

# Longnose Gar

## (*Lepisosteus osseus*)



### Relatives

Member of the Family Lepisosteidae which includes other gar.

### Description

A Slivery, gray to olive-brown color fish with a long, narrow snout and one row of teeth on the upper jaw only. They are scattered with dark spots on the fins and body.

### Size

1½ - 6ft (.5-1.8m)

### Habitat

Prefer to live in slow-moving pools in rivers and lakes. Occasionally found in brackish water. Like areas with high vegetation.

### Predators

Eaten by fish.

### Diet/Prey

Feed on gizzard shad, other fish, frogs and crayfish.

### Reproduction

Spawn in April to May in shallow weedy or rocky areas. Female may spawn with 2-6 males at one time. She can lay up to 36,000 large (1/6 in/ 3.8mm) eggs that attach to the substrate. Eggs hatch in 3-9 days.

### Adaptations

- Gar have long, scissor-like mouths filled with needle-like teeth that they use to grab prey.
- Gar float with the currents using stealth alongside a prey item (a behavioral adaptation). They try to appear similar to the vegetation floating in their environment. They then quickly turn their head to the side and grab the prey.
- Gar have fins that help them to swim in water.
- Gar have gills that enable them to get oxygen out of the water.
- Gar have thick, hard scales that protect their bodies.
- Gar have spots on their fins and bodies that help them to blend in with their environment. The spots break up the outline of the fish.
- Gar have dark backs and light bellies, they are countershaded. This fish feeds at the surface, so countershading helps the gar not to be seen by fish swimming above or below.
- Gar have a primitive, lung-like air bladder and can gulp air at the surface. This body parts allows gar to survive in water with low oxygen content.
- Gar have internal organs that function in freshwater. Although gar can live in brackish water (a mixture of salt and fresh water), they cannot survive in salt water.