



Redspotted Sunfish (*Lepomis miniatus*)

The redspotted sunfish lives in rivers, swamps and oxbow lakes of Alabama, but it is rarely found in high numbers.* It is most abundant in the Mobile Delta.

A breeding male redspotted sunfish is colorful.* It has rows of brilliant orange-red spots on its body. Its tail fin is yellowish orange. The edges of its other fins become lemon-yellow during breeding season. At other times of the year, males and females are relatively drab. Their backs are olive to brown. The sides are pale olive with scattered bluish highlights, fading to yellow below.

The redspotted sunfish has ear flaps that are bony and generally inflexible. Its pectoral fins are short and rounded; they cannot reach forward past the eye.* The mouth of redspotted sunfish is small and does not reach the front of its eye. A redspotted sunfish often eats immature insects, mainly midge larvae.*

Maintaining healthy places for redspotted sunfish, other aquatic life, terrestrial wildlife and people in Alabama depend on each person taking responsibility to be informed about our natural world.

***Vocabulary**

Breeding – ready to reproduce.

Immature – have not yet become adults; some insects look very different depending upon whether they are immature or mature.

Larvae – an immature insect of a species that changes (undergoes metamorphosis) into adult; larvae and adults look very different (caterpillars are larvae and butterflies are adults).

Midge – an insect that, as an adult, looks like a mosquito, but it does not feed as an adult.

Oxbow lake – when a river bends and over time separates from the bend, an oxbow lake is formed.

Pectoral fins – a pair of side fins behind the head.

Terrestrial – living on land; not aquatic.