



Northern Redbelly Dace



NORTHERN REDBELLY DACE

NAMES: Scientific: *Phoxinus eos*. *eos* is Greek for dawn or sunrise, referring to the red coloration. Other common names: red bellied dace, ventre rouge du nord.

DISTRIBUTION: The northern redbelly dace is distributed from Nova Scotia through southern Quebec and northern New England, westward through New York and Ontario to Manitoba and Alberta, south into Nebraska and Wisconsin. In Vermont the redbelly dace is found in ponds and streams mainly in the central and northern portions of the state.

HABITAT: This species is an inhabitant of boggy (tea-colored) waters of lakes, ponds, and streams. In Vermont it is also found in clear streams. In running water it is found in the slow currents of pools over bottoms of silt, sometimes near vegetation.

REPRODUCTION: Little is known of the spawning habits of this little fish. It has been reported that spawning takes place during a protracted period of time generally between May and August. Females may spawn twice during this period. Observations of mating noted it took place on algal mats near the bottom. It is probably able to spawn on other substrates as well. The eggs hatch in 8–10 days at temperatures of 70–80° F. Both sexes mature by age 2.

FOOD: The redbelly dace is omnivorous, consuming algae, aquatic insects, and zooplankton.

SIZE AND AGE: Maximum length is reported at 3.3 inches. The oldest redbelly dace was reported to be 8 years of age.

REMARKS: This species is sometimes used as bait for walleye; otherwise it is not considered an important bait species. In Vermont it is mostly obtained from minnow traps in streams or ponds. The northern redbelly dace hybridizes readily with the closely related finescale dace. The hybrids are difficult to distinguish from the two parent species. Northern redbelly dace also have been reported to hybridize with the northern subspecies of pearl dace (*Margariscus margarita nachtriebi*).