

## spotted bass *Micropterus punctulatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Centrarchidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

### FEATURES

The spotted bass may grow to a length of 10 to 17 inches. The small black spots in rows on the lower half of the body are distinctive. A black stripe is present on each side of the body, or there may be joined black blotches along each side. A black spot can be seen at the base of the tail fin. The back and upper sides are green with dark green blotches while the belly and lower sides are yellow to white. The upper jaw of the large mouth extends to near the rear edge of the eye. A tooth patch is present on the tongue. This fish may live about six years.

### BEHAVIORS

The spotted bass may be found in creeks and rivers of east central, southeastern and extreme southern Illinois. It spawns in spring. The male uses the actions of his tail fin to sweep a depression on the bottom. The nest may contain the eggs of several females. Eggs hatch in two or three days then the young hide in the gravel at the bottom of the nest for about one week. The male guards the eggs until they hatch then moves a short distance away. He will stay in the area of the nest until the young leave the nest. The spotted bass eats immature insects, crayfish and fishes.

### HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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