

COLLECTING IN MISSOURI--Part I

The Osage System

By David L. Hall, Lohman, Missouri

I have been catching fish in Missouri for around three years. Some people call the state a fisher's paradise. It has been suggested that the "Show Me" state would be better named "Land of 10,000 Streams." There is an abundance of rivers, streams, branches, and creeks in Missouri.

There are over 200 species of fish found in Missouri, and that makes it a natural for native-fish enthusiasts. The only thing needed to collect fish is a regular fishing license and collecting equipment--nets, seines, etc. One need only follow the rules of the state for collecting bait.

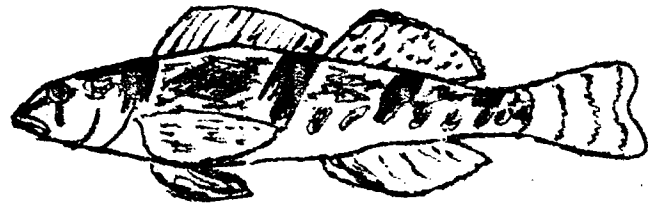
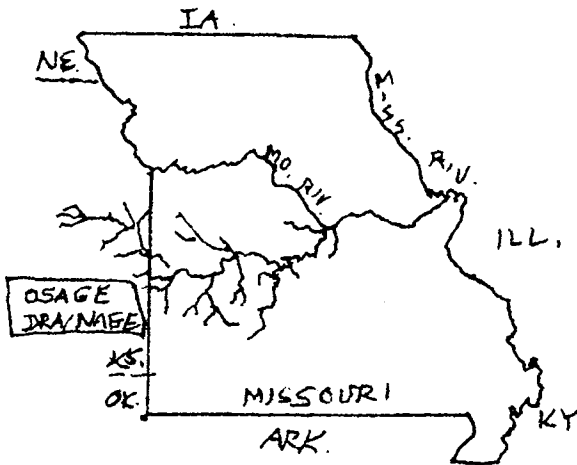
Most everyone has heard of the two major rivers which flow through the "Show Me" state, namely the Missouri and the Mississippi, but few are familiar with the third big river, the Osage. This river was a thoroughfare for native Americans and early settlers. It was named after the tribe which lived along its banks who called themselves "Wa-zha-zhe," meaning, "the strong."

The Osage River begins in the Flint Hills of Kansas, and as it crosses into Missouri it is called the Marais des Cygnes. As the Marmaton and the Little Osage Rivers unite with the Marais des Cygnes, they become the Osage.

This Osage system is home for many interesting fish, some of which are found only in Missouri or the Ozarks. Occurring in the Osage system are the Missouri Saddled (Etheostoma tetrazonum), Niangua (E. nianguae), Stippled (E. punctulatum), and Bluestripe Darters, as well as the Bleeding Shiner (Notropis zonatus).

While I have never collected in the Osage River itself, I have collected in many of the tributaries of the system. I live very near the Moreau River and collect there frequently. The most accessible spot to collect is the Stringtown Bridge Access about 10 miles west of Jefferson City off of Route C. It is here that I have collected the NE Crangethroat (Etheostoma s. spectabile), Johnny (E. nigrum), Fantail (E. flabellare), Mo. Saddled (E. tetrazonum), Greenside (E. blennioides), and Slenderhead (Percina phoxocephala) darters, as well as the Ozark Logperch (Percina caprodes fulvicaenia). The Moreau also is home to the Slender Madtom (Noturus exilis), the Rosyface Shiner (Notropis rubellus), the Bluntnose Minnow (Pimephales notatus), and the Sucker-mouth Minnow (Phenacobius mirabilis). I have also observed Chestnut Lampreys (Ichthyomyzon castaneus) in a spawning pit while seining for darters on the Moreau.

The Maries River is about a thirty-minute drive from my home, and I have been there many times. The Maries is home to the Bleeding Shiner (Notropis zonatus), the Ozark Minnow (Dianda rubilis), the Plains Topminnow (Fundulus sciadicus), the Northern Studfish (Fundulus catenatus), the Blackspotted Topminnow (F. olivaceus), the Niangua Darter (Etheostoma nianguae), the Banded Darter (E. zonale), and the Northern Hogsucker (Hypentelium nigricans). The area where I go to collect on the Maries is called the Dr. Bernard Barns Access of Highway 63, southeast of Jefferson City. The Big Tavern Creek and Saline Creek areas provide many of the same species as the Maries, and the



MISSOURI SADDLE DARTER
(Etheostoma tetrazonum)

--drawing by David L. Hall

Saline Creek Wildlife Area is excellent for collecting. The water in this area has maximum depth of about four feet and the water is usually clear. The Saline Creek Wildlife Area is near Eldon, Missouri, a thirty-minute drive south of Jefferson City.

The Little Niangua River is home for the Ozark Sculpin (Cottus hypselurus) and the Rainbow Darter (Etheostoma caeruleum). I have collected from branches of the Little Niangua. The area that I go to is the Twin Forks State Forest, south of the Lake of the Ozarks off Highway 7.

These are just a few of the very accessible places to collect in the state I call home. Those of you who have never been to Missouri or fished in any of its streams are in for a treat. Collecting in Missouri--Show Me Any Better!

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NOTE: NIANGUA DARTER FEDERALLY LISTED AS THREATENED. It would be collectible under a state of Missouri collecting permit, though possibly with some other contingencies.--Ed.

OTHER RECENT FEDERAL LISTINGS

Proposed as Threatened: Little Colorado Spinedace, Lepidomeda vittata, found in Ariz. Listed as Endangered: Modoc Sucker (Catostomus microps), found in Cal. Listed as Threatened: Hutton Tui Chub (Gila bicolor), found in Oregon; Foskett Speckled Dace (Rhinichthys osculus subspecies--NOTE: Not R. o., only this subspecies, found in Lake County, Ore.); Big Spring Spinedace (Lepidomeda mollispinis pratensis), found in Nevada; Niangua Darter, as noted above. Species listed as Threatened can usually be collected under a state scientific collecting permit, perhaps with special arrangements. Species listed federally as Endangered could probably only be collected with approval of fed. End. Sp. Off.