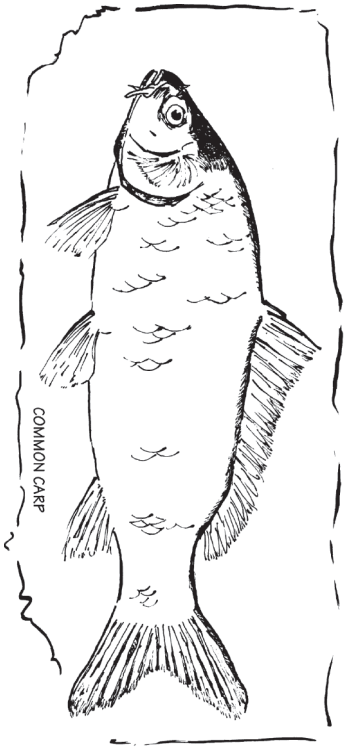
Aquatic Exotic Species
Fact Cards

The *Aquatic Exotic Species Fact Cards* can be used to support the lessons in Units 1, 2 and 3. They can also be used independently for students to learn more about these species and to encourage further research.

STUDENT ACTIVITY | Aquatic Exotic Species Fact Cards



common carp
Cyprinus carpio

Kingdom Animalia
Phylum Chordata
Superclass Osteichthyes
Class Actinopterygii

LOCATION – statewide - exotic

FEATURES – two barbels on each side of lower jaw; introduced in the late 1800s; native to Asia

HABITAT – lakes, ponds, rivers

HABITS – bottom forager; feeds in late evening and early morning

purple loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

Kingdom Plantae

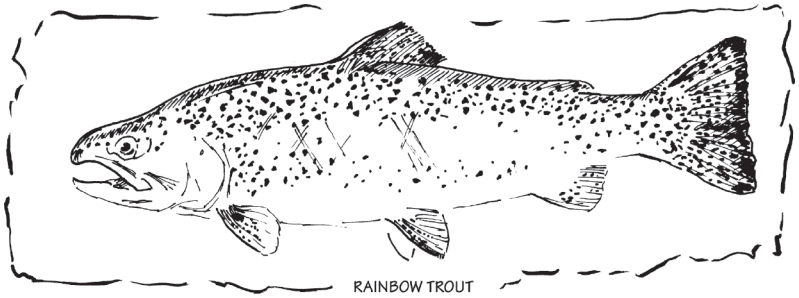
Division Tracheophyta

LOCATION – mainly northern and northeastern Illinois - exotic

FEATURES – can distribute two million seeds per year; no native predators; native to Europe and Asia; in Illinois since about 1940

HABITAT – disturbed, moist soils; marshes; lake shores

HABITS – forms dense stands; animals will not eat it; crowds out native species



rainbow trout

Salmo gairdneri

Kingdom Animalia

Phylum Chordata

Superclass Osteichthyes

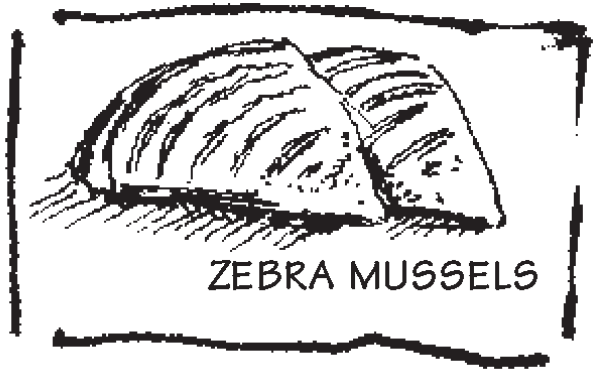
Class Actinopterygii

LOCATION – Lake Michigan and inland lakes where stocking occurs - exotic

FEATURES – native to the Pacific coast of North America; pink stripe on side; adipose fin; introduced in the 1920s

HABITAT – water bodies with cool temperatures

HABITS – eats insects, snails and small fishes



zebra mussel
Dreissena polymorpha

Kingdom Animalia

Phylum Mollusca

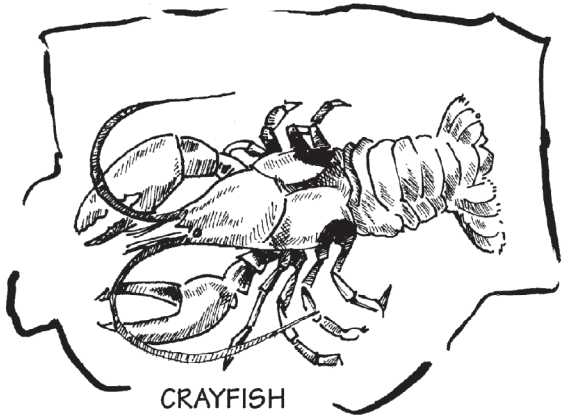
Class Bivalvia

LOCATION – Lake Michigan and large rivers - exotic

FEATURES – found in Illinois waters in 1990; may produce up to one million eggs at once; native to Caspian Sea region of Asia

HABITAT – lakes, rivers

HABITS – filter feeder; will attach to nearly anything in water



rusty crayfish
Orconectes rusticus

Kingdom Animalia

Phylum Arthropoda

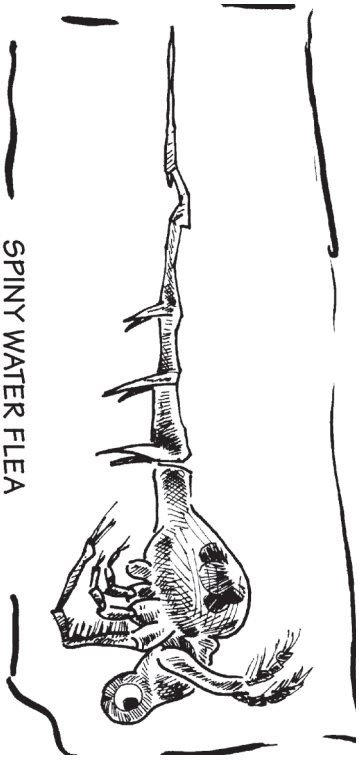
Class Malacostraca

LOCATION – Lake Michigan; Fox, Illinois and Rock river systems - exotic

FEATURES – native to Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee; large red spot on each side of carapace; believed to have been introduced in the 1970s

HABITAT – streams and lakes

HABITS – aggressive; reduces aquatic vegetation



SPINY WATER FLEA

spiny water flea
Bythotrephes cederstroemi

Kingdom Animalia
Phylum Arthropoda
Class Branchiopoda

LOCATION – Lake Michigan, possibly some inland lakes - exotic

FEATURES – native of Europe; present in Illinois by 1987; reproduces rapidly; long, barbed tail spine

HABITAT – cool, deep lakes

HABITS – eats plankton

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