

grass carp *Ctenopharyngodon Idella*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Xenocyprididae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

This species has a wide head. The scales on its body are large and have dark edges. The dorsal fin is short and pointed. The dorsal fin origin is in front of the pelvic fin origin. The back is green-brown, and the belly and lower sides are yellow to white. The fins are clear to gray-brown. Teeth are present in the throat. Grass carp grow rapidly and can become very large, up to 49 inches in length.

BEHAVIORS

The grass carp is native to eastern Asia. It was brought to the United States in 1963 and originally released in the waters of Arkansas. Since then it has spread tremendously and has been introduced into many lakes and ponds to control aquatic vegetation. Young grass carp eat small aquatic invertebrates. After reaching about eight inches in length, these fish switch to a preference for consuming aquatic plants, although animal materials are still eaten as well. It is believed that this species spawns from late spring into summer.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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