

BASIC IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON GAME AND NON-GAME FISHES OF NORTH CAROLINA

**Prepared for use as an Instructional Tool for
Wildlife Enforcement Officer Basic Training**



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LESSON PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION

Lesson Purpose:

This lesson is intended to provide the student with a basic understanding of fish anatomy and taxonomy to expedite the field identification of common inland fishes.

Justification:

If an officer is to be proficient in the enforcement of laws pertaining to fish, he/she must be able to correctly identify all species encountered during routine patrol. The officer will be able to build and maintain good public relations by being able to quickly identify any fish caught by a sportsman. Knowledge gained from this course will also enable the officer to recognize record-size and trophy-size fish. The officer should also be proficient in distinguishing between the two legal classifications of fish as defined in the North Carolina Administrative Code.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and separate fish into the two legal classifications (inland game fish and non-game fish) as defined in the North Carolina Administrative Code.
 - A. Provide and discuss common and legal definitions.

2. Identify various inland fishes found in North Carolina through the use of taxonomic keys and by recognizing characteristics specific to individual fish.
 - A. Discuss anatomical features handout with emphasis on fin placement.
 - B. Explain the utility of the handout “Key to Families of Common North Carolina Fishes”, and work students through the key using various specimens.
 - C. Provide students with commonly used characteristics useful when differentiating between specific game and non-game fish species.

3. Assist sportsmen in recognizing record-size fish and/or fish eligible for the Wildlife Resources Commission’s North Carolina Angler Recognition Program (NCARP).
 - A. Provide list of current record-size fish and discuss minimum trophy requirements for NCARP certification.
 - B. Discuss application procedures for both programs.

LEGAL DEFINITIONS OF FISH

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary definition:

Fish. - Any numerous cold-blooded, strictly aquatic, water breathing, craniate vertebrates having the limbs (when present) developed as fins, and typically a long, scaly somewhat tapering body ending in a broad vertical caudal fin.

NC General Statutes (G. S. 113-129) legal classifications:

Fish; Fishes. - All marine mammals; all fishes; all crustaceans; all other fishes.

Inland game fish – Those species of freshwater fish, wherever found, and migratory salt water fish, when found in inland fishing waters, as to which there is an important element of sport in taking and which are denominated as game fish in the regulations of the Wildlife Resources Commission. No species of fish of commercial importance not classified as a game fish in commercial fishing waters as of January 1, 1965, may be classified as an inland game fish in coastal fishing waters without the concurrence of the Marine Fisheries Commission.

Non-game fish – All fish found in inland fishing waters other than inland game fish.

EXPLANATION OF ANATOMICAL FEATURES

(Adapted from Mettee et al., 1996)

Although some large fishes are easy to identify at first sight or after comparison with a color photograph, others cannot be distinguished without the use of a taxonomic key. In order to accurately identify fishes obtained in the field, users must have some knowledge of basic anatomical features found on fishes. Once specific morphological characteristics are known, standardized counts and/or measurements can be conducted to determine fish identity.

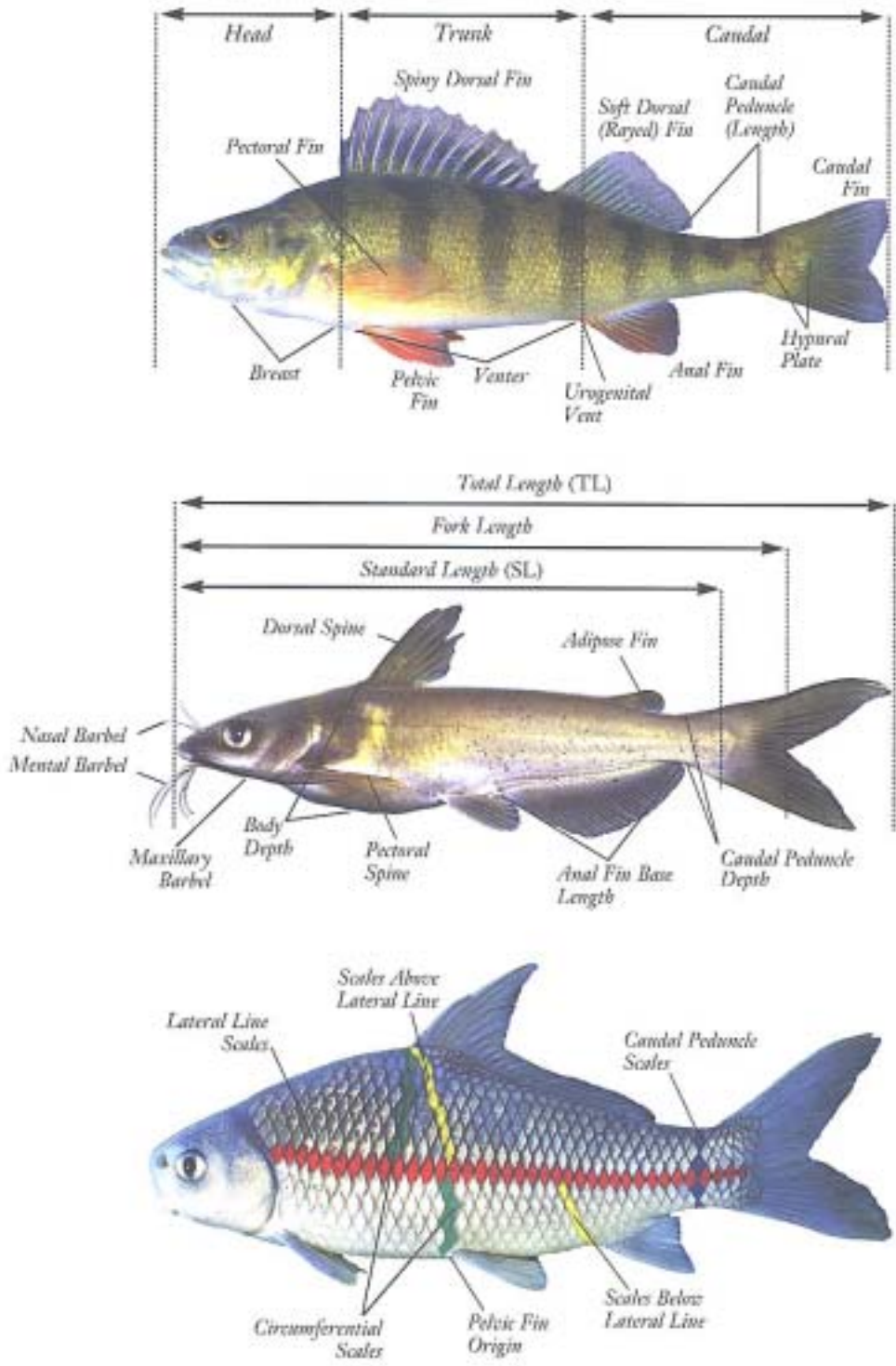
The most obvious features used to identify fishes are body size, shape and color. Numbers, types and sizes of fins also differ between families of fishes, and their location (or absence altogether) can be helpful when distinguishing between species. Most fish possess two basic types of fins, unpaired and paired. Unpaired fins occur along the midline of the body and include the dorsal, anal and caudal fins. Catfishes and trout also possess an adipose (or fleshy) fin located between the dorsal and caudal fins. The dorsal fin can be single or double, and its length and height vary among families. Variations in caudal (tail) fins between fishes are also common, with some tail fins forked and others rounded. If the upper and lower lobes of the caudal fin form a mirror image (symmetrical) then the tail is called homocercal. Heterocercal tails are found on species like sturgeon where one lobe is slightly larger than the other (asymmetrical). Paired fins include the pectoral fins located near the middle of the body behind the gill opening, and the pelvic fins found between the anal and pectoral fins. Most fins are supported by stiff spines, soft flexible rays or both.

