



other submerged vegetation. Eggs hatch in about five days. The slough darter feeds often in the spring but little in the summer. The slough darter eats insects and crustaceans.

HABITATS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bottomland forests | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> rivers & streams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lakes, ponds & reservoirs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> swamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lake Michigan | <input type="checkbox"/> temp water supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> marshes | <input type="checkbox"/> wet prairies & fens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> peatlands | |

ILLINOIS STATUS

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> common | <input type="checkbox"/> endangered | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> native | <input type="checkbox"/> exotic | |

ILLINOIS RANGE

southern 1/2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999. *Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume I: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.

slough darter

Etheostoma gracile

Kingdom: Animalia
 Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
 Class: Osteichthyes
 Order: Perciformes
 Family: Percidae

FEATURES

The slough darter's lateral line arches upward. This lateral line is incomplete and marked with a pale streak. There are no scales on the breast, the front of the belly and the body in front of the dorsal fin. The back is brown and may have nine or 10 crossbars. The sides are light brown with green blotches or bars and dark zigzag lines. The red eye is surrounded by four dark lines. The first dorsal fin is black at the base and has a red band and a row of red dots. The second dorsal fin and tail fin have brown lines. The average length for a slough darter is about one and one-half to two inches.

BEHAVIORS

The slough darter lives in swamps, sloughs, ditches and creeks which have clear water, little or no current and many plants. This fish reaches maturity at about one year of age. It spawns in late May. The male courts the female by following her, stroking her with his pectoral fins and rubbing his chin on her head and snout. The eggs are laid and fertilized one at a time, being deposited on a stick or