

banded pygmy sunfish *Elassoma zonatum*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Elassomatidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The banded pygmy sunfish has no lateral line. Its tail fin is rounded. This fish attains a maximum length of about one and one-half inches. The dark, green body has black markings, vertical dark bars on the sides and a large black spot below the front of the dorsal fin. Black pigment colors the tail, dorsal and anal fins. The breeding male is black. The banded pygmy sunfish has a life span of about two years.

BEHAVIORS

The banded pygmy sunfish lives in clear water with little or no current and many plants. This sunfish spends much of its time hiding near submerged plants. It is a solitary animal. This fish matures at about one year of age. Spawning occurs March through April. The female scatters about 300 eggs over the bottom during a period of several days. Eggs hatch in about seven days. The banded pygmy sunfish eats small crustaceans and insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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