

Albinistic Spotted Gar, *Lepisosteus oculatus*, in Oklahoma

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Among North American fishes, albinism is rare. Only 107 of 1498 references to piscine anomalies (7%) compiled by Dawson (1) dealt with this phenomenon. None was listed for the genus *Lepisosteus*.

On 17 May 1993, I shot an albinistic spotted gar (*Lepisosteus oculatus*) while bowfishing in Lake Lawtonka, Comanche County, Oklahoma. The fish was resting quietly near the surface in clear, well-vegetated water about 30 cm deep, where fairly dense stands of smartweeds (*Polygonum* sp.), scattered black willows (*Salix nigra*), and buttonbushes (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) provided cover. The air temperature was 33 °C and the water was several degrees cooler.

The fish was a gravid female measuring 619 mm (TL) and weighing 827 g. It was not a complete albino, for its eyes were pigmented heavily with black. Although the top of the snout was colorless and no body or fin spotting was evident, a lateral scale count of 57 separated it from the morphologically similar short-nosed gar (*L. platostomus*). The overall color was a dull white, with a pale yellowish tinge. This yellow wash extended posteriorly from the nape approximately 15 cm, and was also evident around and between the eyes. The gular region and ventrolateral aspects of the head were a paler shade of yellow. Other colorless areas included a dime-sized spot atop the head, the sides of the head, and the opercula. The venter was off-white. The fins were transparent except for the first two or three outer rays of the pectorals and dorsal fin and the anteriormost four or five anal rays, which were yellow. The snout had a pinkish hue except for its yellow-tinged base. This fish was deposited in the Cameron University Museum of Zoology in Lawton, Oklahoma (CUMZ-F38).

This report apparently represents the first documentation of albinism for the genus *Lepisosteus*. However, on 6 May 1980, in this same lake I had observed, but did not capture, another white gar which was estimated to be about 36 cm TL (2).

REFERENCES

1. Dawson, C.E., A bibliography of anomalies of fishes. *Gulf Res. Repts.* **1**(6), 1-399 (1964, and supplements in 1966, 1971, and 1976).
2. Tyler, J.D., White gar in Lake Lawtonka, southwestern Oklahoma. *Bull. Oklahoma Herpetol. Soc.* **5**(2), 22 (1980).