Types of scales, scale counts and scale location also provide useful information when identifying fish. Most fishes in North Carolina have one of three scale types, ganoid, cycloid or ctenoid. Ganoid scales form hard, armor-like plates and are found on primitive fishes like sturgeon and gar. Cycloid scales are smooth to the touch and are found on trout and most minnows. Ctenoid scales contain very small spines and produce a rough texture on the skin surface. Members of the sunfish family are covered with ctenoid scales. Members of some fish families (like the catfishes) are scaleless.

Measurements of different external characteristics are often used to distinguish between groups of fishes. Body length is one of the most common measurements taken. Standard length (SL) is the distance from the tip of the snout to the hypural plate, located near the end of the backbone. Fork length (FL) is the distance from the tip of the snout to the deepest part of the fork in the tail. Size limits of inland game fishes in North Carolina are set based on total length (TL) of a fish. Total length is the distance from the tip of the snout with the mouth closed to the end of the longest part of the tail. When measuring total length, the tail is squeezed together and brought to a single point to allow for maximum distance. Eye diameter, body depth, and head length are examples of other measurements used to identify fish.

Once the user is familiar with basic anatomical features, the taxonomic key contained within this document can be used to distinguish between 14 families of fishes commonly found within North Carolina. This key is by no means designed to be an exhaustive list of North Carolina fishes; over 30 families of fishes are known to exist within the state. The families not included within this key will rarely be encountered in the field, but in the event further information is needed, consult the references cited in this document.

ANATOMICAL FEATURES



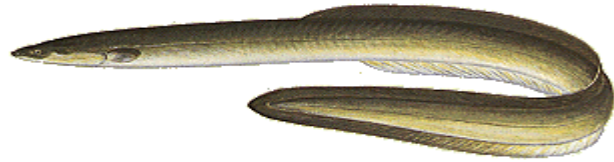
Reprinted with permission from Mettee et al., 1996, *Fishes of Alabama*.

KEY TO FAMILIES OF COMMON NORTH CAROLINA FISHES

- 1A. Body elongate, snake-shaped; pelvic fins absent; anal fin joined to caudal fin go to 2
 1B. Body not snake-shaped; pelvic fins present; anal fin not joined to caudal fin go to 3
- 2A. Pectoral fin absent; seven small round pores on side of head; one nostril on top of head between eyes; funnel-shaped mouth lacks jaws **lampreys, Family Petromyzontidae**
 2B. Pectoral fin present; jaws present; one gill opening on side of body; two nostrils located forward of the eyes; **freshwater eel, Family Anguillidae**



2A. least brook lamprey

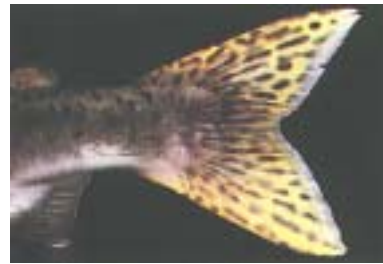


2B. American eel

- 3A. Caudal fin base arches upward, making the caudal fin asymmetrical go to 4
 3B. Upper and lower parts of the caudal fin and fin base symmetrical go to 6



3A. caudal fin asymmetrical



3B. caudal fin symmetrical

- 4A. Caudal fin rounded go to 5
 4B. Caudal fin forked; upper lobe larger than lower lobe **sturgeon, Family Acipenseridae**
- 5A. Snout long and beaklike; body covered with rows of diamond-shaped scales interlocking diagonally to form an armor-like covering **gar, Family Lepisosteidae**
 5B. Snout short, not beaklike; body covered with oval, overlapping scales; dorsal fin long, extending over most of the back **bowfin, Family Amiidae**



5A. longnose gar



5B. bowfin

- 6A. Pelvic fins located closer to anal fin than to pectoral fins..... go to 7
- 6B. Pelvic fins just beneath or slightly behind pectoral fins..... go to 13



6A. pelvic fins closer to anal fin



6B. pelvic fins beneath pectoral fin

- 7A. Pectoral fins with a well developed spine; body without scales, barbels (whiskers) present;**catfishes, Family Ictaluridae**
- 7B. Pectoral fins lack a well-developed spine; body with scales go to 8



7A. channel catfish

- 8A. Head without scales..... go to 9
- 8B. Head partially covered with scales (head includes operculum); snout long and flat resembling a duck's bill**piques, Family Esocidae**



8B. chain pickerel

- 9A. Scales along midline of venter meet at an acute angle, forming a sawtooth or knifelike edge; **herrings/shad, Family Clupeidae**
- 9B. Scales along midline of venter smooth and rounded with no sawtooth or knifelike edge; go to 10



9A. American shad

- 10A. Adipose fin present; axillary process present at base of pelvic fin; **trouts, Family Salmonidae**
- 10B. Adipose fin absent, axillary process absent; go to 11



10A. brook trout

- 11A. Dorsal and anal fins each with a stout serrated spine; **carps and minnows, Family Cyprinidae (in part)**
- 11B. Dorsal and anal fin origins without a stout serrated spine; go to 12



11A. common carp

- 12A. Dorsal fin with 9 or fewer soft rays; mouth usually not fleshy or modified for sucking; **carps and minnows, Family Cyprinidae (in part)**
- 12B. Dorsal fin with 10 or more soft rays; mouth typically fleshy, ventral and modified for sucking; **suckers, Family Catostomidae**



12A. golden shiner



12B. shorthead redhorse

- 13A. Dorsal fins separated by a deep notch; two black horizontal stripes conspicuous above lateral line; gill covers with a sharp spine **temperate basses, Family Moronidae**
- 13B. Dorsal fins well joined, or if separate (Micropterus), horizontal stripes are lacking above lateral line; gill cover lacks sharp spine go to 14



