

## northern hog sucker *Hypentelium nigricans*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Catostomidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The northern hog sucker may attain a length of eight to 15 inches. The female is larger than the male. The rectangular head with its depression between the eyes is characteristic. The body is wide in the front then tapers quickly behind the dorsal fin. There are three to six brown saddles on the upper sides. The mouth has fleshy lips with many bumps (papillae). The pectoral fins are fanlike. The back is green, bronze or red-brown while the belly is yellow or white. The snout is dark, and the fins are green to orange. The dorsal and tail fins are black-edged. The breeding male has projections (tubercles) on the lower fins and the lower half of the tail fin.

### BEHAVIORS

The northern hog sucker may be found in the northern one-half and southeastern one-fourth of Illinois. This fish lives in clear creeks and rivers with permanent flow and little silt. The northern hog sucker lives on the bottom singly or in small groups. Its body features allow it to maintain its position in strong currents with little effort, much like darters. This fish spawns in the spring. The movements of spawning fish dig out a small depression on the bottom into which the eggs are placed. The hog sucker uses its head and lips to turn over rocks and search the bottom for insects and other possible prey items.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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