

## slenderhead darter *Percina phoxocephala*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Percidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The slenderhead darter may attain a length of two to three and one-half inches. Its long, pointed snout is distinctive. The back and upper sides are yellow-brown with wavy, dark lines. Ten to 16 dark, round blotches or bars are present along each side. The lower sides and belly are white to yellow. The first dorsal fin has an outer band of orange while the second dorsal and tail fins have brown lines. A black, "teardrop" mark is present under each eye. The gill covers are connected by a membrane on the throat. The lateral line is complete.

### BEHAVIORS

The slenderhead darter may be found statewide in Illinois. This fish lives in creeks and rivers in a strong current over a gravel bottom. The slenderhead darter spawns in spring. The eggs are mixed into the bottom substrate by the spawning actions. No parental care is given. This fish eats immature insects, small crustaceans and fish eggs.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

**bottomland forests**

Woodland Habitats

**bottomland forests**

Prairie and Edge Habitats

**none**

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