13A. striped bass

14A. One or two anal spinesperches and darters, Family Percidae

14B. Three or more anal spinessunfishes, Family Centrarchidae



14A. walleye



14B. largemouth bass



14B. redbreast sunfish

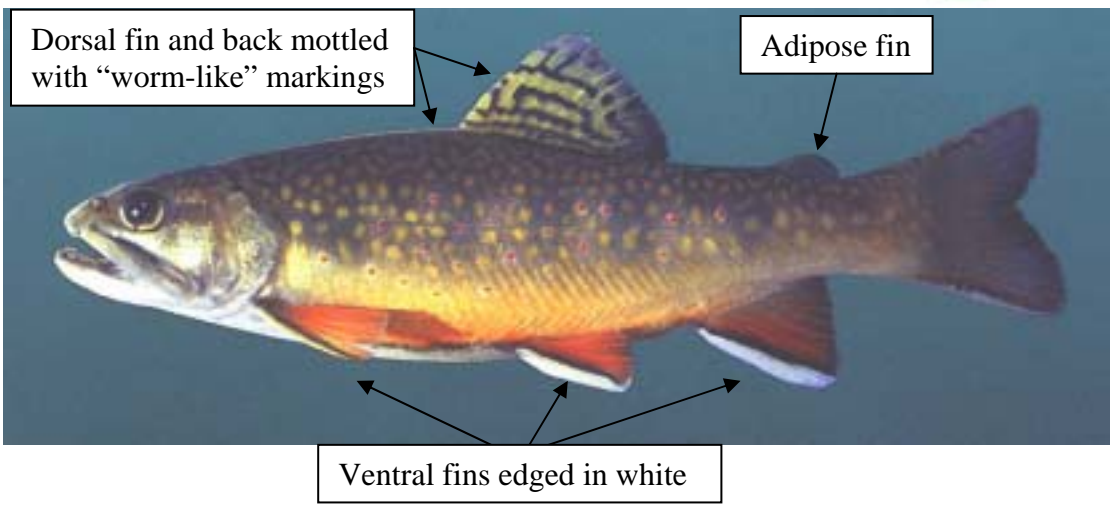
IDENTIFICATION OF INLAND GAME FISHES AND SELECT NON-GAME FISHES

Mountain trout (Family Salmonidae)

BROOK TROUT

Salvelinus fontinalis
(brookie, speckled trout,
native trout, charr)

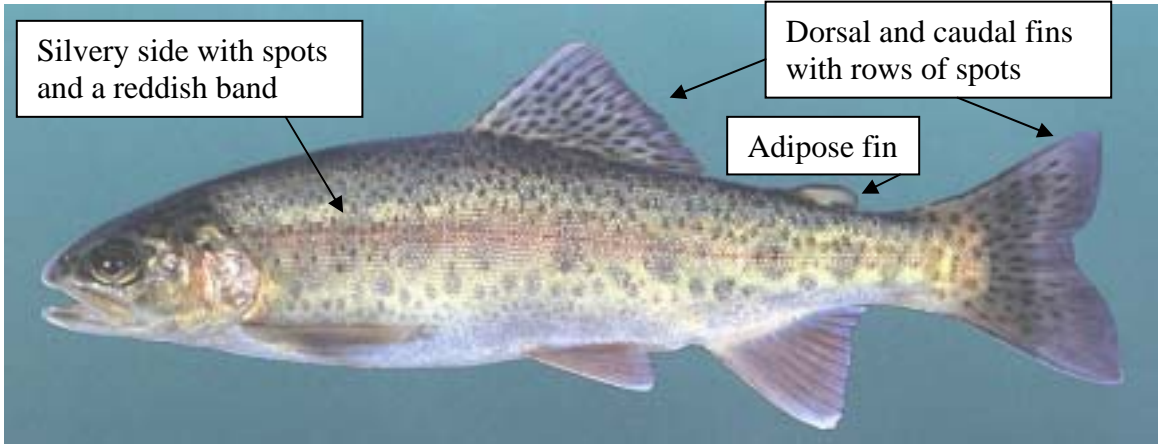
**Game fish*



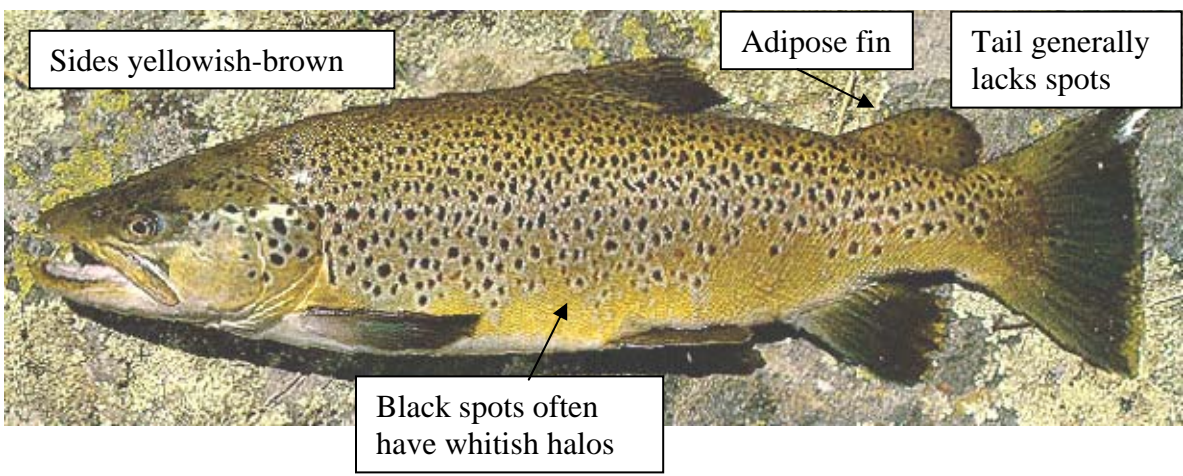
RAINBOW TROUT

Oncorhynchus mykiss
(reidside, California trout,
steelhead, silver trout)

**Game fish*



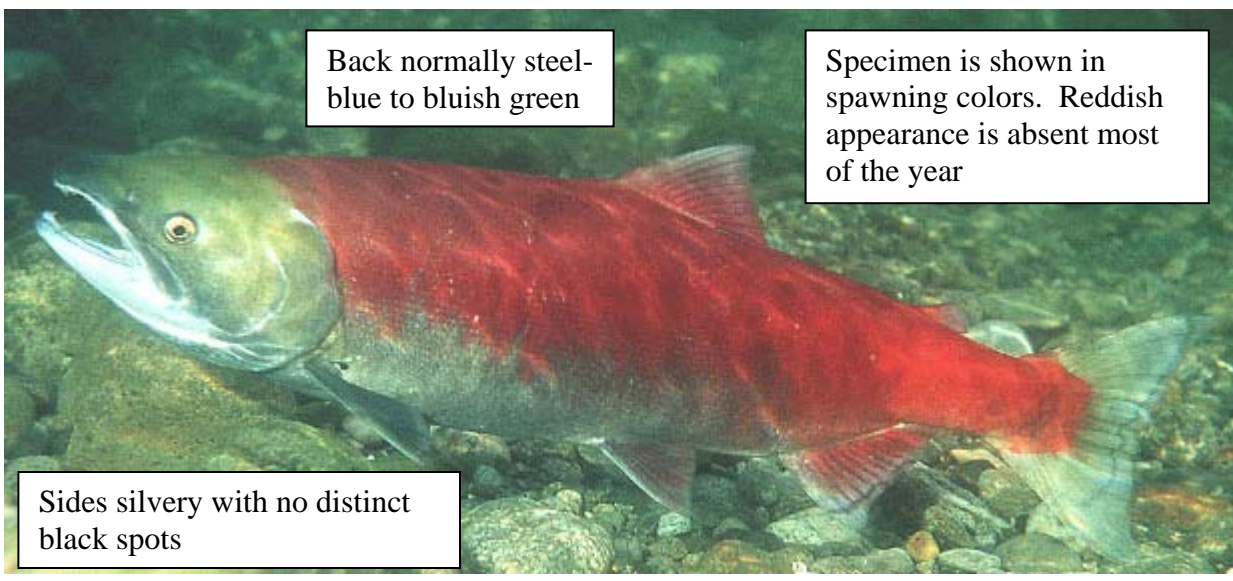
BROWN TROUT
Salmo trutta
(German brown, brownie)
**Game fish*



