

Fish Common Name and ID: Redbreast Sunfish_LM30

By: Arline Melgen



Scientific Name: *Lepomis auritis*

Location Collection: Little Mulberry Park in Gwinnet County - Dacula, GA

Location Coordinates: 34.050373, -83.889477

Diversity Statistics (Shannon H' values):

H' = 1.722178515 Var H': 0.011670419

Taxonomic Information:

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Perciformes

Family: Centrarchidae

Genus: *Lepomis*

Species Name: *L. auritis*

Common Name: Redbreast Sunfish

Morphological Characteristics: Compared to other species of genus *Lepomis*, the Redbreast Sunfish has a long black opercular flap with a shiny blue/white edging dorsally and ventrally. A fairly large mouth with wavy and bright blue streaks on their upper lips and head. They have a shorter pectoral fin and orange/red coloration in their median fins. They may also have red, or orange breasts and they can change color and patterns with age or during breeding seasons. Redbreast Sunfish have a more elongated body and light orange spots on their lower side. The Redbreast Sunfish is one of the brightest-colored sunfish.

Habitat/Environment: The Redbreast Sunfish inhabits sandy and rocky creeks and rivers. When they are not participating in mating activities, they are often found in deeper pools of creeks near fallen trees or large rocks. Hiding in environments with lots of vegetation and boulders gives them protection against predators. They are mostly found in areas with slow moving water such as backwaters of streams and rivers as well as upstream reaches of reservoirs. Redbreast Sunfish like to feed on aquatic and terrestrial insects, insect larvae, crayfish, snails, and other small fish in the *Micropterus* genus.

Reproduction: Redbreast Sunfish produce/spawn eggs late May through the end of July when the water temperature is between 65°F and 75 °F. The female can lay around 300 to 10,000 eggs in a substrate depression built by the male. The number of eggs that they can lay is dependent on their body size. The males build these nests in shallow water on sand or gravel substrates. The nests can either be solitary or in groups of more than 80 nests. The male will also guard the eggs as they prepare to hatch.

Species Interactions: The Redbreast Sunfish compete with other sunfish and larger predatory fish that prey on the same food that they do. Larger piscivorous fish are the main threat to smaller sunfish because of shared habitats.

DNA Sequence

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CCTACTANTTTTCGAGCAGAGCTCAGTCAACCAGGCGCCCTCCTCGGAGACGACCAGATTTACAATGTTAT
CGTAACAGCACATGCATTTGTAATAATTTTCTTTATAGTGATACCAATCATAATTGGAGGTTTCGGCAACTG
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TTTTCCGGAANAA
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