



matures at age three. It spawns April through May. The male defends a small territory from other spotted suckers. Semi-adhesive eggs are broadcast at random and hatch in seven to 12 days. The spotted sucker has a maximum life span of about six years.

Habitats

Mississippi River

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

Mississippi River

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

spotted sucker

Minytrema melanops

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Osteichthyes
Family: Cypriniformes
Order: Catostomidae

Features

The spotted sucker is chunky and round bodied with a short dorsal fin. The lateral line (sensory organ on the side of the fish) is absent or very short. Parallel rows of dark spots along the side are easily seen. The rear edge of the lower lips forms a "V" shape. The back is dark olive-brown, the sides silvery or yellow-brown, and the belly silvery-white. The dorsal and tail fins are green or gray while the lower fins are white. A breeding male has two dark stripes on the side with a pink band between them and large tubercles (bumps) on the snout, head, and anal fin. Adults commonly are 10 to 16 inches long and weigh one-half to two pounds.

Natural History

The spotted sucker lives in clear, warm waters with little current, much vegetation, and a soft bottom. It is common in sloughs and backwaters of the Mississippi River. It feeds at dawn and dusk on zooplankton (microscopic animals), insects, and organic debris. It