

shortnose gar *Lepisosteus platostomus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Lepisosteiformes

Family: Lepisosteidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The shortnose gar may grow to 31 inches in length and three and one-half pounds in weight. Its snout is about one-half the length of the entire head. The body is cylindrical and has diamond-shaped scales. One row of teeth is present on the upper jaw. The body color is olive or brown on the back and sides with a white belly. There are black spots on the dorsal and caudal fins.

BEHAVIORS

The shortnose gar lives in rivers, swamps and lakes. In the water, it is found near aquatic plants and submerged logs. This fish reaches maturity at a length of 15 inches (three years old). Spawning occurs May through July. The female scatters eggs over aquatic plants and other objects in shallow water. Eggs hatch in about eight days. The shortnose gar eats insects, crayfish and fishes.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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