

Redside Dace

Ontario Government Response Statement



Photo: W.N. Roston, AFS Fish Slide Catalog

PROTECTING AND RECOVERING SPECIES AT RISK IN ONTARIO

Species at risk recovery is a key part of protecting Ontario's biodiversity. Biodiversity – the variety of living organisms on Earth – provides us with clean air and water, food, fibre, medicine and other resources that we need to survive.

The *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) is the Government of Ontario's legislative commitment to protecting and recovering species at risk and their habitats. As soon as a species is listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened under the ESA, it is automatically protected from harm or harassment. Also, immediately upon listing, the habitats of endangered and threatened species are protected from damage or destruction.

Under the ESA, the Ministry of Natural Resources (the Ministry) must ensure that a recovery strategy is prepared for each species that is listed as endangered or threatened. A recovery strategy provides science-based advice to government on what is required to achieve recovery of a species.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE STATEMENTS

Within nine months after a recovery strategy is prepared, the ESA requires the Ministry to publish a statement summarizing the government's intended actions and priorities in response to the recovery strategy. The recovery strategy for Redside Dace was completed on February 18, 2010.

(<http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@species/documents/document/286971.pdf>)

The response statement is the government's policy response to the scientific advice provided in the recovery strategy. In addition to the strategy, the response statement is based on input from stakeholders, other jurisdictions, Aboriginal communities and members of the public. It reflects the best available traditional, local and scientific knowledge at this time and may be adapted if new information becomes available. In implementing the actions in the response statement, the ESA allows the Ministry to determine what is feasible, taking into account social and economic factors.

Redside Dace is a member of the minnow family. In Canada, the species is found in some streams flowing into Lake Huron and western Lake Ontario, in the Holland River, and in Irvine Creek of the Grand River system. Habitat loss and degradation caused by development activities are the most significant threats to Redside Dace. These activities can alter streams and the streamside vegetation Redside Dace depend on.

MOVING FORWARD TO PROTECT AND RECOVER REDSIDE DACE

The Redside Dace is listed as an endangered species under the ESA which protects both the species and its habitat. The ESA prohibits any damage or destruction of that habitat without authorization. Such authorization would require that conditions established by the Ministry of Natural Resources be met.

The government's goal for the recovery of Redside Dace is to protect existing populations and their habitats and where feasible, restore degraded habitats to allow for increased distribution adjacent to occupied reaches.

Protecting and recovering species at risk is a shared responsibility. No single agency or organization has the knowledge, authority, or financial resources to protect and recover all of Ontario's species at risk. Successful recovery requires inter-governmental co-operation and the involvement of many individuals, organizations and communities.

In developing the government response statement, the Ministry considered what actions are feasible for the government to lead directly, and what actions are feasible for the government to support its conservation partners to undertake.

GOVERNMENT-LED ACTIONS

To help protect and recover Redside Dace, the government will directly undertake the following actions:

- Maintain a database of Redside Dace distribution and ensure that information on the currently occupied range of the species is available to appropriate planning authorities.
- Develop urban development guidelines to provide guidance where there is an interest in developing urban areas within Redside Dace habitat, as protected under the ESA.
- Ensure appropriate timing windows for activities in and around Redside Dace habitat are considered in the application of the ESA.
- Educate other agencies and planning authorities on the requirement to consider the protection of Redside Dace and its habitat in planning activities and environmental assessment processes.
- Finalize and implement the "Framework for Managing Commercial Baitfish Harvest to Protect Redside Dace Populations."
- Encourage the submission of Redside Dace data to the Ministry of Natural Resources' central repository at the Natural Heritage Information Centre.
- Undertake communications and outreach to increase public awareness of species at risk in Ontario.

- Protect Redside Dace and its habitat through the ESA. Develop and enforce a regulation protecting the specific habitat of the species.
- Support conservation, agency, municipal and industry partners to undertake activities to protect and recover Redside Dace. Support will be provided through funding, agreements, permits (including conditions) and advisory services.
- Establish and communicate annual priority actions for government support in order to encourage collaboration and reduce duplication of efforts.

