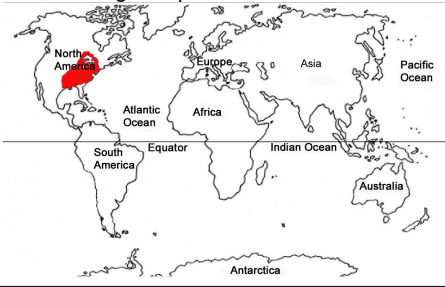


# Common Shiner

Native Range Map



Kingdom: Animalia  
Phylum: Chordata  
Subphylum: Vertebrata  
Class: Actinopterygii  
Order: Cypriniformes  
Family: Cyprinidae  
Genus: *Notropis*  
Species: *cornutus*



Photo courtesy of Janet Wisneski

## Habitat

- **In the Wild:** Populations of the common shiner range in North America from the Atlantic Ocean, Great Lakes, Hudson Bay, and the Mississippi River basins from Nova Scotia to southeastern Saskatchewan and Quebec, south to New York and the James River drainage in Virginia, northern Ohio, central Missouri, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, and the Gulf Coast. The shiner is found in both warm and cold, clear water of small tributaries, lakes, and rivers.
- **Exhibit Location:** Adaptation

## Characteristics

- Length: up to 8 inches (averages 2 ½ - 4 inches)
- The common shiner has a stout, robust body, appearing flattened side to side. The head, eyes, and mouth are relatively large in comparison to similar species. The mouth is almost horizontal.
- The shiner is an olive-green color with a silvery belly and bluish reflections down the middle of the back. Stripes, which can be seen from above, run parallel down the sides of the fish.
- Breeding males are tinted with pink over their entire body with dusky dorsal (back) and tail fins.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild** 4-6 years; **In Captivity** Unknown

## Behaviors

- Shiners feed at or below the water surface.
- They may form schools.
- Shiners prefer areas without fast moving water. They will tolerate some salt, but cannot survive in muddy water.
- The common shiner is a baitfish. It will take a fly readily and is easily and often caught by beginner fishers.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** Food items, otters trying to get them

## Reproduction

- Shiners become sexually mature at age 2.
- The shiner spawns in the spring, between May and June, when the water is about 65°F. The spawning occurs over gravel, often over the nest of a creek chub, river chub or fallfish. Some males will excavate their own nests. Shiners will often hybridize (cross breed) with other species of minnow spawning at the same time or over the same nest.
- Fertility is 400-1950 eggs per female.

## Diet

- **In the Wild:** insects, worms, micro crustaceans, spiders, small fish
- **At the Zoo:** Brine shrimp, smelt, gelatin, various other frozen foods

## Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** not listed; **CITES Appendix:** not listed

- Although shiners are important forage fish for other species and are popular bait for fisherpersons, they are not endangered in most places. However, they are of special concern in Nebraska and Wyoming and are threatened in Colorado. The reasons for this have not yet been specifically identified.
- Predators: northern pike, muskies, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, eagles, grebes, herons, kingfishers, mergansers

### **Did You Know?/Fun Facts**

- *Notropis cornutus* is also known as *Luxilus cornutus*.
- The common shiner has dark coloration behind scattered scales, which makes it appear as if it has lost some scales.
- The common shiner, being that it is so common, goes by many names. These names include: Creek Shiner, Eastern Shiner, Hornyhead, Redfin Shiner, Rough-head, Silver Shiner, Dace, Silverside and Skipjack. In fact, the name common shiner refers to its widespread distribution and abundance as the ‘shiny’ minnow.
- The first common shiner was imported from Asia.

### **Sources:**

- Hasse, J.J., & Stegemann, E.C. (1992). Some Common Minnows of New York. *The Conservationist*, July/August, Retrieved May 7, 2007, from <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7040.html>
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources. (2001). *Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.
- Jenkins, R.E., & N.M. Burkhead. (1993). The virtual aquarium: Common shiner, *Luxilus cornutus*. Retrieved May 7, 2007, from The Virtual Aquarium Web site: <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/efish/families/commonshiner.html>
- Kraft, C.E., D.M. Carlson, and M. Carlson. (2006). *Inland fishes of new york* (online) version 4.0. Department of Natural Resources, Cornell University, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Retrieved April 25, 2006, from Cornell University Web site: [http://www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/fish/nyfish/Cyprinidae/common\\_shiner.html](http://www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/fish/nyfish/Cyprinidae/common_shiner.html)
- Robins, C.R., R.M. Bailey, C.E. Bond, J.R. Brooker, E.A. Lachner, R.N. Lea and W.B. Scott. (1991). *Luxilus cornutus* Common shiner. Retrieved May 7, 2007, from FishBase Web site: <http://www.fishbase.org/Summary/SpeciesSummary.php?id=2851>
- Rook, Earl J.S. (1999). *Notropis cornuta*: Common shiner. Retrieved April 25, 2006 from <http://www.rook.org/earl/bwca/nature/fish/notropiscorn.html>
- Wyoming Game & Fish, Common shiner (*Luxilus cornutus*). Retrieved May 7, 2007, from Wyoming Game & Fish Web site: <http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/CompConvStrategy/Species/Fish/PDFS/Common%20Shiner.pdf>