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## Leopard Dace

### *Rhinichthys falcatus*

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Actinopterygii — Cypriniformes — Cyprinidae

#### CONSERVATION STATUS / CLASSIFICATION

Rangewide: Apparently secure (G4)  
Statewide: Unranked (SNR)  
ESA: No status  
USFS: Region 1: No status; Region 4: No status  
BLM: No status  
IDFG: Unprotected wildlife

#### BASIS FOR INCLUSION

Lack of essential information pertaining to status.

#### TAXONOMY

Although originally described by Eigenmann and Eigenmann in 1893, this species along with Umatilla dace was considered by Schultz to be a subspecies of speckled dace *R. osculus* in the early 1900s (Wydoski and Whitney 2003). Leopard dace and Umatilla dace *R. umatilla* are very similar in appearance and were considered 1 species until 2004 (Nelson et al. 2004). Due to this recent split, it is unknown if past Idaho records represent leopard or Umatilla dace without reviewing individual specimens or future field sampling.

#### DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE

Leopard dace are found in the Columbia and Frasier River systems (Wydoski and Whitney 2003). In Idaho, records are spotty with IDFG records and collections at Albertson College showing fish from the Payette, Boise, Bruneau, Salmon Falls Creek and upper Little Salmon drainages. Abundance is unknown.

#### POPULATION TREND

Information on population status is unknown. Most previous IDFG records combine all the dace samples including the more common speckled dace and longnose dace (*R. cataractae*) into a single category.

#### HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Leopard dace usually occur in stream habitats with greater current than Umatilla dace but in slower (<40cm/sec [ $<1.5$  ft/sec]) and deeper water than longnose dace (Wydoski and Whitney 2003). They inhabit streams with clean substrates of rock, boulders and cobble where water velocity is strong enough to prevent siltation from embedding interspaces. Leopard dace may live >4 years and attain a length of 10 cm (4 in). Spawning occurs in May to July, depending on location. Eggs are adhesive and attach to gravel and stones. They feed on both aquatic and terrestrial insects and other aquatic invertebrates.

**ISSUES**

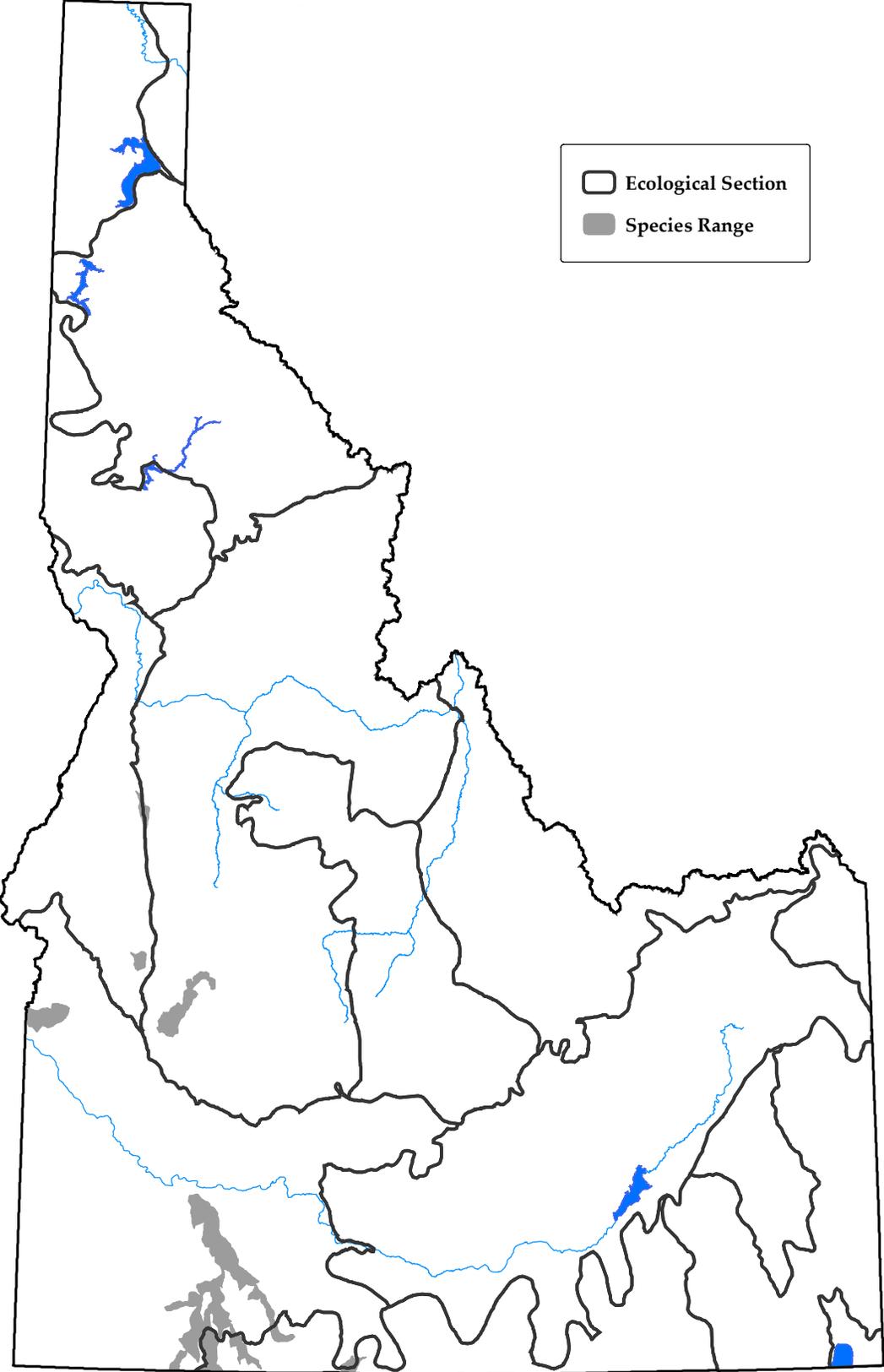
There is a lack of information on population distribution, status and life history requirements. Historic land and water management practices have altered stream habits resulting in reduced flows and sedimentation. Isolation of populations due to construction of dams, diversions, road crossings can result in negative impacts on populations. Introduction of non–native fish species can impact this species.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

Surveys need to be developed targeting nongame species to determine distribution of nongame fish at the species level. Studies of life history requirements need to be done. Work with land and water management agencies to protect existing stream channels and to improve degraded habitat, including removal of movement barriers. Management of nonnative fish species needs to consider impacts on native nongame species.

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23 September 2005  
Fish information is from Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and displayed at the 6th code hydrologic unit.

