

redfin pickerel *Esox americanus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Esociformes

Family: Esocidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The average length for a redfin pickerel is nine inches. It may attain a maximum length of 15 inches and a maximum weight of three-fourths of a pound. It normally lives about three to four years. There are teeth on the jaw and scales on the cheek and gill cover. A dark bar is present under the eye, and dark bars may be present on the sides of the body. There are no spots on the sides or fins. The eyes are yellow. The long body is green or brown with a white-to-dark yellow belly. The snout is shaped like a duckbill and easily seen.

BEHAVIORS

The redfin pickerel lives in lakes, swamps, streams and marshes, preferring to be near plants in clear water. This fish hunts by ambush, waiting in or near vegetation until a possible prey animal swims by, then swimming quickly to capture it. The redfin pickerel reaches maturity at about one year of age. Spawning occurs March through April. The female deposits about 16,000 sticky eggs over vegetation. Eggs hatch in 12 to 15 days. There is no parental care of eggs or young. The redfin pickerel eats fishes, insects, tadpoles and crayfish.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; marshes; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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