

**REDISCOVERY OF THE GREATER  
REDHORSE (*MOXOSTOMA  
VALENCIENNESI* JORDAN)  
(CYPRINIFORMES: CATOSTOMIDAE)  
IN ILLINOIS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The first collection of the greater redhorse (*Moxostoma valenciennesi* Jordan) in Illinois since 1901 is described.

The inclusion of the greater redhorse (*Moxostoma valenciennesi*) in the indigenous fish fauna of Illinois is based on the collection of one specimen from Salt Creek (DuPage County) in 1901 (Smith 1979). It has not been reported from Illinois waters since, and Smith (1979) considered it as long extirpated from the states ichthyofauna.

On July 30, 1985, the author collected a single specimen (total length = 403 mm) by electrofishing in the Illinois River at River Mile 249. Approximately 45 minutes of additional effort between RM 249 and 249.7 failed to yield any additional specimens. The single specimen collected was verified by Dr. Lawrence Page of the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) and it has been deposited in the INHS museum as INHS 69169.

Although the species occurs in the upper Great Lakes region from Minnesota eastward to New York, it is considered uncommon or rare throughout much of its range (Jenkins 1970). Although unreported since 1901 in Illinois, it was collected in the mid-70's from the Rock River and Turtle Creek in adjacent Rock County, Wisconsin (Pago 1982). It apparently is more widely distributed in Wisconsin than in any other state, but even there most records are based on only one or two specimens (Becker 1983). It is also known to occur immediately adjacent to Illinois in Vigo County, Indiana (Whitaker and Wallace 1973). The greater redhorse is the rarest of the six redhorse species known from Illinois. Golden redhorse (*Moxostoma*

*erythrurum*), silver redhorse (*M. anisurum*), and shorthead redhorse (*M. macrolepidotum*) are distributed throughout Illinois and are locally common. River redhorse (*M. carinatum*) and black redhorse (*M. duquesnei*), though known from a variety of localities across the state, are typically rare or uncommon (Smith 1979). All six species occur in the upper Illinois River system (Smith 1979, EA 1984, this report), but only golden, silver, and shorthead redhorse are regularly collected.

Because redhorse were only infrequently collected before the advent of electrofishing gear, their true historical abundance is difficult to determine. Even now redhorse often are listed only as redhorse spp. in surveys conducted by fish departments in most states. It seems safe to say, however, that the greater redhorse was never common nor widely distributed in Illinois. The specimen collected from the Illinois River presumably is part of a larger population residing somewhere in the Illinois River Basin. It was collected near the mouth of the South Kickapoo Creek but it is highly unlikely that it would reside in such a small stream. The Fox and Big Vermillion Rivers both join the Illinois River within about 20 river miles of this record. Perhaps one or the other of these rivers serves as a refugia for the greater redhorse. Additional collecting in the upper Illinois River mainstem and in some of its larger tributaries seems warranted.

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