

bluntnose minnow *Pimephales notatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Leuciscidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The bluntnose minnow may attain a length of one and one-half to three and one-half inches. The male is larger than the female. It has a blunt snout that extends beyond the small, horizontal mouth. Its body appears almost square when looked at head-on. The back is green to light brown. The scales are darkly outlined with pigment, giving this fish a cross-hatched effect. A dark stripe around the snout continues along each side and ends at a black spot at the base of the tail fin. A black blotch is present at the front of the dorsal fin. The scales in front of the dorsal fin are smaller and closer together than the scales on the sides of the body. The breeding male is very dark with a silver bar behind each gill cover, tubercles on the snout and a barbellike projection at the corner of the mouth.

BEHAVIORS

The bluntnose minnow may be found statewide in Illinois. This fish prefers clear, warm streams with plenty of plants and permanent flow but will live in most any stream or river. The bluntnose minnow swims in schools in midwater or near the bottom. It spawns from late spring through mid-summer, usually over a gravel or sand substrate. Its eggs are deposited on objects laying on the bottom that have a flat undersurface. Nest-making consists of using the tail fin and snout to dig a small cavity under the object and cleaning the undersurface. There is only one male to a nest but several females may spawn in the same nest with 5,000 or more eggs laid per nest. The male stays with the eggs until they hatch, in six to 14 days. The bluntnose minnow eats insects, small crustaceans, algae and a variety of other items.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers & streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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