

blue sucker *Cypleptus elongatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Catostomidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The blue sucker may attain a length of 16 to 24 inches. It has a long body with a small head. The blunt snout overhangs its horizontal mouth. The thick lips are covered with bumps (papillae). This sucker has a deeply forked tail fin and a long, sickle-shaped, dorsal fin. The back is blue-green or gray, the sides and belly are blue-white, and the fins are blue-gray or black. A large, breeding male may be blue-black and have tiny, white projections (tubercles) on the head, body and fins. A large, breeding female is tan to light blue with fewer projections than the male. The average life span is about 10 years.

BEHAVIORS

The blue sucker may be found in the Mississippi, Ohio and Wabash rivers in Illinois. It lives in areas of strong current in the main channels of these rivers over rock, sand and gravel. It will not live in areas with silt. The blue sucker is a highly mobile species. Before the navigation dams were built on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, this species would undergo runs upstream in the spring and fall. The building of these dams has constricted the range of this fish. The blue sucker spawns in spring. Males mature at age four, females at age six. This species eats insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie Habitats

none

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