

## cypress darter *Etheostoma proeliare*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Percidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The cypress darter may attain a length of about one and one-half inches. Its lateral line is very short. The gill covers are connected by a membrane across the throat, and the cheek and gill covers are completely covered with scales. The green back is crossed by six to nine dark saddles. Dark dashes can be seen along the middle of the green-brown side, and spots are scattered throughout the sides. A thin, dark, "teardrop" mark is located under each eye. The male has a dark base and edge, a red band in the middle and a dark spot in front of the first dorsal fin. The breeding male has black anal and pelvic fins.

### BEHAVIORS

The cypress darter may be found in extreme southern Illinois. This fish lives in vegetation over mud in ditches, swamps and lowland lakes. The cypress darter spawns in spring. Its distinctive eggs, indented on one side, are deposited singly on aquatic plants. This fish eats immature insects and small crustaceans.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie Habitats

none

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