GOVERNMENT-SUPPORTED ACTIONS

The government endorses the following actions as being necessary for the protection and recovery of Redside Dace. Actions which are noted as “high” will be given priority consideration for funding or for authorizations under the ESA. The government will focus its support on these high priority actions over the next five years.

Focus Area: Protection
Objective: Maintain the current geographical distribution and abundance of Redside Dace through habitat protection, including habitat in urban areas, and ensuring protection of water quality and stream hydrology.

Actions:

1. As opportunities arise, support the securement of lands within catchment areas that contain Redside Dace populations with a high likelihood of survival through existing land securement and stewardship programs.

Focus Area: Rehabilitation
Objective: Rehabilitate degraded Redside Dace habitats in areas adjacent to occupied reaches.

Actions:

2. **(HIGH)** Evaluate the current condition of all Redside Dace populations and habitats to identify degraded Redside Dace habitats.
3. **(HIGH)** Encourage development and use of Environmental Farm Plans and Nutrient Management Plans to incorporate best management practices for rural streams and drains that restore a healthy riparian zone, reduce livestock access, establish manure storage and runoff collection systems, encourage conservation tillage and reduce the impact of drains.
4. **(HIGH)** Investigate the effectiveness of habitat rehabilitation work that has been completed to date. Where appropriate, continue riparian and in-stream work on existing rehabilitation projects and initiate projects on top priority areas that are adjacent to occupied reaches.
5. Investigate the feasibility and potential impacts of artificial propagation and wild fish transfers of Redside Dace. This may require an analysis of the local genetic diversity of Redside Dace populations.

Focus Area: Monitoring and Research

Objective: Establish a long-term monitoring program to continue to determine the distribution, abundance, and associated trends of Redside Dace and its habitats.

Actions:

6. **(HIGH)** Implement a standard two-part monitoring program. The first broad-scale component should assess and map the presence or absence of Redside Dace through time in streams throughout its Ontario range. The second component should be conducted at representative sites to assess changes through time in population abundance and habitat conditions that result from restoration actions, and to compare the conditions of disturbed and undisturbed sites.
7. Conduct research to identify the habitat areas that are required for spawning, incubation and larval development; investigate what habitat the species uses seasonally, particularly in the winter; and investigate the movements and physiological tolerances of Redside Dace.
8. To inform the development of impact thresholds, further investigate the mechanisms of how urban development, agricultural practices, aggregate operations, and water taking contribute to declines in Redside Dace populations and impact population dynamics.
9. Investigate the impacts that the introduction of other fish species have on Redside Dace and the streams in which they occur.

Focus Area: Awareness

Objective: Increase awareness regarding the significance of Redside Dace and protection and stewardship of its habitat.

Actions:

10. Increase the awareness of planners, developers and other interested stakeholders of Redside Dace and protection of the species and its habitat.

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

Financial support for the implementation of actions may be available through the Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, Species at Risk Farm Incentive Program, or Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program. Conservation partners are encouraged to discuss project proposals related to the actions in this response statement with the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry can also advise whether any authorizations under the ESA or other legislation may be required for undertaking the project.

Implementation of the actions may be subject to changing priorities across the multitude of species at risk, available resources and the capacity of partners to undertake recovery activities. Where appropriate, the implementation of actions for multiple species will be co-ordinated across government response statements.

REVIEWING PROGRESS

The ESA requires the Ministry to conduct a review of progress towards protecting and recovering a species not later than five years from the publication of this response statement. The review will help identify whether adjustments are needed to achieve the protection and recovery of Redside Dace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the development of the "Recovery Strategy for Redside Dace in Ontario" for their dedication to protecting and recovering species at risk.

For additional information:

Visit the species at risk website at
ontario.ca/speciesatrisk
Contact your MNR district office
Contact the Natural Resources Information Centre
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