

## BLACKMOUTH SHINER

*Miniellus melanostomus*

**Order:** Cypriniformes

**Family:** Leuciscidae

**FNAI Ranks:** G2/S1

**U.S. Status:** none

**FL Status:** Threatened



**Description:** Minnow-sized fish, up to 1 - 1.5 in. (25 - 38 mm), with large eyes, strongly upturned mouth, and nearly transparent fins; edges of dorsal scales black, dorsolateral pale grey area; black stripe along the midside that passes through the eye and onto snout; ventral surface silver; peritoneum black.

**Similar Species:** Blackmouth shiners are fairly nondescript and can be mistaken for other superficially similar minnows and young shiners; golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*) has fleshy keel that extends from between the pelvic fins to the anal fin; pugnose minnow (*Opsopoeodus emiliae*) also has an upturned mouth, but the mouth shape has a peculiar “puckered” appearance.

**Habitat:** Calm, shallow backwaters of blackwater streams below steep, vegetated banks; usually found in schools.

**Seasonal Occurrence:** Present in all seasons. However, may be absent from sites for years, only to reappear.

**Florida Distribution:** Restricted to backwater pools of lower Blackwater River and Pond Creek near Milton, Santa Rosa County, and the Shoal River near Mossy Head, Walton County.

**Range-wide Distribution:** Pascagoula River system in Mississippi and above-mentioned Florida sites.

**Conservation Status:** Urban and industrial development of the Milton, Florida, region is rapidly degrading habitat; extirpation of Florida populations is likely in foreseeable future.

**Protection and Management:** Maintain integrity of stream systems, prevent habitat destruction and pollution.

**References:** Bortone 1989, Bortone 1993, Gilbert (ed.) 1992, Hoehn 1998, Page and Burr 1998.

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