

THIS NON-NATIVE FISH IS A COMMON BAITFISH USED IN LAKE GEORGE

BANDED KILLIFISH

Banded Killifish (*Fundulus diaphanous*) is a freshwater fish species that can enter brackish water and is a non-native species that was introduced to Lake George as a forage species for larger fish. Banded killifish is the only freshwater member of the killifish family present in New York. They live in the weedy shallows on a variety of substrates. When threatened, they can burrow into the sand or fine gravel to hide. They are on the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Baitfish "Green List," meaning they can be purchased and used in any body of water in New York where it is legal to use fish as bait.

Banded Killifish have slender elongated bodies with flat sides, tail squares, scales and no lateral lines. They are generally olive green to tan, with sides and belly silvery to white. The



Banded killifish is an important forage fish for larger prey species, like trout, salmon and pike.

body is quite transparent as are the pelvic fins. There are 11-20 narrow vertical bars on killifish's sides. Their mouth is directed upward. The largest adults can reach 4 inches in length. Males will become brightly colored during the spawning season.

Spawning takes place in May when waters reach 21 degrees C. Males will select territories and defend them. Each male pursues a female; during the chase she will lay a single egg that remains attached to her body by a fine thread. This stimulates

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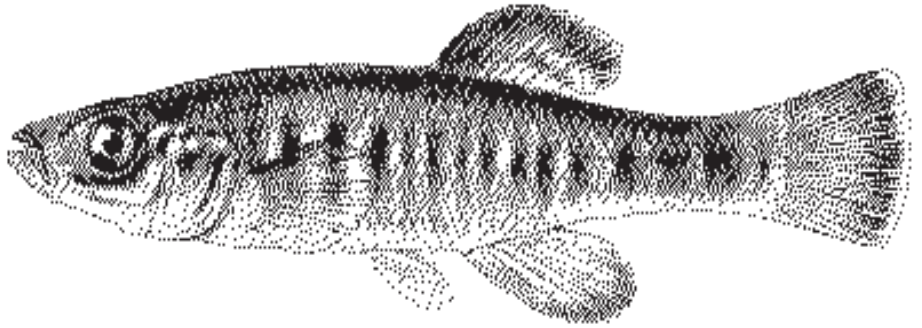
Banded Killifish

LAKE GEORGE FACT SHEET

the male into pursuing her further. Eventually the female and male banded killifish will come together in the vegetation where they press together and vibrate. The female will then lay 5-10 eggs and start to move away. The male will then chase her again. This courtship will take place repeatedly until the female has laid approximately 50 eggs. Both parents show no awareness of the eggs. Hatching takes place after 11 days.

The young banded killifish reach 20-58mm by the end of their first summer. While the killifish's mouth is upturned they will feed at all level of the water column and substrate. They primarily feed on; midge larvae, flying insects, mollusks and flatworms. Banded Killifish are fed on by larger fish species, which is why they are used as a baitfish.

Killifish are commonly used throughout New York as bait and are not considered to be a threat to native fish species, which is why they were introduced in a bottom up effort to improve the Lake George fishery. It is legal to use them in any body of



Banded killifish are regularly used as bait and are approved for use throughout the state by the NYSDEC in water where fish can be used as bait.

water in New York except for trout waters where baitfish is prohibited.

For additional information on fishing regulations in New York State please visit the website of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (www.dec.ny.gov).

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