

red shiner *Cyprinella lutrensis*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Cyprinidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The red shiner is a deep-bodied minnow that is compressed side to side. The adult averages two to three inches in length. Its dorsal fin is covered with tiny, dark specks. The back is yellow-green, and the sides are silver with blue reflections. The scales are edged in dark pigment, forming a diamond-shaped pattern on the sides. The breeding male is metallic blue, with the top of the head and all fins (except the dorsal) bright red and with a pink bar behind the pectoral fin. The life span is about three years.

BEHAVIORS

The red shiner lives in streams of all sizes but is most abundant in large creeks and rivers in a variety of habitats, such as pools, riffles and backwaters. Unlike many fishes, the red shiner is tolerant of high turbidity and silt. It has replaced some minnow species that cannot live in these conditions and has become more widely distributed in Illinois in the last half of the twentieth century. The red shiner lives in schools in midwater or near the surface in association with several other minnow species. Maturity is attained at an age of two to three years. Spawning occurs May through September. Eggs may be deposited over the nests of some sunfish species, on a gravel bottom or on submerged objects like tree roots or plants. The red shiner eats insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none