

ninespine stickleback *Pungitius pungitius*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Gasterosteiformes

Family: Gasterosteidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The ninespine stickleback has a tapered head with an upturned mouth. The body section between the end of the dorsal and anal fins and the base of the caudal fin is very slender. No scales are present, but small scutes can be found in a few locations on the body. The spines in the dorsal fin are separated from each other followed by the rest of this fin. The pelvic fins have spines. The back and sides are dark brown. The belly is white. This species matures in one year and grows to two to three inches in length.

BEHAVIORS

The male builds a tunnel nest of plant materials and lures a female into it to spawn. Spawning occurs in spring. The male guards and cares for the eggs and young. The ninespine stickleback eats plankton, insects and other aquatic invertebrates.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

Lake Michigan

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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