

taillight shiner *Notropis maculatus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Cypriniformes

Family: Leuciscidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

The taillight shiner has a black spot at the base of the caudal fin. The edges of the scales on its back and sides are darkly pigmented, making a cross-hatching pattern. There is a black blotch on the front of the dorsal fin, and the origin of the dorsal fin is behind the origin of the pelvic fins. There is green-brown coloration on the back. A dark stripe on each side continues around the snout. The sides are silver-white. The snout may show red coloration. Teeth are present in the throat. The lateral line is incomplete. Breeding males have bright-red coloration of the body and head with black-red fin edges. They also have tubercles on the head and pectoral fins. Adults range from about two to three inches in length.

BEHAVIORS

Taillight shiners live in swamps, ponds, oxbow lakes and rivers usually with many aquatic plants present. They form schools in mid-water. Their diet is composed of small aquatic animals and algae. Spawning occurs in early spring and summer. The life span of this species is about one year.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams; swamps; lakes, ponds and reservoirs

Woodland Habitats

southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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