Common Name: BURRHEAD SHINER

Scientific Name: *Notropis asperifrons* Suttkus and Raney

Other Commonly Used Names: none

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Cyprinidae

Rarity Ranks: G4/S2

State Legal Status: Threatened

Federal Legal Status: none

Description: The burrhead shiner is a slender minnow with a snout that slightly overhangs the mouth. Adults reach about 75 mm (3 inches) total length. The anterior lateral line scales are elevated (taller than wide) and there are usually 7 anal fin rays. It has a dark, narrow lateral stripe that encircles the snout and terminates as a spot at the base of the caudal fin. There is a pale stripe directly above the dark lateral stripe. The stripe running down the midline of the back (the mid-dorsal stripe) is limited to short streaks at the beginning and rear margin of the dorsal fin. The burrhead shiner does not develop bright breeding coloration, but nuptial males may develop a pale orange coloration on their body and fins.

Similar Species: The rainbow shiner (*Notropis chrosomus*) has 8 anal fin rays, a less prominent snout, and typically has some red coloration in the fins. The Coosa shiner (*N. xaenocephalus*) has a well-developed dorsal stripe, a terminal mouth, and anterior lateral line scales that are not elevated.

Habitat: Pools and runs over rocky substrate in small to medium-sized clear streams.

Diet: Nothing has been published on the diet of the burrhead shiner. Like other minnows, it likely feeds on aquatic insects.

Life History: Nothing has been published on the life history of the burrhead shiner. Based on tuberculation patterns, spawning likely occurs from April through June.

Survey Recommendations: Seining is a good method for collecting minnows. Because minnows are often mis-identified, voucher specimens should be kept to document new stream occurrences of the burrhead shiner.

Range: The burrhead shiner is endemic to the Mobile Basin in Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee (just barely), primarily above the Fall Line. In Georgia, this species is known from the Conasauga and Oostanaula river systems (Coosa River system). Most records are from the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, but this species does penetrate the Blue Ridge in the Conasauga River system. Check the Fishes of Georgia Webpage for a watershed-level distribution map.

Threats: The small number of populations makes this species vulnerable to extirpation from Georgia. It is also threatened by development along the I-75 corridor and the failure to follow agricultural best-management practices. Despite intensive survey efforts, this species has not been collected at historic sites in Ridge and Valley portions of the mainstem Conasauga River since 1990.

Georgia Conservation Status: There are several records on U.S. Forest Service property in the upper Conasauga, but all other populations are on private lands.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Conserving populations of the burrhead shiner will require general watershed-level conservation and restoration practices. Incentive programs to help farmers implement best-management practices could improve instream habitat by decreasing sediment, nutrient, and chemical runoff and increasing riparian forest cover. Conservation groups should work cooperatively with developers and local governments to minimize the impacts from new home construction and commercial development. Additional water withdrawals and impoundments should be minimized by promoting water conservation practices and augmenting existing water storage whenever possible.

Selected References:

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Author of Species Account: Brett Albanese

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