

## Conasauga Logperch Recovery Action Plan



Photo by Conservation Fisheries, Inc.

Conasauga logperch (*Percina jenkinsi*)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Region – Georgia Ecological Services Field Office, October 8, 2009

■ **Target:** Prevent Extinction

### **Conasauga Logperch:**

Status: Endangered

Recovery Priority Number: 5 (high degree of threat/low recovery potential)

Recovery Plan:

- Recovery plan for Conasauga logperch (*Percina jenkinsi*) Thompson and amber darter (*Percina antesella*) Williams and Etnier, 1986
- Recovery plan for Mobile River Basin Aquatic Ecosystem. 2000 (Note: This plan updated the species' recovery outline). confluence with Halfway Branch in Tennessee downstream to the GA Highway 2 bridge.

5-Year Review: ongoing

Other: Listed as endangered August 5, 1985 (50 FR 31597).

### **Threats:**

Restricted range and habitat loss: The Conasauga logperch is endemic to a 55-km reach of the mainstem Conasauga River in northwestern Georgia and southeastern Tennessee. Recent catch-per-unit-effort estimates indicate the adult population includes only about 200 individuals. Only a handful of Conasauga logperch have been collected during survey and monitoring efforts over the past 5 years. Potential threats to the species include agricultural non-point source pollution, inadequate riparian buffers and lack of large woody debris in the river, sedimentation and channel entrenchment, and urbanization/development.

Overutilization: Overutilization of this species is not believed to be a threat at this time.

Disease/Predation: Disease and predation are not believed to be threats at this time.

Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms: Inadequate regulatory mechanisms are not believed to be a threat at this time.

Other natural or human factors: The restricted range and small population size of the Conasauga logperch leaves this endemic fish highly susceptible to extreme flood, drought, spills, or other catastrophic events.

## Conasauga logperch Recovery Action Plan

**Current Status:** The Conasauga logperch is endemic to a 55-km reach of the mainstem Conasauga River in northwestern Georgia and southeastern Tennessee. Numbers are low, and little is known about the species' natural history.

**Target:** Prevent species' extinction and improve status within its historic range.

**Measure:**

- Conasauga logperch remains extant in the wild
- Best available information has improved our understanding of threats to the species

**Actions:** FWS actions alone will be insufficient to meet the targeted measure. Preventing Conasauga logperch extinction and extending the species' range will require coordinated action by multiple state, Federal, and private organizations.

	FY	09	10	11	12	13	Cost	Responsible Party
Protect and restore high priority Conasauga reaches RA 1.1		X	X	X	X	X	Salary	FWS, Corps
Restore riparian buffers, fence cattle, and install agricultural BMPs in priority Conasauga reaches RA 1.1		X	X	X	X	X	\$250K	FWS, NRCS, TNC
Minimize impacts of projects on stream systems RA 1.2		X	X	X	X	X	Salary	FWS; Corps, FHWA, and other Federal agencies
Identify agricultural practices that may impact stream systems RA 1.2		X	X	X	X	X	Salary	FWS, NRCS, GSWCS, landowners
Incorporate T&E review into NPDES point-source and construction permit review RA 1.5, 3.1, 4 and 5		X	X	X			Salary	FWS-ATGA
Train county officials, consultants, and others working in the basin about infiltration stormwater runoff BMPs RA 1.5, 3.1, 4 and 5		X	X				Salary	FWS, TNC, CRA, CRBI
Complete and distribute a manual for road/stream crossings RA 1.5, 3.1, 4 and 5		X	X				Salary + \$30K	FWS (draft manual completed and under review)
Work with the Corps to develop stream mitigation SOPs for successful restoration RA 2.1		X	X	X	X	X	Salary	FWS, GDNR, EPA, GEPA, Corps
Hold periodic Conasauga and/or Coosa Summits to discuss recent Conasauga/Coosa research results, new threats, and management actions RA 9 and 10				X			Salary	FWS, TNC (most recent Conasauga Summit March 2008)
Establish a Conasauga River National Wildlife Refuge RA 1.1						X	\$3M	FWS
Fund a study to evaluate concentrations and sources of contaminants in Conasauga flows, season of discharge relative to target aquatic species' life			X	X	X		\$75K	Proposal submitted for FY10 SSP

histories, and trigger for discharge to assist with BMP development and implementation								funding
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<b>Future Conservation Actions (many of which could be implemented now, with adequate research and recovery funding)</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Estimated Cost/Year</b>
Work with local officials to develop a HCP that focuses on urban development stormwater runoff management, sediment and erosion control, road and utility crossings of streams, riparian buffer protection, and other stressors of urbanization	FWS, UGA, USGS, local governments	\$1.5 million
Evaluate efficacy of stream restoration methods	FWS, EPA, GEPD, Corps	\$100K
Work with local governments to establish a SPLOST (special purpose local option sales tax) to fund conservation land acquisition/restoration	FWS, TNC	0
Increase signage about Conasauga species at TN Aquarium Coosa touch tank	TNAQ	\$100K
Evaluate the impact of lake sturgeon reintroductions on Conasauga logperch	UGA	\$150K
Propagate Conasauga logperch for reintroduction efforts	AABC, UGA	\$100K
Research fish early life history – where are the larvae and juveniles	UGA, USGS	\$150K
Continue long-term monitoring of fish at fixed stations in GA, and extend survey to TN	UGA, USGS	\$35K
Establish a River Basin Education Center	TNAQ	\$150K
Create a video about the Conasauga for Georgia Outdoors	GDNR	\$50K

<sup>1</sup> CFI: Conservation Fisheries, Inc.                      CRA: Conasauga River Alliance                      CRBI: Coosa River Basin Initiative  
 FS: US Forest Service                                      FWS: US Fish and Wildlife Service                      GDNR: GA Dep’t Natural Resources  
 GEPD: GA Environmental Protection Division                      TNAQ: Tennessee Aquarium                      TNC: The Nature Conservancy  
 UERA: Upper Etowah River Alliance                      UGA: University of Georgia

**Role of Other ESA Programs:** None – the action plan incorporates work by FWS biologists in all ESA programs.  
**Role of Other FWS Programs:** The Refuge Program will take the lead on establishment of the Conasauga River NWR.  
**Role of Other Cooperators (other than as described above):**

- Continue long-term monitoring of fish at fixed stations in GA and extend survey to TN                      USGS, UGA
- Develop a fish handling manual to minimize impact of surveys on sampled populations                      UGA, USGS
- Evaluate Conasauga logperch genetic diversity                      TNAQ
- Continue land acquisition activities to protect priority reaches in the basin                      TNC, FS, GDNR
- Continue to educate landowners about streambank stabilization methods to replace riprapp                      CRA
- Continue to evaluate and rectify the impact of septic systems on Conasauga water quality                      CRA
- Continue to evaluate impact of PFOA (a by-product of carpet production) in the lower Conasauga                      UGA

**Revised Action Plan Due:** 2014, but the plan likely will be updated regularly, as new data become available and additional recovery actions are identified.