

Redfin Shiner

Lythrurus umbratilis

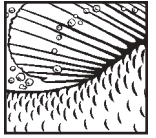


The redfin shiner is a member of the minnow family (Cyprinidae). Like other minnows, it is an important link in the food web of freshwater ecosystems, eating small insects and algae, then being eaten by larger fish, wading birds and turtles.

Northern Pineywoods

Redfin Shiner

Lythrurus umbratilis



APPEARANCE

Length: 3.5 inches (8.9 cm) for average adult

Distinguishing Characteristics

- Light olive to steel blue body with silvery sides and an occasional reddish tint in breeding males
- Small dark spot at the base of the *dorsal* (back) fin
- Large eyes
- Blunt snout

LIFE HISTORY

Range: Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, west New York to Minnesota and south to Louisiana and the Gulf drainages west to the San Jacinto River in Texas

Diet: Aquatic and terrestrial insects and other small animal life, occasionally algae and other plants

Predators: Larger fish, wading birds and humans

Sexual maturity: Between the second and third summer

Spawning season: Late April through August

Nesting: Use nests previously used by sunfish

Eggs: Data not available

Incubation: Data not available

Life span: Up to 3 years

HABITAT

Redfin shiners prefer pools and streams with sand and gravel bottoms and some vegetation.

BEHAVIOR

Redfin shiners congregate in large schools near the water's surface. They are attracted to sunfish nests and are stimulated to spawn by the scent of fluids released from the sunfish during spawning. A male redfin shiner will defend territory above a sunfish nest until a female redfin comes along, then spawning occurs.

NOW YOU KNOW!

- Redfin shiners can survive in water that is somewhat *turbid* (laden with silt) except during the breeding season, when clear water is needed.
- The term "minnow" is often used for any small fish, however, only members of the family "Cyprinidae" are true minnows.
- Members of the Cyprinidae family include fish with common names such as minnow, shiner, chub, dace and stoneroller.
- Goldfish and carp, both native to Asia, are also members of this family.
- Texas has 56 native species in the Cyprinidae family, while North America as a whole has 231 species.

REDFIN SHINERS AND PEOPLE

People often use redfin shiners as bait to catch sportfish such as crappie and bass. They can also be used as a freshwater aquarium fish.