

goldfish *Carassius auratus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Cyprinidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

The goldfish may grow to 16 inches in length. It has large scales and a long dorsal fin. Unlike the carp, which it resembles, it does not have barbels. One large and two smaller spines are present at the front of the dorsal and anal fins. The tailfin is large. The goldfish is gray-green on its back, shading to white or yellow below. The sides and back have a brassy luster.

BEHAVIORS

The first Illinois goldfish in the wild were released or escaped from ornamental ponds. Since then, releases from bait buckets have added to their spread. This exotic species is now present most everywhere in Illinois. The goldfish lives in rivers with little current, ponds and lakes. It is often found in areas of high turbidity with lots of vegetation. The goldfish primarily spawns from March through June but some spawning occurs throughout the year. No nest is constructed, and no parental care is given. The eggs are scattered over the bottom. The goldfish is an omnivore, eating both plant and animal materials.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; Lake Michigan; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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