

## REDISCOVERING PLAINS TOPMINNONS IN MINNESOTA

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The Plains Topminnow (Fundulus sciadicus) was discovered relatively late in Minnesota's ichthyological history. The first specimens totaling seven individuals were collected in the early 1970s, and only in the Missouri River Drainage of extreme southwestern Minnesota (Rock River watershed of Rock and Pipestone Counties) (Phillips, Schmid, and Underhill, 1982). Repeated efforts since then by Dr. James C. Underhill, Curator of Fishes at the James Ford Bell Museum of Natural History (pers. comm.) and myself failed, until October, 1988, when I collected 16 specimens from three new sites in Pipestone County.

At one site, which I have checked annually without success since 1983, the topminnows appeared to be unusually dense. Two short, consecutive scoops with my push seine yielded eight individuals. I donated specimens from the three sites to Dr. Underhill's collection and asked his opinion on the cause of their 14-year disappearance. He believes they have always been there, but the severe drought concentrated them into smaller, more confined areas. I hope he's correct!

The status of the Plains Topminnow varies considerably on this edge of its range. Minnesota calls the species Special Concern, but South Dakota calls it Threatened. It is not specially listed in Iowa, but Harlan and Speaker (1987) believe it may be extirpated. Perhaps NANFA should notify these states as to the effectiveness of a push seine.

### Literature Cited

Harlan, J.R. and E.B. Speaker. 1987. Iowa Fish and Fishing. Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 323 pp. And Phillips, G.L., W.M. Schmidt, and J.C. Underhill. 1982. Fishes of the Minnesota Region. Univ. of Minn. Press, Minneapolis. 248 pp.