## USACE Natural Resource Management Fish



**G3** 

Vulnerable

## **Ozark Cavefish**

**Ozark Cavefish (Amblyopsis rosae):** This species of fish grows to be approximately 2-1/4 inches in length. Because this species is a true troglobite, or obligatory cave inhabitant, it has only rudimentary eyes and lacks pigment. The species appears pinkish white due to its translucent skin which reveals blood and organs.

Status: *Threatened*, listed 1984 NatureServe: *Vulnerable* 



Order: The order Percopsiformes includes trout-perches, pirate perches, and cave fishes. Percopsiformes includes three extant families and one fossil family for a total of nine species. All living species occupy freshwater habitats. This order is found exclusively in North America. (Britannica Encyclopedia)

Photos Left to Right: Full Body (USFWS), Close-up of Face (Missouri Dept. of Conservation), Full Body (USFWS)

## Management and Protection:

July 2021

- The species occurs in caves within the Springfield Plateau of the Ozark Highlands in northwest Arkansas, southwest Missouri, and northeast Oklahoma. The Ozark cavefish occurs in flowing cave streams with chert rubble substrate and pool areas. The species has also been found in wells and sinkholes.
- Not much is known about this species' life history. It is believed that the Ozark cavefish has low reproductive capacity and is slow to reach reproductive maturity. These increase the species' vulnerability to threats. (USFWS)
- The USFWS listed the Ozark cavefish in November 1984 due to habitat alteration and over-collecting which had negatively impacted the species. Over-collection stemmed from removal for scientific purposes and the aquaria trade. Habitat has been altered and degraded by pollution stemming from agricultural activities and development. Habitat degradation remains the primary threat to the Ozark cavefish. (USFWS)
  - Conservation efforts include protecting caves used by the cavefish as well as their associated recharge areas. Additionally, recovery efforts include educating the public about sensitive cave ecosystems, the specialized and often rare species that inhabit them, and land use practices that help prevent cave pollution. (USFWS)



**USACE ROLE:** According to the Engineering Research and Development Center's Threatened and Endangered Species Team Cost Estimates, the USACE has expended over \$60,000 on efforts relating to the Ozark cavefish. These funds have been expended by multiple business lines, but the majority of costs were incurred by the Regulatory Business Line. Expense types included Coordination and Determination, Site Visits and Inspections, In-house Research, and more.



Ozark Cavefish= \$61,107 (2005)

What is USACE NRM Doing: Nestled high within the Ozark Mountains is Beaver Lake project. Originally completed in 1966, Beaver Lake recently updated its Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) in 2018. In the SMP, the authors noted that the project was home to a variety of federally listed species,



including the Ozark cavefish.

Project staff ensure that the project is managed in a sustainable manner. Efforts are taken to ensure that current and proposed work at the project is executed in a manner that will not negatively impact federally listed species or their habitats.

*Photo, left:* Beaver Dam releasing water in March of 2020.

*Photo, right:* The cover of Beaver Lake's 2018 Shoreline Management Plan.

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