becoming extinct, to provide for the recovery of species at risk and to manage species of special concern. Threatened species such as the channel darter and the eastern sand darter are protected by SARA, which prohibits harming, killing or capturing them. In addition, it is forbidden to destroy any element of their critical habitat. A recovery strategy followed by one or several action plans must be developed for these species.

The CHANNEL DARTER — a THREATENED SPECIES



40 to 70 mm

Sand or olive-coloured with dark speckles



Forked tail

Large anal fin with 2 spines

E. Edmonson (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)



G. Coker

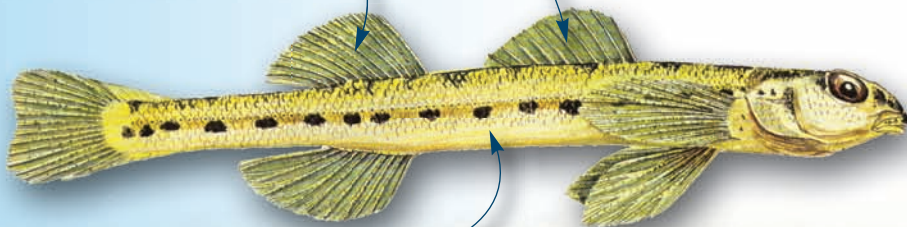
Channel darters live in streams and pools with clean water and unsilted beds of gravel, pebbles or sand.

The EASTERN SAND DARTER — a THREATENED SPECIES



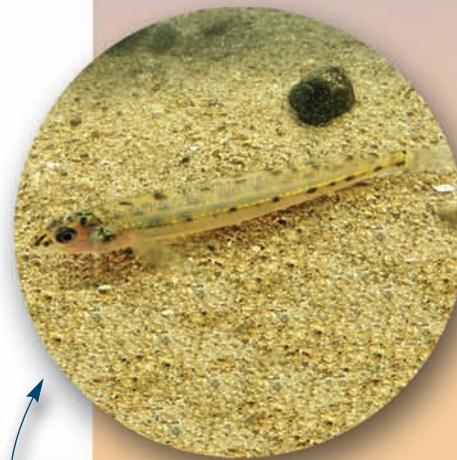
45 to 70 mm

2 separate dorsal fins



Translucent, yellowish or silvery with 10-14 dark speckles

E. Edmonson and H. Chrisp (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)



A. Dextrase (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources)

Eastern sand darters live in sandy-bottomed streams and lakes with clean water.



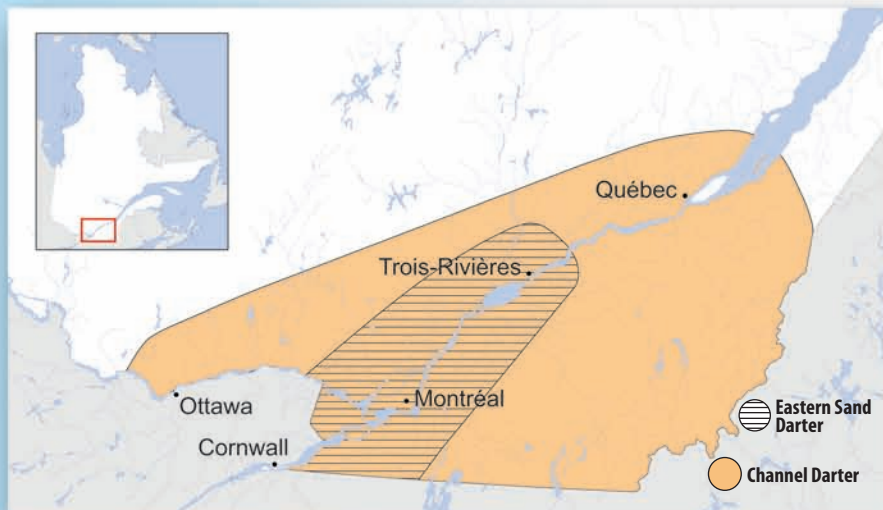
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You Have a Role to Play

Quebec Distribution



Both channel darters and eastern sand darters are found in the St. Lawrence River as well as in lakes and streams in southern Quebec.

Threats

A number of human activities (farming, urban, forestry and recreational) can cause loss or degradation of the habitat of channel darters and eastern sand darters. Some of the main threats to the habitat of these species at risk are:

- the removal or degradation of shoreline vegetation,
- sediment input and excessive accumulation of sediment,
- reduced water quality due to chemicals and fertilizers, and
- the disruption of natural water flow patterns, or barriers to the free passage of fish.

Bait fishing can also harm these small fish, because they can be captured accidentally.

What is being done to support recovery?

The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and the Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk help fund recovery and awareness projects. For example, shorelines have been planted with vegetation to stabilize them and to restore the aquatic habitat.

In addition, commercial bait fishing has been banned from some sectors to prevent channel darters and eastern sand darters from being captured accidentally.

How can you take part in the recovery effort?

Waterfront residents: avoid disturbing the habitat of these species

- Preserve or restore natural shorelines.
- Avoid driving vehicles on streambeds or shorelines.
- Avoid spreading fertilizer or pesticides.

Fishers: do not use these species as baitfish

- Learn how to recognize these threatened species.
- If you catch a channel darter or an eastern sand darter by accident, observe the law: return the fish to the water immediately to give it the best possible chance of surviving.



S. Garceau (Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune du Québec)

A natural shoreline is key to a healthy stream or lake, because it keeps the temperature cool and oxygen levels up, and it provides food and cover. It also serves as a protective barrier to pollutants and a natural protection against shoreline erosion.

To find out more: Visit the Species at Risk Public Registry: www.sararegistry.gc.ca.