

Alabama shad *Alosa alabamae*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Clupeiformes

Family: Clupeidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

This species has no lateral line. The scales in the middle of its belly are jagged. An adult Alabama shad may reach 20 and one-fourth inches in length. There are no teeth on the jaws and no scales on the head. The lower jaw is equal to or projects slightly beyond the snout. The lower jaw has dark speckles. Sides and belly are silvery. The back and upper sides are green or blue. The teeth on the tongue are in a single row. There is an adipose eyelid. The body is compressed side-to-side. There are no spines in the fins. The dorsal fin is much farther forward on the body than the anal fin.

BEHAVIORS

This species lives most of its life in saltwater habitats. It migrates from January through July from the Gulf of Mexico to freshwater rivers and streams to reproduce. It is believed that the juveniles swim to the Gulf of Mexico a few months after hatching. The Alabama shad's population has been declining in large part due to the construction of locks and dams along large rivers that stop its spawning migrations. Juveniles eat fishes and insects. Adults do not feed when on spawning runs and die after spawning.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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