KOKANEE
(landlocked sockeye salmon)
Oncorhynchus nerka
(koke, redfish, silver trout)
**Game fish*



Found only in Nantahalah Reservoir



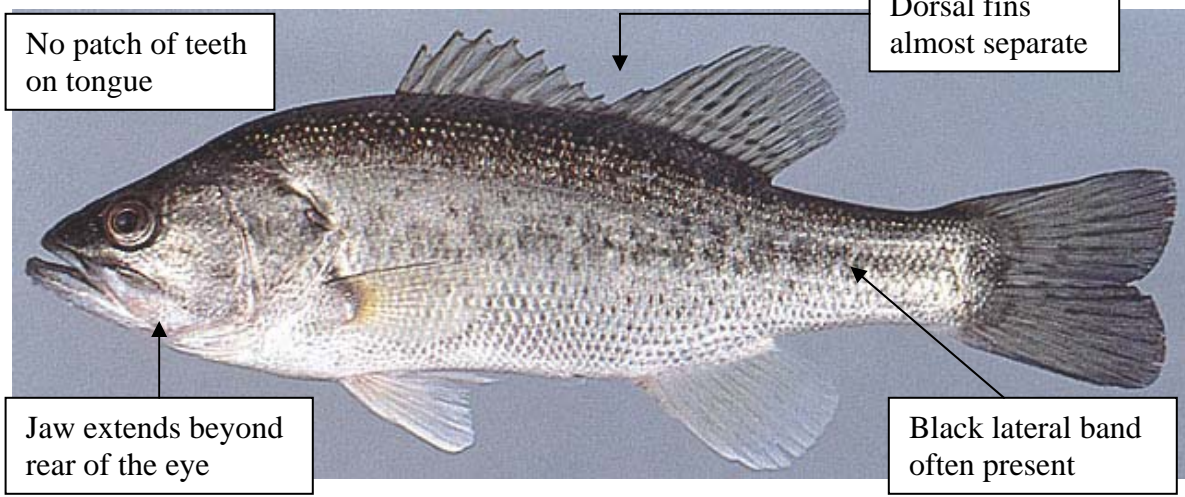
Sunfish (Family Centrarchidae)

LARGEMOUTH BASS

Micropterus salmoides

(black bass, green bass, bigmouth, bucketmouth, green trout, chub)

**Game fish*



No patch of teeth on tongue

Dorsal fins almost separate

Jaw extends beyond rear of the eye

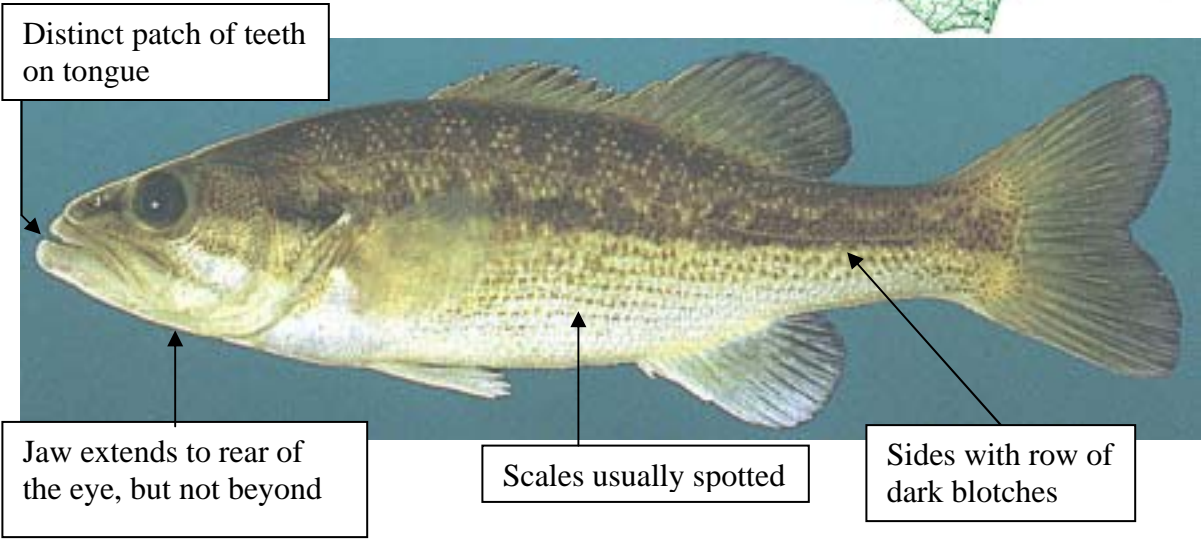
Black lateral band often present

SPOTTED BASS

Micropterus punctulatus

(Kentucky bass, spot)

