

common carp *Cyprinus carpio*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Cyprinidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

The common carp may grow to a maximum size of 48 inches and more than 80 pounds. The average weight, however, is two to five pounds. This fish may live eight to 15 years. Two barbels (whiskerlike projections) are present at each side of the mouth. The front of the dorsal and anal fins contains a spine with sawlike projections. The dorsal fin is long. The upper body is olive while the caudal and anal fins are red. Teeth are present in the throat.

BEHAVIORS

The common carp lives in rivers, lakes and ponds. It is often found near brush piles and weedy areas. The common carp is active in the evening and morning. It reaches maturity when a length of 12 to 15 inches is attained, usually at the age of about three years. Spawning occurs April through August. The female deposits more than 50,000 sticky eggs over submerged objects. Eggs hatch in 12 days. No parental care is given to eggs or young. The common carp eats both plant and animal material (insect larvae) it finds as it roots in mud on the bottom. It may feed in water so shallow that part of its back sticks out. The common carp is a native of Asia that was brought to America in 1876. It was introduced to Illinois in 1879.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

None

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