

## muskellunge *Esox masquinongy*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Esociformes

Family: Esocidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

### FEATURES

The muskellunge has an elongate body and a large head with duckbill-shaped jaws. The gill covers and cheeks have scales only on the upper half. A row of six to nine pores is present along each side of the lower jaw. This fish's back is silver-gray to yellow-green with scattered dark spots or bars. The muskellunge may attain a length of more than five feet and a weight of about 70 pounds.

### BEHAVIORS

The muskellunge lives in lakes and pools of slow-moving streams. It is stocked in several lakes in Illinois. It prefers clear water with abundant vegetation. The muskellunge is a solitary fish, hiding near submerged objects and swimming out to capture prey. Spawning occurs in spring with eggs scattered over dead plants. The female may deposit up to 265,000 eggs. The muskellunge eats fishes. This species is not native to Illinois.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

**lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams**

Woodland Habitats

**none**

Prairie and Edge Habitats

**none**

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