

spotted gar *Lepisosteus oculatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Lepisosteiformes

Family: Lepisosteidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The spotted gar may grow to about three feet in length. It has obvious black spots on its fins and the top of its head. Its back is brown or olive, gradually lightening along the sides to white on the belly. One row of teeth is present on the upper jaw. Males reach maturity at two to three years of age while females become mature at three to four years.

BEHAVIORS

The spotted gar may be found in the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, Wabash and Kaskaskia rivers and the southern tip of Illinois. This animal lives in pools and backwaters of creeks, rivers, lakes, swamps and sloughs. It is most frequently found in areas with many aquatic plants and/or trees in the water. The spotted gar spawns in the spring. This fish eats mainly other fishes but will take crayfish, freshwater shrimp and insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers & streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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