

Longnose Gar



photo-Rob Criswell

CANDIDATE
for endangered
species list



Longnose Gar

Family: Gars (*Lepisosteidae*).
PA Watershed Range: Erie, Ohio.

Take one look at the snout of this fish and you'll know how it was named! There are two gar species native to Pennsylvania waters: The longnose gar and the spotted gar. The spotted gar is endangered in Pennsylvania. Longnose gar can live to be 20 years old and grow to a length of about 50 inches.

Gars are primitive bony fishes identified by their long, narrow jaws and diamond-shaped scales. Gars have a lunglike bladder that allows them to breathe air. This lets them live in low-oxygen conditions, including the shallow water of lakes and rivers, their preferred habitat.

Gars prey on a wide variety of fish, ambushing their prey. These fish are sometimes observed floating at the water's surface, and they may look like a small log. The longnose gar spawns in late spring when the water temperature approaches 70 degrees. The eggs are adhesive and poisonous to humans and other mammals. The eggs hatch in about six days. Young fish may reach 18 inches in their first season.