

largemouth bass *Micropterus salmoides*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Centrarchidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The largemouth bass has an average life span of five to six years. Its average length is 10 to 20 inches. The upper jaw of the mouth extends behind the eye when the mouth is closed. A dark stripe is present along each side. The body is dark green on the back and upper sides with a white belly.

BEHAVIORS

The largemouth bass lives in lakes, ponds, swamps, rivers and impoundments. It seeks areas with little or no current. This fish is active at night. Reaching maturity at an age of two years, spawning occurs from May through June. The male builds a nest by fanning his fins near the bottom. The female deposits 2,000 to 100,000 eggs that hatch in three to six days. The male guards the eggs and young, staying with them for some time after they leave the nest. The largemouth bass eats mainly fishes, crayfish and large insects but will eat most any animal in the water that it can swallow.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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