

western sand darter *Ammocrypta clara*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Osteichthyes

Order: Perciformes

Family: Percidae

ILLINOIS STATUS endangered, native

FEATURES

The slender western sand darter is about two to three inches in length. Its back is yellow-brown, while the sides and belly are silver-white. The fins are colorless. This fish has few markings except for some dots along the lateral line, dark outlines of a few scales above the lateral line and a dark mark on the snout. A needlelike spine projects backward from the gill cover. A few rows of scales along the lateral line are the only scales present on this darter. The two dorsal fins are completely separated.

BEHAVIORS

In Illinois, the western sand darter may be found in the Mississippi, Kankakee and Kaskaskia rivers. It lives in sand areas in the rivers. It is intolerant of siltation and turbidity and avoids strong currents. Nocturnal, it buries itself in sand during the day. Spawning occurs in summer. The western sand darter feeds along the bottom, eating immature aquatic insects.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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