

black buffalo

Ictiobus niger

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Actinopterygii
Order: Cypriniformes
Family: Catostomidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

FEATURES

The black buffalo has a sickle-shaped dorsal fin. All its fins are dark, and some of the fins may have white around the edge. The lateral line is complete. The conical head has a small mouth that is almost horizontal. The front of the upper lip is below the lower edge of the eye. The section of the back that is in front of the dorsal fin is rounded or weakly keeled. The back and sides are brown or black with a copper-and-green sheen. The belly is white or yellow. The breeding male has darker coloration than in nonbreeding condition and may have tubercles on his head, body and fins. Adults may reach 37 inches in length.

BEHAVIORS

The black buffalo lives in rivers, lakes and impoundments, swimming in schools. It feeds on clams, crustaceans, other small aquatic invertebrate animals and algae. Spawning occurs in spring. In rivers, this species is more likely to be found in strong currents than the other buffalofishes.

ILLINOIS RANGE





Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none