

## bigmouth buffalo *Ictiobus cyprinellus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Catostomidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The average life span of a bigmouth buffalo is seven to eight years. This fish typically averages two and one-half pounds in weight and 15 to 27 inches in length. It may attain a maximum length of 40 inches. The large head contains a sucker-type mouth with large lips. The body is brown or copper on the back, black to yellow-green on the sides and white to yellow on the belly. The fins are brown or black. The dorsal fin is long.

### BEHAVIORS

The bigmouth buffalo lives in deep pools of rivers, lakes and impoundments. This fish swims in schools in midwater or near the bottom. Reaching maturity at age three, it spawns in spring. The female deposits about 400,000 eggs that are scattered over the bottom in shallow water. Eggs hatch in eight to 14 days. This fish eats insects and small crustaceans that it strains from the water with its gill rakers (long, hard extensions of the bones supporting the gills).

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers & streams; lakes, ponds & reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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