

blacktail shiner *Cyprinella venusta*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Cyprinidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The blacktail shiner is a slender fish that is compressed side to side. A dark blotch is present on the last two to three membranes of the dorsal fin, while the other dorsal fin membranes have dark speckles. The large, dark spot at the base of the tail fin is distinctive. This fish averages two and one-half to four and one-half inches in length. Its back is yellow-green, and the sides are silver with blue reflections. The scales are edged in dark pigment, forming a diamond-shaped pattern on the sides.

BEHAVIORS

The blacktail shiner lives in open channels of large ditches and streams in extreme southern Illinois. It is most often found where there is a noticeable current and a sand and gravel bottom. This fish swims in schools in midwater or near the surface. Most individuals mature in their second year. Spawning occurs from June to August. The female deposits about 130 to 460 eggs under the bark of submerged trees, in tree roots or in other crevices. The blacktail shiner eats mainly insects but takes in some plant materials, too.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.