

gizzard shad *Dorosoma cepedianum*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Clupeiformes

Family: Clupeidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The gizzard shad lives an average of four to six years. A typical gizzard shad is eight to 12 inches in length with a maximum length of 20 inches and a maximum weight of four pounds. A dark spot is present on each side of the body near the gill cover. The last ray in the dorsal fin is very long and thin. The upper body is silver-blue changing to silver on the sides. Dark stripes are present on the back and upper side.

BEHAVIORS

The gizzard shad lives in the deep, open water of rivers, lakes and impoundments. This fish travels in schools near the water's surface. It may leap out of the water. The gizzard shad reaches maturity at two to three years of age. Spawning occurs April through May. The female deposits about 50,000 eggs which are scattered across the bottom in shallow water. The eggs are sticky and attach to the first object they touch. Eggs hatch in about four days. The gizzard shad eats plankton, algae and insect larvae, feeding by filtering objects out of the water with bony extensions of its gills.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; lakes, ponds & reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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