

hornyhead chub

Nocomis biguttatus

FEATURES

The average life span of a hornyhead chub is three to four years. This fish may grow to 10 inches in length, but the average size is five to seven inches. A dark spot is present behind each eye. The body is olive to brown on the back, brown-yellow on the sides and white to yellow on the belly. It has a yellow stripe along the back, a black spot on the tail and yellow-to-orange fins. A rounded snout, teeth in the throat and small eyes are also characteristic. A small barbel (whiskerlike projection) is present at each corner of the mouth. The scales have dark edges that give the fish a cross-hatched effect. Breeding males have a red spot behind the eye and bumps (tubercles) on the head.

BEHAVIORS

The hornyhead chub lives in rocky creeks and rivers with permanent, clear water and gravel bottoms. This fish lives in schools with other species. It reaches maturity at two to three years of age. Spawning occurs April through May. Nests of stones are constructed by the male, who carries the rocks in his mouth. The stones are often very large and may be carried for several feet. The male starts the process by fanning out a depression on the bottom. Eggs may then be deposited and covered with stones. The female deposits over 1,000 eggs that stick to the stones. Other species may deposit their eggs in the nest, too. Nest-building and egg-deposition continue until the nest is one to three feet across and several inches high. Predators are often found nearby as the eggs begin to hatch. The hornyhead chub eats both plant and animal material.

TAXONOMY

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





Aquatic Habitats

rivers & streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none