A New Ohio Drainage Record for the Bluebreast Darter, *Etheostoma camurum*

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The Bluebreast Darter (*Etheostoma camurum*) has a spotty distribution over a relatively wide range in the northern and central region of the eastern United States. Page (1983) describes its distribution as sporadic and absent from many rivers within the Allegheny, Ohio, Vermillion, and Tennessee river systems. *E camurum* ranges from extreme northern Alabama through Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, Pennsylvania and southwestern New York. It is listed as "endangered," "threatened" or "species of special concern" in six of 10 states. NatureServe (2006) indicates that *E. camurum* is "critically imperiled" to "vulnerable" in all states where it occurs except Kentucky and Tennessee, where it is "apparently secure." Heavy sediment loads, industrial and domestic waste, and impoundments are considered primary threats to its existence (Trautman, 1981; NatureServe, 2006).

E. camurum is listed as a threatened species by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife. It can be found in about a dozen high-quality streams in the Buckeye State, primarily in the Scioto and Muskingum River drainages. *E. camurum* inhabits medium-to-large streams with rapid current flowing over clean gravels, cobbles and boulders (Trautman, 1981; Page, 1983). In Ohio, *E. camurum* is often found in association with the Variegate Darter (*E. variatum*) (Trautman, 1981; Dr. Ted Cavender, Ohio State Museum of Biological Diversity).

During summer 2005, *E. variatum* was documented for the first time in southeastern Ohio's Little Muskingum River, a direct tributary to the Ohio River (Austin, 2005). We recorded about a half-dozen adults from a single riffle downstream from the Eightmile Creek outwash during August and September (see map). Nearly one year later on 24 July 2006, while seining this same riffle in anticipation of finding more *E. variatum*, I was surprised when I lifted my seine and noticed a darter that was only vaguely familiar. This darter was not overly colorful, but after close inspection I recognized the species as either *E. camurum* or a Spotted Darter (*E. maculatum*) based on the presence of small crimson spots and dark striations on the sides. After reviewing the characteristics of each in Trautman (1981), I determined it was *E. camurum* and consulted the ODNR about a possible new drainage record. At the direction of ODNR, the specimen was submitted as a voucher to Dr. Cavender for confirmation and acquisition, representing a new drainage record for *E. camurum* in Ohio (see map).

The nearest drainages to the Little Muskingum River that support *E. camurum* are the Muskingum River mainstem in Ohio and the Little Kanawha River in West Virginia, both of which are direct tributaries to the Ohio River and are within about 10 miles of the Little Muskingum River confluence. Interestingly, Dr. Cavender indicated that during fisheries surveys *E. camurum* occasionally "show up as strays" in the Ohio River mainstem. Seining carried out in late summer and early fall 2006 at the Eightmile Creek outwash and the nearest riffles downstream and upstream provided no other *E. camurum*. Long-term monitoring at suitable riffles within the Little Muskingum River may determine the status of *E. camurum* in this drainage and whether the current individual represents a stray or a period of low abundance.

Literature Cited

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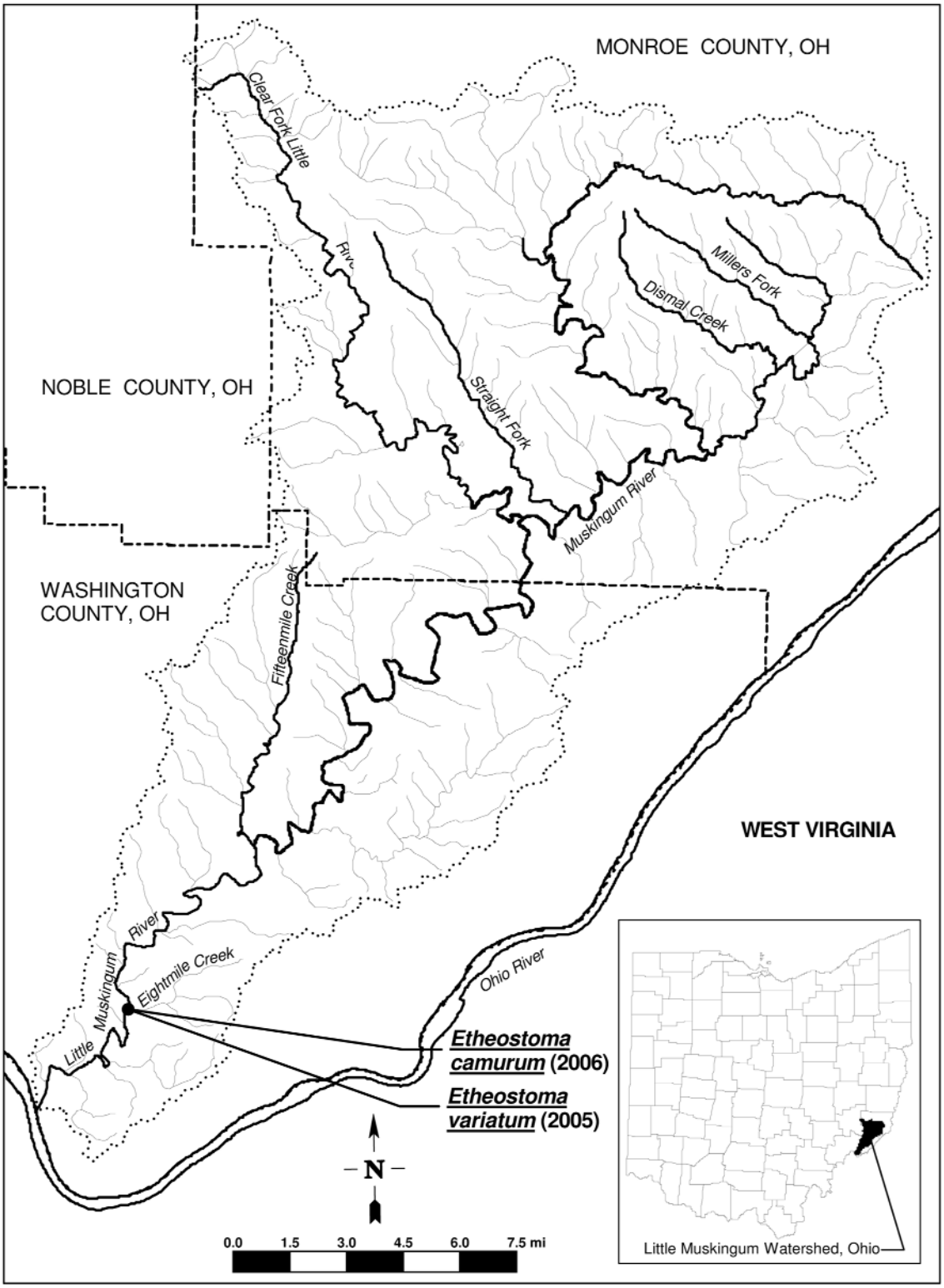

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