



Current information online about local freshwater fish species.

Data Aggregation and Dissemination



Challenge

To synthesize the available information regarding Ontario's freshwater fishes and provide an account for each species that includes key life history parameters as well as current conservation status and distribution for all species.

Background

The primary source of information concerning Ontario's freshwater fishes used by fisheries biologists has traditionally been *Freshwater Fishes of Canada* by W.B. Scott and E.J. Crossman, originally published in 1973. Reprints in 1979 and 1998 included "Author's Comments", providing notes on species new to the fauna since 1973 and 1979, respectively. Since then, Ontario's freshwater fish fauna has undergone significant change. Several invading species have become established while many native species have experienced expansion or reduction in their distribution and/or general abundance. Some species have been designated as species at risk, while others have been de-listed. In addition, supplementary life history information for many species has been published and changes in nomenclature have occurred.

Project

In 1999, Robert Eakins began to compile some basic life history information for Ontario's freshwater fishes into a database, which would facilitate easier access to pertinent information not otherwise available in a single source. This information was made available online through the creation of The Ontario Freshwater Fishes Life History Database. In early 2002, version 2.0 was published that included significant additional life history information and provided a much more aesthetic presentation. In 2007, version 3.0 was assigned due to the increase in new references and material added since 2002. Version 4.0 was published in 2011 following a redesign of the species detail page. To date, information has been compiled from more than 200 sources, including books, peer-reviewed scientific papers, and reputable on-line resources, as well as some unpublished data collected over the course of Rob's professional career. www.ontariofishes.ca is updated frequently.

Rob further says, "Ontario's freshwater fish fauna is changing. Introduction of exotic species, bait-bucket transfer, habitat alteration and climate change, all have the potential to affect the distribution of freshwater fish species in Ontario. These changes will continue and additional life history information will be learned that will supplement existing data. I welcome any such information and would encourage you to contact me."

Outcome

Robert who is a Senior Fisheries Ecologist at EcoMetrix stated, "Data compiled for the database were also used to prepare a book entitled *Handbook of Ontario Freshwater Fishes Including Adjacent Great Lakes*. This handbook contains current information pertaining to life history, habitat, size and age, distribution, status, reproduction and nomenclature for 154 species, 3 subspecies and 2 established hybrids including introduced, extirpated and extinct species."

EcoMetrix Team:

Robert Eakins