

Mooneye

Hiodon tergisus

By Mark Martin



Taxonomy

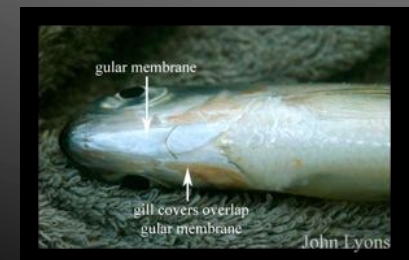
- ▶ Class: *Actinopterygii*, Ray-finned fishes
- ▶ Subclass: *Neopterygii*
- ▶ Infraclass: *Teleostei*
- ▶ Superorder: *Osteoglossomorpha*
- ▶ Order: *Osteoglossiformes*, Bony tongues
- ▶ Suborder: *Notopteroidei*
- ▶ Family: *Hiodontidae*, Mooneyes
- ▶ Genus: *Hiodon*, The mooneyes
- ▶ Species: *Hiodon tergisus*, Mooneye

Identification

- ▶ Silvery in color with big silver eye
 - Top view has darker hue than silvery sides
 - No distinguishing markings on body
- ▶ **Fleshy keel**
- ▶ Small terminal mouth
- ▶ Homocercal, Forked tail
- ▶ Rounded top part of body from head to dorsal fin
- ▶ Big cycloid scales with present lateral line
- ▶ Total length typically between 200-300mm (7.87- 11.81in)

Distinguishing Characteristics

- ▶ Fleshy keel extends from anus to pelvic fin
- ▶ Teeth on tongue
- ▶ Gular membrane on anteriorly ventral side of fish
- ▶ 11-12 soft dorsal fin rays with 26-29 anal fin rays
 - Origin of both fins in line with each other on the posterior part of the fish
- ▶ 52-57 lateral line scales



Similar species

- ▶ Goldeye (*Hiodon alosoides*)
 - Different in coloration, shape of body, keel length, more anal fin rays
- ▶ Herring (Clupeidae)
 - Scaly keel, no gular membrane, lateral line absent, and many more gill rakers



Distribution and Status

- ▶ Great Lakes basin (except Lake Superior)
- ▶ Mississippi drainage basin
- ▶ Southern Canada
- ▶ Threatened in Michigan
- ▶ Globally secure



Life history

- ▶ Live about 8 years
- ▶ Spawn in Spring
 - Spawn in large clear streams and back areas
- ▶ Eggs are dispersed randomly
 - Between 10,000 and 20,000 eggs
 - Deposit eggs in swift current over rocks

Habitat and diet

- ▶ Medium to large streams and freshwater lakes
- ▶ In lakes
 - Pelagic
 - Near shore
 - Near surface
- ▶ In rivers
 - Deep pools
 - Slow current
 - Firm substrate
- ▶ Diet
 - Surface insects, insect larvae, and small fish

Other facts

- ▶ Common names
 - Mooneye
 - Freshwater Herring
 - Toothed Herring
 - River Whitefish
- ▶ Once entered commercial catch in a small way
- ▶ Intolerant to turbidity and silt
- ▶ Pollution has led to decline in numbers

