

bullhead minnow *Pimephales vigilax*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Leuciscidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The bullhead minnow may attain a length of one and one-half to three inches. Its large eyes are located on the upper half of its head. A black spot is present on the front of the dorsal fin. The body appears to be nearly square when looked at head-on. The round snout has a dark, crescent-shaped mark on each side above the upper lip. The back is green. The scales are darkly outlined with pigment, giving them a cross-hatched effect. The scales in front of the dorsal fin are small and tightly packed. A dark stripe is present along the silver-blue side, and a black spot can be seen at the base of the tail fin. The breeding male is dark and has a silver bar behind the gill cover, a black head and projections (tubercles) on the snout.

BEHAVIORS

The bullhead minnow may be found statewide in Illinois. This fish lives in creeks and rivers over a sand, silt or gravel substrate. The bullhead minnow swims in schools on or near the bottom in association with other minnow species. It spawns in late spring and early summer in a cavity dug by the male under an object on the bottom of the water body. The female deposits eggs on the roof of the cavity.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie Habitats

none

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