

bantam sunfish

Lepomis symmetricus

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Actinopterygii
Order: Perciformes
Family: Centrarchidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

threatened, native

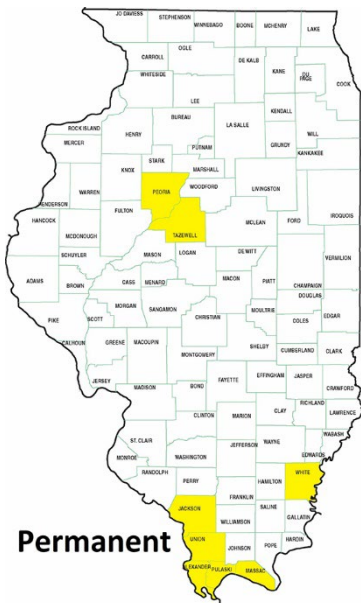
FEATURES

The bantam sunfish is small, robust, dusky olive sunfish with rows of dark spots along its side and faint, irregular vertical bars. It's distinguished from other *Lepomis* species by an incomplete lateral line and a prominent black spot on the soft, posterior dorsal fin in juveniles (less than three and one-third inches). It's most confused for the spotted sunfish but lacks the pale pigment above the opercular flap and three dark lines behind eye. Other look-alike species include warmouth and young bluegill. It lives up to three years.

BEHAVIORS

This small sunfish is found in clear, vegetated bottomland lakes with good water quality. The species was first described in the Illinois River Valley near Pekin and was formerly found in bottomland lakes of the Wabash River valley. Today, the species is known only to occur in two localities in Union County. The species is threatened in the state because of habitat degradation and few remaining populations. Young Bantam generally feed on small crustaceans, midge larvae, and small dragonfly nymphs. Adults diet is similar but contains snails, aquatic hemipterans, and terrestrial insects. The species becomes sexually mature at age one and spawning occurs from April to May, and females produce 200 to 1600 eggs.

ILLINOIS RANGE



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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none