



Blackspotted Topminnow (*Fundulus olivaceus*)

The blackspotted topminnow is a fish found in waters throughout Alabama.

Any topminnow is found near the water surface mostly in streams, rivers, reservoirs, swamps, and isolated oxbow lakes.*

A blackspotted topminnow is olive green on top and white on the bottom. It has a dark lateral stripe that runs from its mouth to its tail and small dark spots. The spots are an important difference between the blackspotted topminnow and the blackstripe topminnow. Dorsal, anal, and pelvic fins are faded yellow in color.* A male has spots on its dorsal fin and anal fin.* Fins on the female are colorless. An adult blackspotted topminnow is as long as or longer than your finger, two- to four-inches long.

The flat shaped head of the blackspotted topminnow and its rounded tail allow it to have bursts of speed in slow moving water. A blackspotted topminnow eats insects and small crustaceans.* When humans change the landscape, they may unknowingly alter water quality or habitat, thereby affecting aquatic animals. All living things benefit from clean water.

Vocabulary

Anal fin – a single fin on the bottom of a fish behind the anus.

Crustaceans – are invertebrate animals that have an external skeleton, a segmented body, and limbs with two parts; examples are copepods and daphnia.

Fins – are used to produce thrust and lift, allowing movement in water.

Dorsal fin – a fin or fins on the top part of a fish.

Oxbow lake – when a river meanders and then abandons the meander, an oxbow lake is formed.

Pelvic fins – a pair of side fins on the bottom of the fish.