**Game fish*

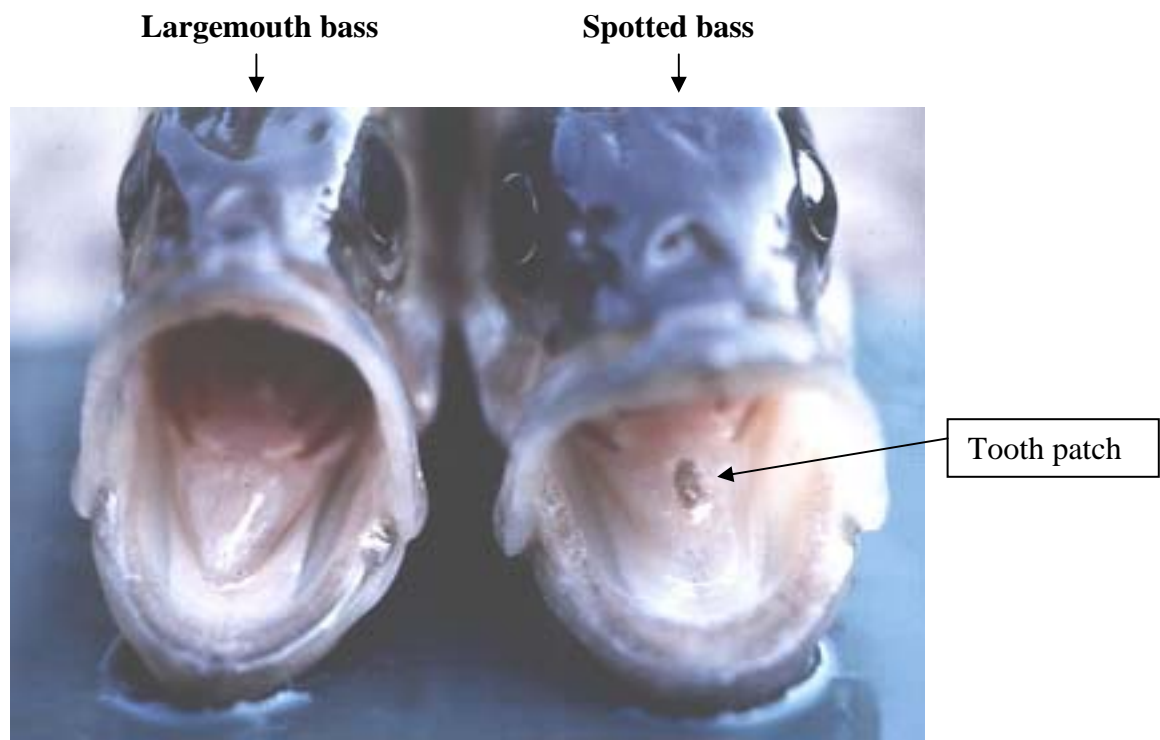


Distinct patch of teeth on tongue

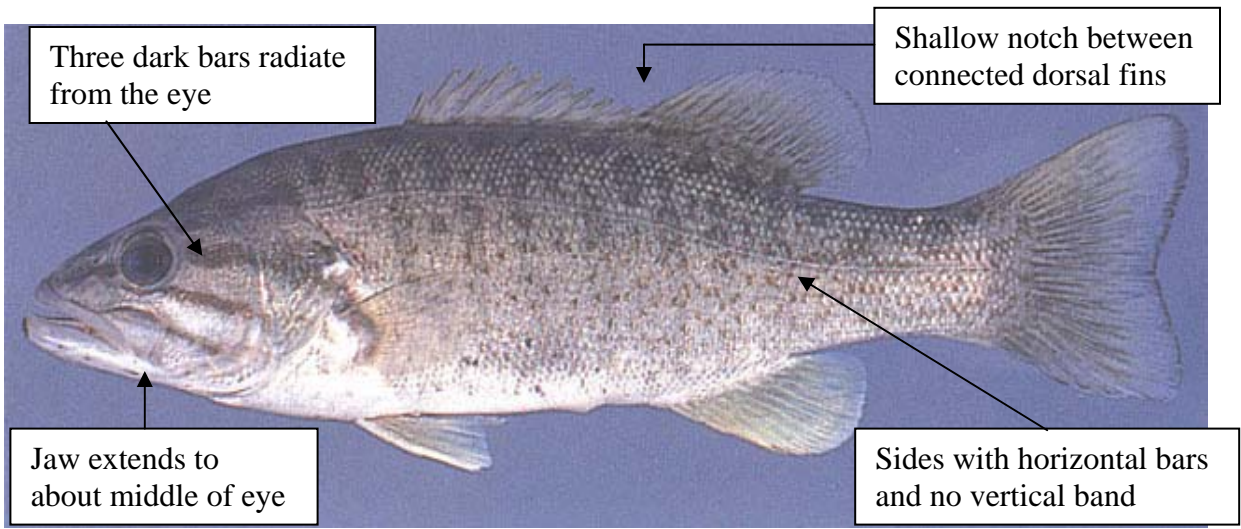
Jaw extends to rear of the eye, but not beyond

Scales usually spotted

Sides with row of dark blotches



SMALLMOUTH BASS
Micropterus dolomieu
(bronzeback, smally, green trout, redeye)
**Game fish*

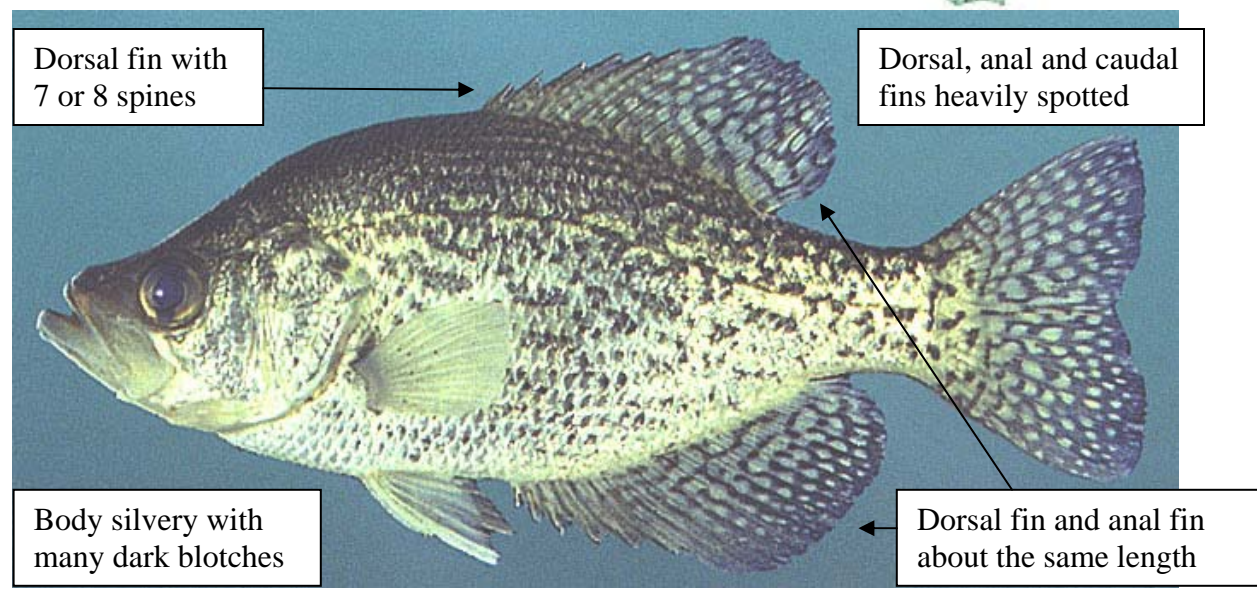


BLACK CRAPPIE

Pomoxis nigromaculatus

(papermouth, speckled perch, speckle, calico bass)

