

banded darter *Etheostoma zonale*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Percidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The average length of the banded darter is one and one-half to three inches. The life span is about four years. The banded darter's upper lip is connected to its snout by a narrow ridge of skin. The back and upper sides are green-brown with six or seven dark crossbars. There are dark green bars on the sides. The lower sides and belly are yellow-white with dark markings. A dark spot is present under and in front of each eye. The first dorsal fin is rust-colored at the base. All fins have narrow dark lines, and there are three or four dark spots at the base of the tail fin. The breeding male has about 10 green bars around the body, its lower head and breast are blue-green and the dorsal fin has a red band at the base.

BEHAVIORS

The banded darter lives in river riffles that contain algae and aquatic plants. This fish attains maturity at two years of age. Spawning occurs from April through May. The female deposits eggs on filamentous algae and aquatic plants. The banded darter feeds during the day on insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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