

Region 2 Other Sensitive Species List

Arkansas Darter (*Etheostoma cragini*)

Recommendation Rationale: Not R2 Sensitive Species, But Should Be Considered For Other Emphasis Species Lists

The species is restricted to the Arkansas River drainage, where it occurs primarily in one or more warm water tributaries to the Arkansas, and in spring seeps and spring-fed streams adjacent to the Arkansas and Fountain Creek. Some are found along the edges of the Arkansas River and Fountain Creek where grasses and sedges are abundant. Extensive sampling has failed to locate the darter on the Comanche, and no data exists to verify that they ever existed there. Dave Winters, Regional Aquatic Ecologist, believes that grazing and hydrological modification have largely eliminated even potential habitat on the grasslands since area settlement. It is likely that there has been substantial habitat loss and degradation for this species due to dewatering, other hydrological modification, and development. The small spring seep habitats of these species are highly vulnerable to loss or degradation due to development or groundwater drawdown. Because of very limited habitat potential on NFS lands and surveys that demonstrate that darters probably do not occur on any NFS lands; and because NFS activities probably do not significantly affect off-system habitat, we see no justification for Regional sensitive species status, despite threatened status in Colorado. However, we do recommend that the PSICC evaluate the likelihood of historic occupation on the Comanche and the potential for restoration if historic occupation is believed likely. For that reason, we recommend the species be considered for “..other emphasis species lists”, at least pending such evaluation.

Revised on January 29, 2003 by Gary Patton