**Game fish*

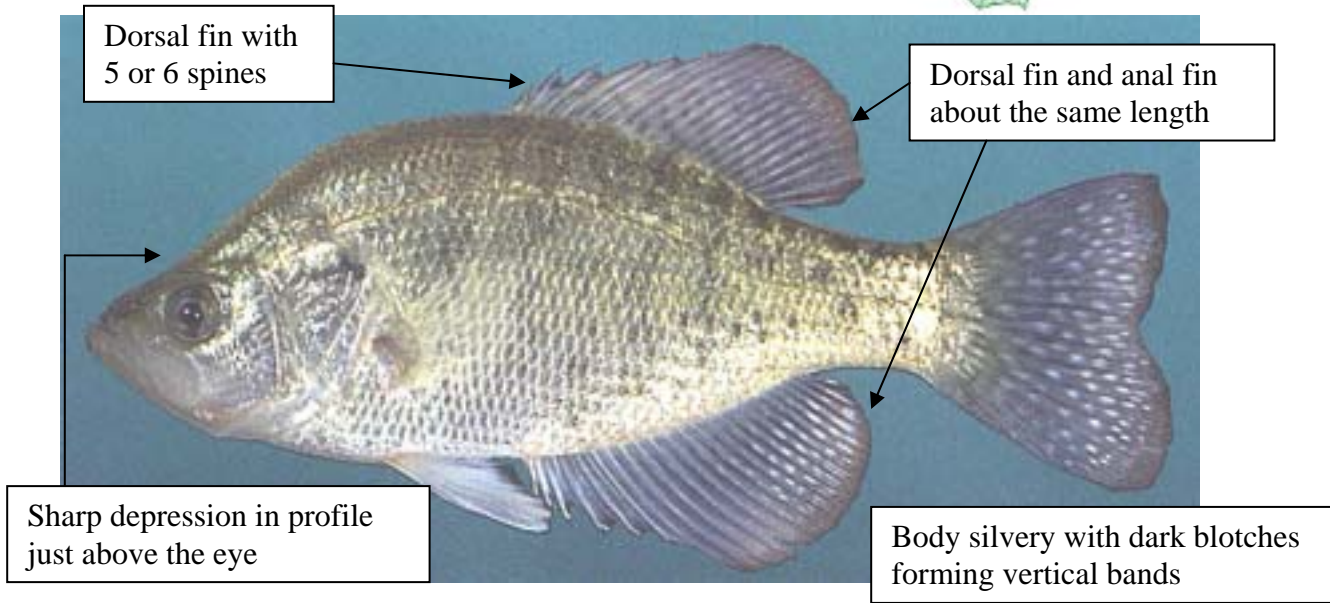


WHITE CRAPPIE

Pomoxis annularis

(papermouth, speckled perch, silver bass)

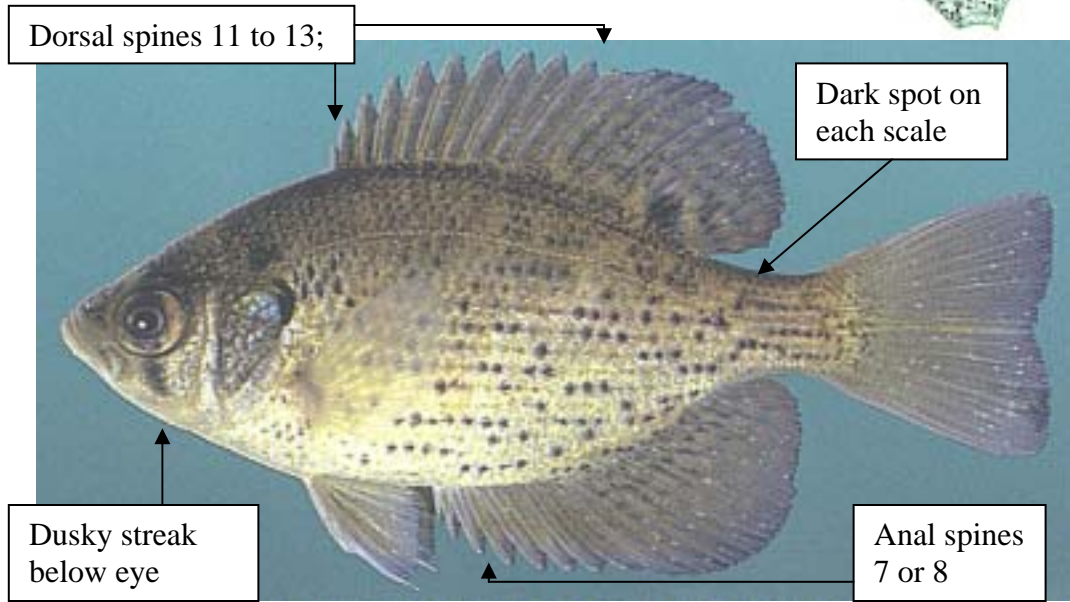
**Game fish*



FLIER

Centrarchus macropterus
(round sunfish, flier bream)

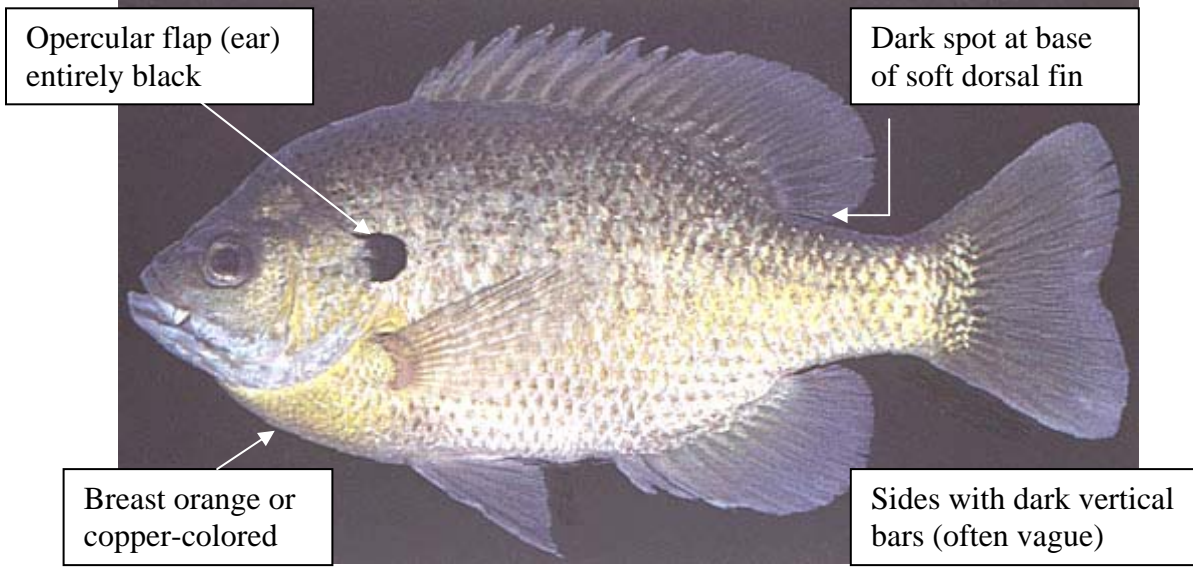
**Game fish*



BLUEGILL

Lepomis macrochirus
(bream, sunfish, panfish, sunny, copperbelly, roach)

