

common shiner

Luxilus cornutus

FEATURES

The common shiner averages about three to seven inches in length. Its back and upper sides are green-brown. The lower sides are silver with scattered dark spots, and the belly is silver-white. The fins are colorless. The tip of the chin is clear or with only a few dark patches on the sides. When viewed from above, this fish has a dark stripe in the middle of the back that is darker in front of the dorsal fin than behind it. A dark, thin stripe is present on each side of the main stripe. The breeding male develops tubercles (bumps) on the head and dorsal and pectoral fins, a bright pink color on the sides and in the fins, and a steel-blue color all over. Gold stripes can be seen along the midline of the back and along the upper sides of the breeding male.

BEHAVIORS

The common shiner may be found in gravel-bottomed creeks in the northern one-fourth of Illinois. Spawning occurs from May through July over gravel in stream riffles. The male excavates a depression to use for a nest, or this fish may nest in a depression made by other nest-building species. The use of communal nests results in frequent development of hybrids. Young common shiners reach maturity in their third summer. The common shiner swims in schools at middle depths in the water often with other minnows. It feeds on insects, fishes, crustaceans and algae. The life span of this fish is about five years.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Actinopterygii
Order: Cypriniformes
Family: Leuciscidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none