redspotted sunfish Lepomis miniatus

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

state threatened, native

FEATURES

The redspotted sunfish is a small, typically dark olive fish with a pale, yellow belly, and three dark lines behind the eye. Distinguished from other *Lepomis* species by stiff opercular lopes, a pale spot on the end of lateral line, and dark spots on the lower gill cover. Young fish may have vertical bars or small scattered dark spots along their sides and are most confused for *cyanellus, gulosus, marginatus,* and *megalotis.* Breeding adult males are beautifully colored, displaying red and orange spots along most of the body and above the ear flap. They reach a maximum length of eight inches.

BEHAVIORS

The redspotted sunfish is an inhabitant of slow-moving backwaters and swamps. They are highly insectivorous, consuming mostly midge larvae and other larval aquatic insects, amphipods, and cladocerans. Males construct nests in shallow waters near cover and they spawn from May to August. As with other *Lepomis* species, several females may spawn in the nest of a single male. Females deposit blueish eggs and males guard nests until young have hatched. Redspotted sunfish are known to hybridize with bluegill.

ILLINOIS RANGE



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Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats none