

black crappie *Pomoxis nigromaculatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Centrarchidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The black crappie is a deep-bodied fish, compressed side to side. Its back is arched in front of the dorsal fin and dips over the eye. The body has a green back, silver or white sides with black or green speckles and a silver or white belly. The anal fin is nearly as long as the dorsal fin. The dorsal fin has seven or eight spines, varying from that of the white crappie that has six. The dorsal, tail and anal fins are heavily pigmented with black. The black crappie may attain a length of more than 14 inches and a weight of about one and one-half pounds.

BEHAVIORS

The black crappie lives in creeks, rivers, lakes and ponds. It prefers clear water with little or no current and many hiding places, like submerged logs and plants. This species moves in groups around submerged objects. It may be found at depths of 15 feet or more but when breeding will move to shallow water. The black crappie reaches maturity at an age of two to three years. Spawning occurs April through June. The male builds a nest by fanning his fins over the bottom. The female deposits 29,000 to 147,000 eggs that hatch in three to eight days. The male guards the eggs. The black crappie eats insects, small fishes and crustaceans.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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