**Game fish*

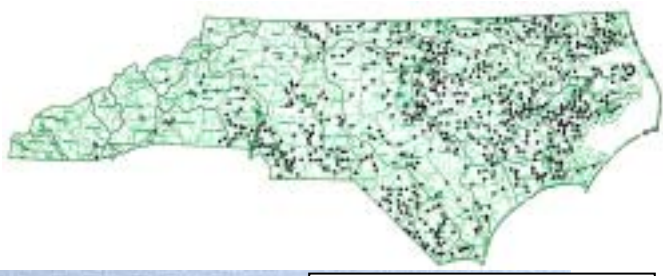


PUMPKINSEED

Lepomis gibbosus

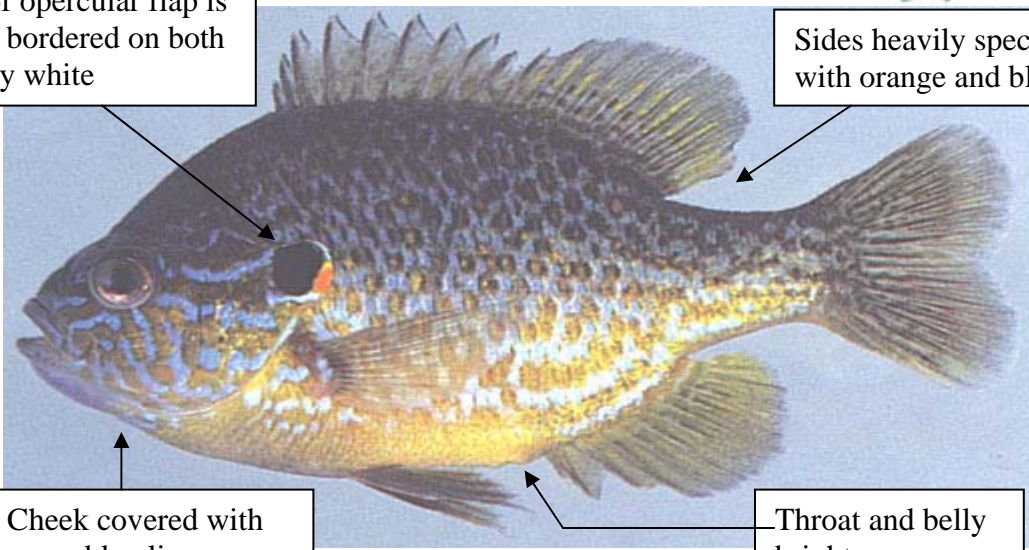
(common sunfish, yellow sunfish, bream)

**Game fish*



Edge of opercular flap is orange bordered on both sides by white

Sides heavily speckled with orange and black



Cheek covered with wavy blue lines

Throat and belly bright orange

REDEAR SUNFISH

Lepomis microlophus

(shellcracker, stumpknocker, bream, yellow bream)

**Game fish*



Opercular flap with a bright red or orange margin

Sides olive-green to gold, with red or orange flecks



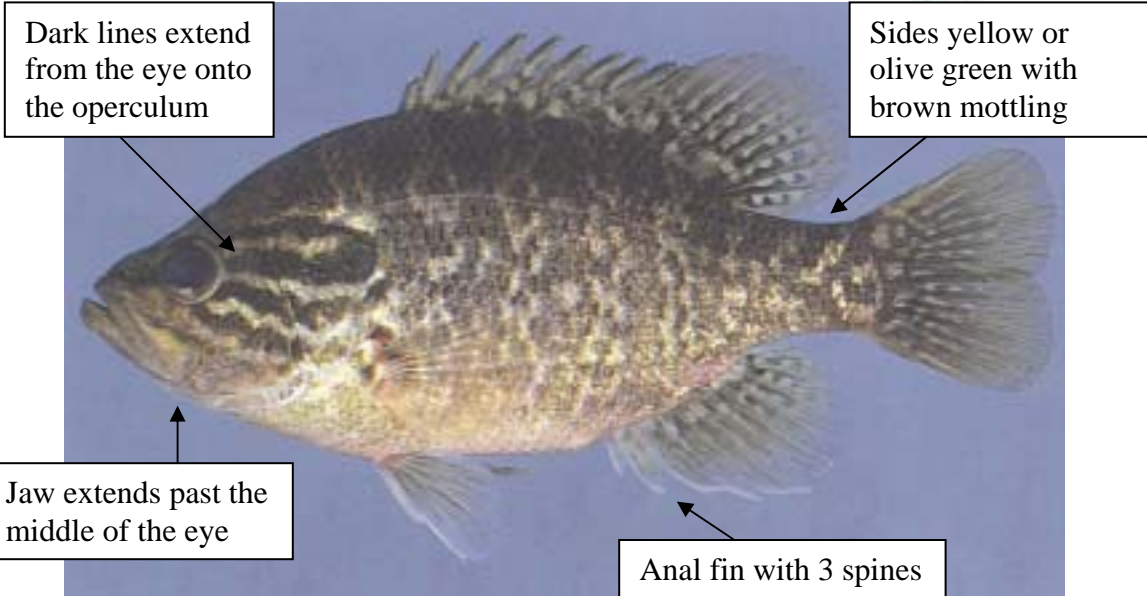
No blue streaks on cheeks

WARMOUTH

Lepomis gulosus

(stumpknocker, goggle-eye)

**Game fish*

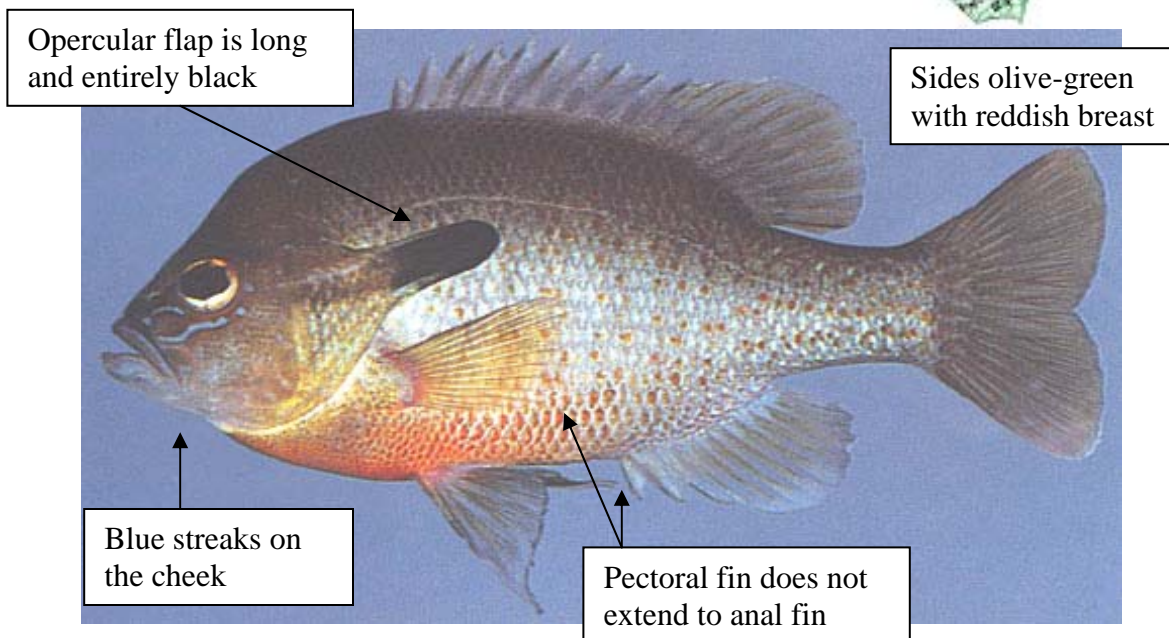


REDBREAST SUNFISH

Lepomis auritus

(robin, redbelly, yellowbelly sunfish)

