

Northern Hog Sucker (*Hypentelium nigricans*)

Historical Presence	Abundance	Life History	Management
Native	Rare	Freshwater	Conservation

General Information

A moderate sized sucker species with large, forward-protruding lips, distinguished by a distinct concave area between eyes, and a prominently blotched and saddled body. It is highly specialized for living on the bottom in swift currents. It is common in neighboring states of PA and NY, but rarely encountered in NJ. In 2016, the NJ Endangered and Nongame Advisory Committee recommended a Special Concern status for this species, but no formal rule proposal has been filed to date.



Geographic Range

Great Lakes, Hudson Bay (Red R.), and Mississippi R. basins from NY and s. ON, to MN, and south the n. AL, s. AR and e. LA; Atlantic Slope drainages from Mohawk-Hudson R., NY, to Oconee R., n. GA, Gulf Slope drainages from Pascagoula R., MS, to Mississippi R., LA; Conasauga R. (Mobile Bay drainage), TN, and upper Chattahoochee R., GA. Limited to Delaware R. and a few of its northern coldwater tributaries in NJ.

Habitat Description

Rocky riffles, runs, and pools of clean creeks and small rivers; occasionally large rivers and impoundments.

Optimum Habitat Requirements

Dissolved Oxygen	
Temperature	< 30.8 °C
pH	
Turbidity	Clear
Current	Moderate

Diet

Fry	Zooplankton
Juveniles	Small aquatic invertebrates, algae
Adults	Small aquatic invertebrates, algae, mollusks
Notes: Aggressive feeder, stirring up bottom and even overturning stones while foraging.	

Reproduction

Time of Year	April – May	Age Males Mature	2 – 3
Temperature Range	11 – 23 °C	Age Females Mature	3 – 4
Water Depth	0.35 – 0.45 m	Nest	Shallow depressions
Substrate	Gravel	Egg Type	Demersal (non-adhesive)
Time of Day	Daylight	Parental Care	None
Critical pH		Days to Hatching	10
Velocity Range	0.4 – 0.6 m/s	Oxygen Level	

Notes: Spawn in riffles or in shallow pools. Females attract 3-11 males that form mobile troupes. Highly migratory.

Size and Growth

Adults are typically 125-300 mm up to a maximum of ~355 mm. Maximum lifespan of 11 years.

References

(Raney and Lachner 1946; Buynak and Mohr 1978; Phillips 1982)

Buynak, G. L., and H. W. Mohr. 1978. Larval Development of the Northern Hog Sucker (*Hypentelium nigricans*), from the Susquehanna River. Transactions of the American Fisheries Society 107(4):595–599.

Phillips, G. L. 1982. Fishes of the Minnesota Region. University of Minnesota Press.

Raney, E. C., and E. A. Lachner. 1946. Age, growth, and habits of the hog sucker, *Hypentelium nigricans* (LeSueur), in New York. American Midland Naturalist:76–86.