

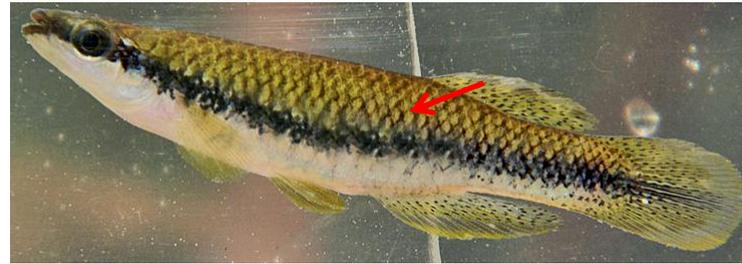
The Topminnows



Blackspotted and Blackstripe Topminnows



- Blackspotted (top) and blackstripe (right) topminnows look very similar and can be hard to distinguish as both species can have spots.
- The spots are more numerous and darker on blackspotted topminnows.
- When present, spots on the blackstripe topminnows are a rust colored and less numerous.
- Both species have dark black stripes, flattened heads and dorsal fins located far back on their body.



Fish Fact: Both species spend most of their time at the surface where their reflection creates a mirror image of them. This confuses predators who will often attack the mirror image, allowing the minnows to escape.

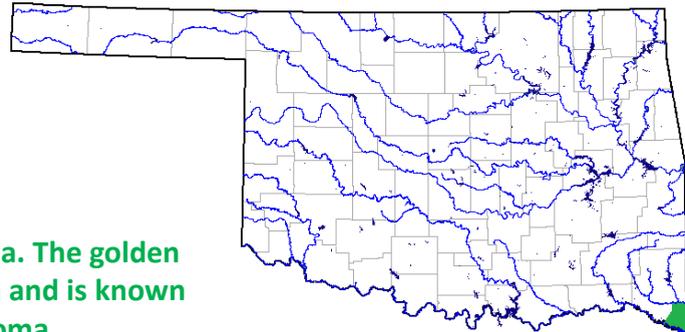
Golden and Western Starheaded Topminnows



- Golden (pictured) and western starheaded topminnows (not shown) look very similar.
- Both topminnows have gold or greenish bodies with spots and glitter-like flecks on their sides.
- Both species lack vertical bars or black stripes.
- Western starheaded topminnows have a black or blue teardrop below the eye and a yellowish spot on the top of the head between the eyes.
- Golden topminnows develop bright red fins during breeding season.



Fish Fact: Both species have very small ranges in Oklahoma. The golden topminnow has only recently been collected in Oklahoma and is known only from a few locations in extreme southeastern Oklahoma.



Plains Killifish



- Plains killifish are easily identified by their zebra-like vertical bars. Their body colors are silver or tan with black, rust or maroon stripes.
- Fins can be clear or dark orange in breeding males.
- Plains killifish are one of the hardiest fish in Oklahoma and can survive salinities greater than seawater and water temperatures similar to a hot tub.
- They are a western fish and thrive where other species struggle to survive.



Fish Fact: Plains killifish have been found in saltwater springs that are so salty almost nothing else can live there.

Red River Pupfish



- Red River pupfish are unique fish that do not resemble other topminnows.
- They are short, stocky and plump, seldom exceeding two inches. They are nearly as big as they are long.
- Their coloring is tan or white with a bronze or brown vertical blotches.
- Males develop an iridescent blue sheen on their backs and on the front of their eyes.



Fish Fact: Pupfish are very hardy fish that are often found in conjunction with plains killifish in western Oklahoma. They were once found solely in the Red River and its tributaries, but have been introduced to the Canadian and Cimarron rivers, where they have become common.

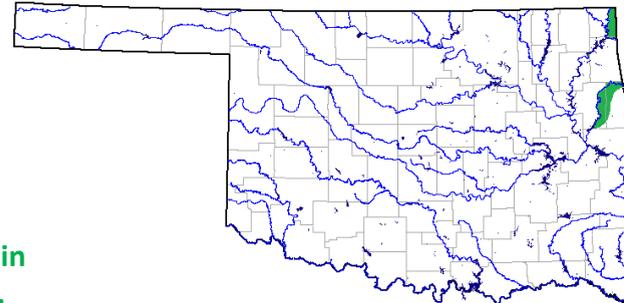
Northern Studfish



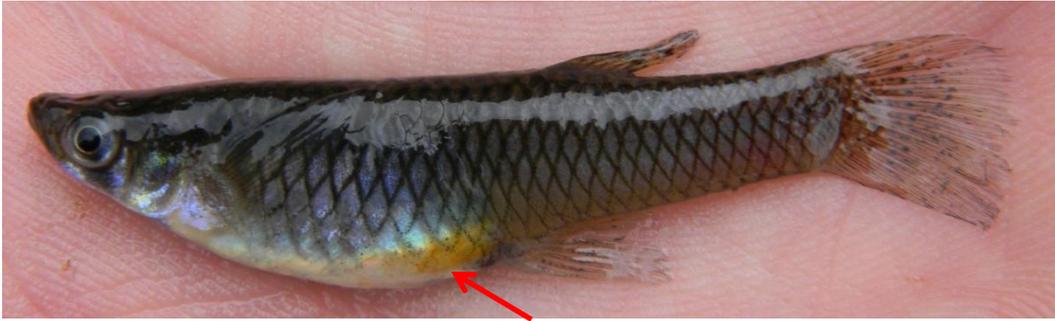
- Northern studfish have large eyes and beak-like mouths.
- The dorsal fin sits far back on the body and begins directly above the anal fin.
- Studfish have rows of spots on their sides, but the spots are bright orange in breeding males.
- Breeding males are unmistakable and have brilliant blue bodies and yellow heads.
- They also have a blue eyebrow-like slash above their eyes.

Biologist Tip: Northern studfish are often skittish and retreat when approached. When viewed from above, studfish swimming away can be identified by a shiny hash mark at the base of their dorsal.

Fish Fact: Northern studfish seem to be expanding their range in Oklahoma, so their current range may be larger than reported.



Mosquito Fish (Gambusia)



- Gambusia have large eyes located near the ends of their small, flattened heads.
- They have relatively large diamond-shaped scales that are etched in black.
- Their dorsals are located far back and they have a black or orange spot on their abdomen.
- They are live bearers, related to guppies. They give birth to fully developed young, basically mini versions of the adults.



Fish Fact: Mosquito fish eggs are incubated inside the mother and young are born alive. They can live in the shallowest of waters and are often touted as a biological control for mosquito larvae. However, studies have shown that they consume less mosquito larvae than many other native species.