

Minnow

Phoxinus phoxinus

Fish · Here all year · spawns May-Jun



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A small, slim, olive-brown fish with a dark mottled pattern along the flank, a pale belly and rounded fins. In the breeding season males are transformed: the throat and belly flush bright scarlet, the fins redden and the back darkens, and the head develops small white breeding tubercles. Minnows shoal in the clean, well-oxygenated shallows of the Nith and its tributaries.

BEHAVIOUR

Minnows are highly social and shoal tightly, feeding on insect larvae, small crustaceans and algae. They are a classic subject in the study of alarm signals: damaged skin releases a chemical that sends the whole shoal into hiding. Spawning is in late spring over gravel shallows, in dense, conspicuous aggregations. They are important prey for trout, kingfishers, herons and dippers.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Carps and minnows (Cyprinidae)
SIZE	Typically 6–9 cm
UK STATUS	Native and widespread

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