

skipjack herring *Alosa chrysochloris*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Clupeiformes

Family: Clupeidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

This species is also known as the skipjack shad. It has no lateral line and no scales on the head. The scales in the middle of its belly are jagged. The body is compressed side-to-side. The coloration is blue or green above and silvery on the sides and belly. The adult may grow to about 21 inches in length. There is an adipose eyelid. There are no spines in the fins. The lower jaw sticks out far beyond the end of the snout and has dark speckles only near the tip. The tongue teeth are in two to four rows.

BEHAVIORS

The skipjack herring is found in medium-to-large rivers and large reservoirs. Individuals swim in schools and often leap from the water when feeding. They spawn from May to early July. The species is migratory, and its movements have been limited by the construction of locks and dams. Adults eat fishes. Juveniles eat insects. It is often found in the strong current below dams.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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