

NOTES ON THE TADPOLE MADTOM IN MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN

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The following observations on the Tadpole Madtom (Noturus gyrinus) have been culled from my field notes. They provide distributional information and emphasize the strong shelter-seeking behavior of this species.

Upper Mississippi River Backwaters

June 5, 1975--Two individuals captured by seining in the Weaver Bottoms, Pool 5.

June 17-18, 1975--Two individuals captured in a fyke net set in Half Moon Lake, Pool 5.

June 20, 1975--One individual inside a beer can seined up in Half Moon Lake, Pool 5.

May 30, 1976--At its confluence with the Mississippi River in Pool 7 in La Crosse County, Wisconsin, the Black River splits into a maze of shallow, sandy channels, with little cover other than large mussels partially embedded in the sand. I found a Tadpole Madtom hugging the downstream side of a mussel. When I flushed it away, it took advantage of the nearest available cover by pressing itself against the bottom along the downstream side of my foot.

Fall, 1977--Found several Tadpole Madtoms in "chicken baskets" near the mouth of Waumandee Creek in the Fountain City Bay backwaters of Pool 5A. Chicken baskets are wire baskets of the type used to cook chickens in delicatessens. They are filled with rocks or blocks of wood to provide a substrate for colonization by benthic invertebrates. In this case, they were being used by Kevin Buhl to sample the benthos of the Fountain City backwaters. It is interesting that the madtoms, normally bottom-dwellers, were able to find the baskets even though they were suspended in the water column up off the bottom.

Tadpole Madtoms were reported from Upper Mississippi River backwaters in Pools 5, 5A, and 6 by Fremling et al. (1979) and from Pool 7 by Held (1983 a, b). The distribution of this species along the Upper Mississippi River was reviewed most recently by Van Vooren (1983). In general, Tadpole Madtoms along the Upper Mississippi River are collected only occasionally or in small numbers, but this may be due in part to the use of sampling method targeted toward larger fish (e.g., electrofishing and large-mesh nets) and to the fact that the nocturnal habits of madtoms make them less vulnerable to daytime seining.

Other Records in Minnesota and Wisconsin

Summer, 1976--Very common in Green Lake near Spicer in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, where it was found on the bottom in beverage containers and

in mats of aquatic vegetation washed up against the shore (see also Eddy and Underhill 1974)

April 25, 1982—Four individuals captured by seining with John Lyons and Frank Rahel in the Mukwonago River, County Road I crossing upstream of Lower Phantom Lake, Waukesha County, Wisconsin (T-5N, R-18E, Sec. 28), along with Etheostoma nigrum, Umbra limi, and Erimyzon sucetta. Previously reported from this stream by Fago (1984 b) and Simon (1984).

May 25, 1982—One individual captured by seining with Jeff Hagar in the Namekagon River not far downstream from the U.S. Highway 63 crossing and just upstream from the Phipps Flowage, Sawyer County, Wisconsin (T-42N, R-8W, Sec. 31). Preserved in the University of Wisconsin--Madison Zoology Museum (#8474).

September 18, 1982—Dead specimen found by John Lyons while we were snorkeling in the Namekagon River at the Phipps Road crossing, Sawyer County, Wisconsin (T-41N, R-9W, Sec. 12).

The Namekagon River is partitioned today by a series of dams. The two records above reveal the continued existence of the Tadpole Madtom in the Namekagon River above the Hayward and Phipps dams, where it was recorded by Green (1935) but not by Becker (1983).

June 16, 1983—One individual captured by seining in the Sugar River at the Ten Eyke Road crossing near Brodhead, Green County, Wisconsin (T-2N, R-9E, Sec. 26/35). Reported from the Sugar River by Greene (1935) but not collected by Becker (1983) or Fago (1982).

Further information on the distribution and ecology of the Tadpole Madtom in Minnesota and Wisconsin can be found in Eddy and Underhill (1974), Becker (1983), and Fago (1982, 1983, 1984 a, b).

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