

Poeciliidae EEP

The Poeciliidae family consists of 29 genera and 273 species. 2 species have been assessed as Extinct in the Wild, 17 as Critically Endangered, 16 as Endangered, 16 as Vulnerable, 10 as Near Threatened, 73 as Least Concern and 64 as Data Deficient.

Poeciliids are one of the most popular fish families, kept by many institutions and private breeders around the world. However, only a very small part of ex situ populations are made up of endangered species. Most of the specimens of this family currently kept by members of EAZA / EUAC belong to domesticated strains of several popular species. These strains are explicitly excluded from EEP.

This EEP will actively manage only selected species based on their conservation needs and will monitor others. Some species are kept by private breeders in sufficient numbers, so active management is not necessary. On the other hand, some of the critically endangered or endangered species are not maintained at all. Most of the threatened species belong to the genera *Xiphophorus*, *Poecilia (Limia)* and *Gambusia* and, contrary to popular belief, many of these livebearers are difficult to maintain in the long term with success.

Close cooperation with private breeders (who have the capacity and experience) is necessary to establish insurance populations of all target species.

Main goals for the first two years (2022-2023) of the Poeciliidae EEP:

- Initiate cooperation with European livebearer associations and other private breeders to find out the current status of ex situ populations of poeciliids.
- Select the species that require active management.
- Begin to build a network of EAZA / EUAC institutions willing to participate and dedicate their capacity to the endangered poeciliids; encourage the substitution of domesticated strains by endangered species with conservation potential.
- Investigate possible cooperation with Mexican institutions for the reintroduction of the two species extinct in the wild (*Xiphophorus couchianus*, *Xiphophorus meyeri*).
- Investigate the possibilities of establishing insurance populations of critically endangered or endangered species that are currently not maintained at all, and to support their conservation in situ.
- Develop Best Practice Guidelines that cover selected species.

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