

Blind Cavefish



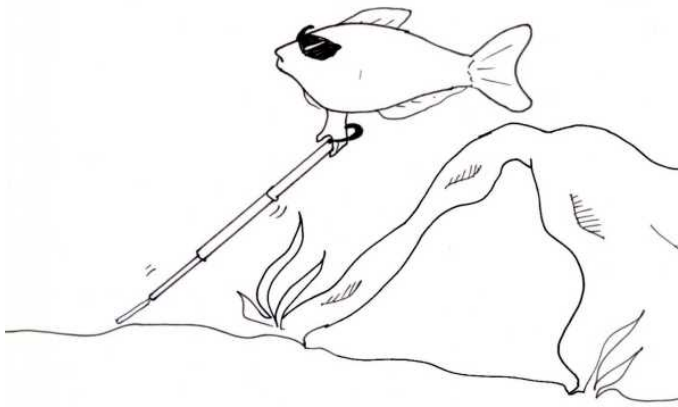
What do we look like?

There are many species of Blind Cave Fish. Most of us grow to around two inches in length. We get our names for two reasons. First is because we live in underground lake systems in North and South America. Secondly, we are completely blind. We don't need any colors or patterns on our scales to camouflage us to other predators because the caves are pitch dark. We are blind because we do not need to have functional eyesight in our constantly-dark environment.



What do we eat?

We eat eyeless amphipods, cave snails, blind crayfish, white isopods, eyeless flatworms, and copepods. Since we don't have eyes, we "see" with sensory organs on our head and sides. The small whisker-like projections help us feel our way through the water and detect the movements of our prey.



Where do we live?

We live in completely dark, underground caves of Southern Missouri, and underground lakes in Mexico. These areas are ideal because the caves have constant temperatures and stable oxygen levels. We have slow metabolisms and do not require much food.



Something interesting about us...

- We are listed as a "threatened" species under the Federal Endangered Species Act. In the state of Missouri we are classified as an "endangered species".
- Some current threats to us: water pollution, human disturbance, and alterations or destruction of cave habitats.
- Because the caves are without sunlight we don't have any use for eyes, but our other senses have become extra-sensitive.

