

BLEEDING & DUSKYSTRIPED SHINERS
(Notropis zonatus & N. pilsbryi)

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The Bleeding & Duskystripe Shiners (Notropis zonatus & N. pilsbryi) are two closely related species in the subgenus Luxilus. They are found in the Ozarks of Missouri and Arkansas. The Duskystripe is also found in parts of Kansas and Oklahoma. The two species never occur together.

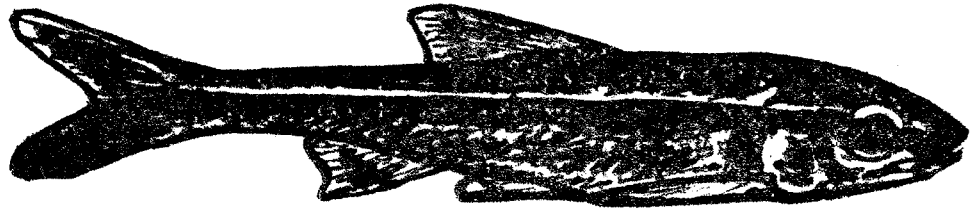
The Bleeding Shiner is aptly named. It is a silvery minnow with two black stripes separated by a gold iridescent stripe. One of the black stripes is more prominent than the other and extends to the tip of the snout, growing narrower as it reaches the gills. The belly is whitish and the fins are plain, except in breeding males; their heads, bodies, and fins turn bright red.

The Duskystripe is not as appropriately named. It does have a "dusky" stripe, but this isn't its most outstanding feature. The breeding male turns an intense red and has a blue nose. The species could very easily be called the Bluenose Shiner, but of course that name is already taken by the elusive N. welaka. The Duskystripe Shiner is very much like the Bleeding Shiner, but differs in the following ways:

- *the prominent dark stripe doesn't become abruptly narrower behind the gills as it does in the Bleeding Shiner;
- *breeding males have more red on the fins and body than do male Bleedings;
- *the tip of the snout is powder-blue in breeding males; and
- *it does not have a dark bar along the rear margin of its gill opening as the Bleeding does.

I have collected Bleedings in several places in central Missouri, but my favorite spot is the Saline Creek near Eldon, Missouri. The Duskystripe has a more limited distribution in Missouri. I have collected it in the Spring River near Carhage in southwest Missouri.

Both fish spawn from late April to early July in Missouri, according to Pflieger's Fishes of Missouri. Duskystripe and Bleedings spawn in depressions or pits. Most often, these fish spawn over the nests of other minnows such as the Hornyhead Chub (Nocomis biguttatus) and stonerollers (Campestris species). Spawning groups of a hundred or more are not uncommon.



BLEEDING SHINER, m., 3", out of color. Bright red-orange on upper lip, pectoral base, &, vertically, on cheek. Some red-orange on unpaired fins. Green-gold dorsal midline & under dorsal; and above dark midlateral stripe. Hand-darkened in hope of better reproduction.

These fish have similar habits. They school in midwinter with other minnows such as the Rosyface (Notropis rubellus), Wedgespot (N. greeni), and Telescope Shiners (N. telescopus). They seem to feed by sight, and in the aquarium they eat just about anything. In the wild, both species feed primarily on insects or invertebrates. Both fish have terminal, oblique mouths and large eyes.

These fish grow to about 85 mm, according to the Atlas. Pflieger says they average 3.5 to 4.5 inches and reach a maximum of 4.8. The fish I have are about 4". I keep them in 20-gallon-long tanks. The Bleeding Shiners made the adjustment to life in the aquarium quicker than the Duskystripes did, but both are doing well. Their striking colors have faded, but have not altogether disappeared.

The Bleeding and Duskystripe Shiners are sure to become favorites as people become aware of them. The Duskystripe, with its powder-blue nose, may become as sought-after as N. welaka (certainly they are easier to come by). Both species are interesting and attractive.

References

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