

# rainbow darter

## *Etheostoma caeruleum*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Class: Actinopterygii  
Order: Perciformes  
Family: Percidae

### ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

### FEATURES

The rainbow darter grows to an average length of one and one-half to two and one-half inches and may attain a maximum length of three inches. The deep body has dark bars on the sides. The bars are blue on the male and brown on the female. The typical rainbow darter has a brown back, a yellow, green or red belly and dorsal, tail and anal fins that are red with a blue edge. The lateral line is incomplete.

### BEHAVIORS

The rainbow darter lives in creeks and rivers, selecting areas with a gravel or rock bottom. This fish lives near the bottom. It spawns from March through May. Eggs are buried in gravel. Large males defend a territory. The rainbow darter eats crustaceans, snails and insects.



male in breeding season

### ILLINOIS RANGE



© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2020. *Biodiversity of Illinois*.

Unless otherwise noted, photos and images © Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

female

© Konrad P. Schmidt, University of Minnesota



male

© Konrad P. Schmidt, University of Minnesota



## **Aquatic Habitats**

rivers and streams

## **Woodland Habitats**

none

## **Prairie and Edge Habitats**

none