

Lepisosteidae spp.

Gar

Lepisosteidae, the ray-finned fish



Diagnostic Characteristics

- Elongated, cylindrical fish with slender snouts and sharp needle-like teeth
- Dorsal and anal fins located near caudal area; body covered in diamond shaped scales
- Green to brown in color on upper surface; yellow to white on lower surface
- Several species of gar (alligator, Cuban, Florida, longnose, shortnose, spotted, and tropical – distinguishing characteristics are the number of teeth rows and location of spots)
- Adults range in size from 1 to over 9 feet long depending on species
- Possess swim bladder that allows them to breath air

Background

- Native to eastern, central and southern parts of the U.S., Cuba, and Central America
- Inhabits rivers and lakes in warm, shallow, and well-vegetated areas
- Can tolerate brackish water and water with low dissolved oxygen levels
- Carnivorous and considered a dominate predator within its environment
- Will eat fish, insects, and other invertebrates

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