

bigmouth shiner *Notropis dorsalis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Leuciscidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The bigmouth shiner is about two and one-half to three inches in length. It is green-yellow on the back and upper sides, silver on the lower sides and silver-white on the belly. The fins do not have color. A pair of dark crescents can be seen between the nostrils when viewed from above. The dark stripe in front of the dorsal fin is of equal width along its entire length. The breeding male has very small tubercles (bumps) on the head, front of the body and pectoral fins. Eight rays are present in the anal fin. There are teeth in the throat. The large mouth extends backward to the front edge of the eye. The front edge of the dorsal fin is located almost exactly above the front edge of the pelvic fins. The small eyes are directed slightly upward.

BEHAVIORS

The bigmouth shiner is a prairie species. It may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois plus the Mississippi River border counties. It lives in shallow water in creeks and small rivers. This fish is particularly plentiful in sand-bottomed creeks that lack shade. Spawning occurs from May through August. It swims in schools just above the bottom, where it feeds on insects. This fish has a life span of two to three years.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

black soil prairie; dolomite prairie; edge; gravel prairie; hill prairie; sand prairie; shrub prairie

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2016. Biodiversity of Illinois.