

CRYSTAL DARTER

Crystallaria asprella

Order: Perciformes

Family: Percidae

FNAI Ranks: G3/S1

U.S. Status: none

FL Status: Threatened



Description: A large darter, up to 6 in. (152 mm), with a slender body; wide, laterally compressed head; small mouth; and large eye. The general body color is olive-brown with three to four darker saddle marks.

Similar Species: None of the sand darter species exhibit saddle marks, and all are much smaller in size.

Habitat: Moderate to swift currents in medium to larger rivers with sandy riffles, bars, and flowing pool bottoms; restricted to areas with a combination of sand and fine gravel bottom.

Seasonal Occurrence: Present in all seasons.

Florida Distribution: Known only from the Escambia River (Escambia and Santa Rosa counties) and Big Escambia Creek (Escambia County) in the vicinity of Century.

Range-wide Distribution: Much of Mississippi River Basin from Wisconsin southward to Gulf of Mexico and along the Gulf coast in Escambia and Pearl River drainages and Mobile Bay.

Conservation Status: Distribution is sporadic, not abundant anywhere within entire range; species common only in a few pristine streams. Declining throughout much of range and extirpated in many states, including Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois.

Protection and Management: Prevent damming, channelization, siltation, and pollution of rivers and maintain natural characteristics of habitat where species occurs

References: Gilbert (ed.) 1992, Hoehn 1998, Mettee et al. 1996, Page and Burr 1998.



© Patrick E. O'Neil, Alabama Geological Survey



© Joe Tomelleri