

NORTHERN REDBELLY DACE (*Phoxinus eos*)



Image by John Lyons

Other common names: Yellowbelly dace, dace.

Identification: Body is stout and round in cross section. Snout is short and rounded; mouth is small, forward pointing, and slightly upturned. Scales are very small giving the fish a smooth skinned appearance. There are two distinct dark lines or bands on each side of the body: one is slightly below the lateral line and the other is located above it. The upper band may be interrupted and broken into dark spots toward the rear half of the fish. **Coloration:** Back and sides above the upper stripe are olive brown; sides between the two stripes are silvery or brassy; sides below the lower line and underside are silvery-white or yellowish. The underparts of male fish may be red during the peak spawning season and bright fluorescent yellow immediately prior to and following spawning. **Size:** Average about 2 inches.

Habitat: This is a fish of acidic lakes, beaver ponds, bogs and streams, although populations may also occur in non-acidic waters. It avoids fast moving waters preferring backwaters with silty bottoms and abundant aquatic vegetation. The northern redbelly dace is not particularly widespread in Vermont; however, in suitable habitats it can be quite abundant.

Bait use: Although not readily available through commercial bait dealers, it is trapped from the wild locally and used primarily for walleye bait.