

redspotted sunfish

Lepomis miniatus

FEATURES

The red spotted sunfish is a small, typically dark olive fish with a pale, yellow belly, and three dark lines behind the eye. Distinguished from other *Lepomis* species by stiff opercular lobes, a pale spot on the end of lateral line, and dark spots on the lower gill cover. Young fish may have vertical bars or small scattered dark spots along their sides and are most confused for *cyanellus*, *gulosus*, *marginatus*, and *megalotis*. Breeding adult males are beautifully colored, displaying red and orange spots along most of the body and above the ear flap. They reach a maximum length of eight inches.

BEHAVIORS

The red spotted sunfish is an inhabitant of slow-moving backwaters and swamps. They are highly insectivorous, consuming mostly midge larvae and other larval aquatic insects, amphipods, and cladocerans. Males construct nests in shallow waters near cover and they spawn from May to August. As with other *Lepomis* species, several females may spawn in the nest of a single male. Females deposit blueish eggs and males guard nests until young have hatched. Red spotted sunfish are known to hybridize with bluegill.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Actinopterygii
Order: Perciformes
Family: Centrarchidae

ILLINOIS STATUS

state endangered, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams; swamps

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none