

longnose dace *Rhinichthys cataractae*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Leuciscidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The longnose dace averages about four inches in length. Two forms of this fish are found in Illinois. The Lake Michigan form is light green-brown with pale brown blotches. It has yellow pigment around the mouth and at the bases of the pectoral fins. The stream form is mottled with black and has red around the mouth and fin bases. There is a barbel at each side of the mouth where the two jaws meet. Tiny scales and an elongated snout are also characteristic features of this fish.

BEHAVIORS

The longnose dace occurs in two forms in Illinois. The light form is found along the pebble beaches of Lake Michigan in shallow water. The dark form is found in gravel-bottomed streams in northwestern Illinois. This fish is common along the Lake Michigan shore but rare inland. It spawns from April to June over gravel in stream riffles or along the shore of Lake Michigan. The female deposits about 200 to 700 eggs. The longnose dace eats adult and immature aquatic insects, annelids (segmented worms) and algae. This fish has a life span of about five years.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

Lake Michigan; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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