**Game fish*

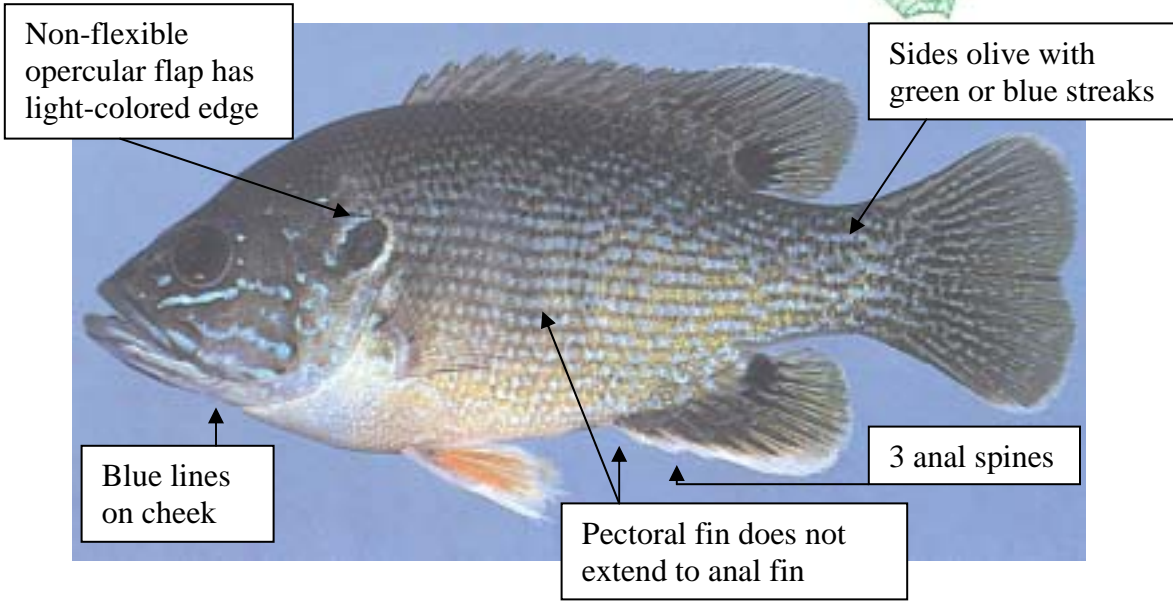


GREEN SUNFISH

Lepomis cyanellus

(green perch, bream)

**Game fish*

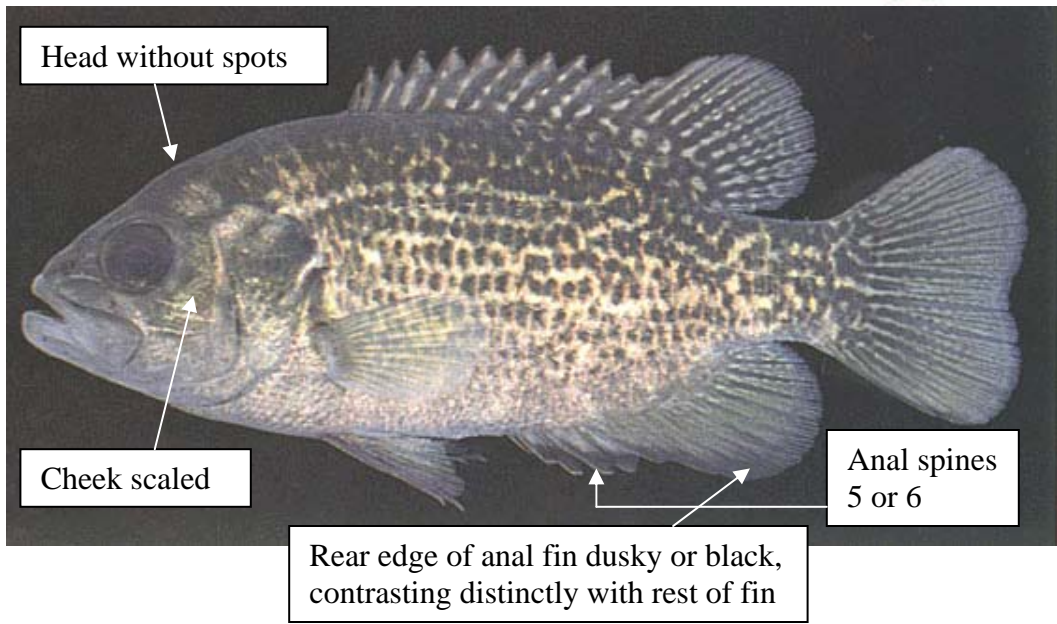


ROCK BASS

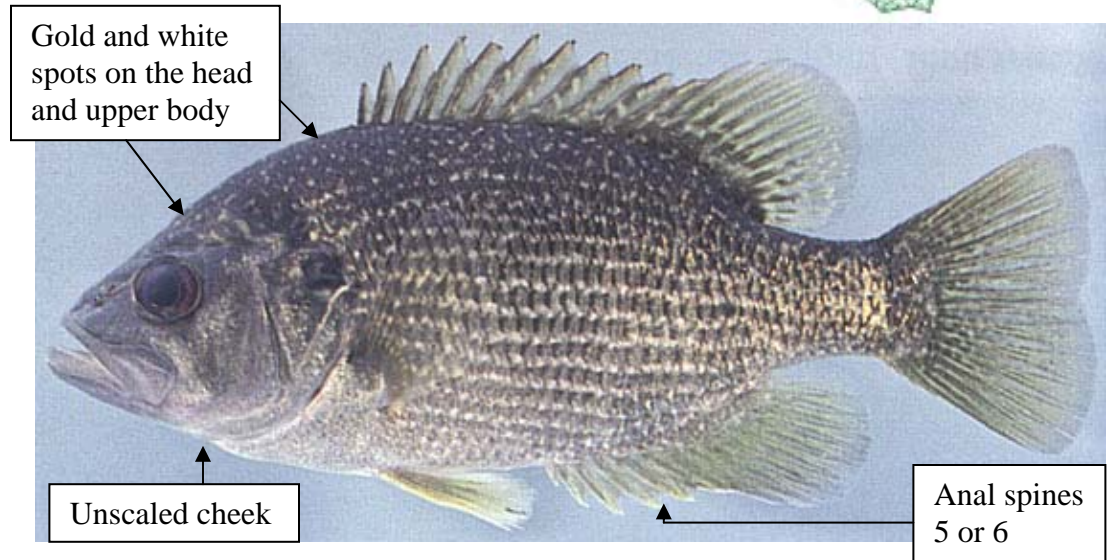
Ambloplites rupestris

(goggle eye, redeye, rock sunfish)

**Game fish*

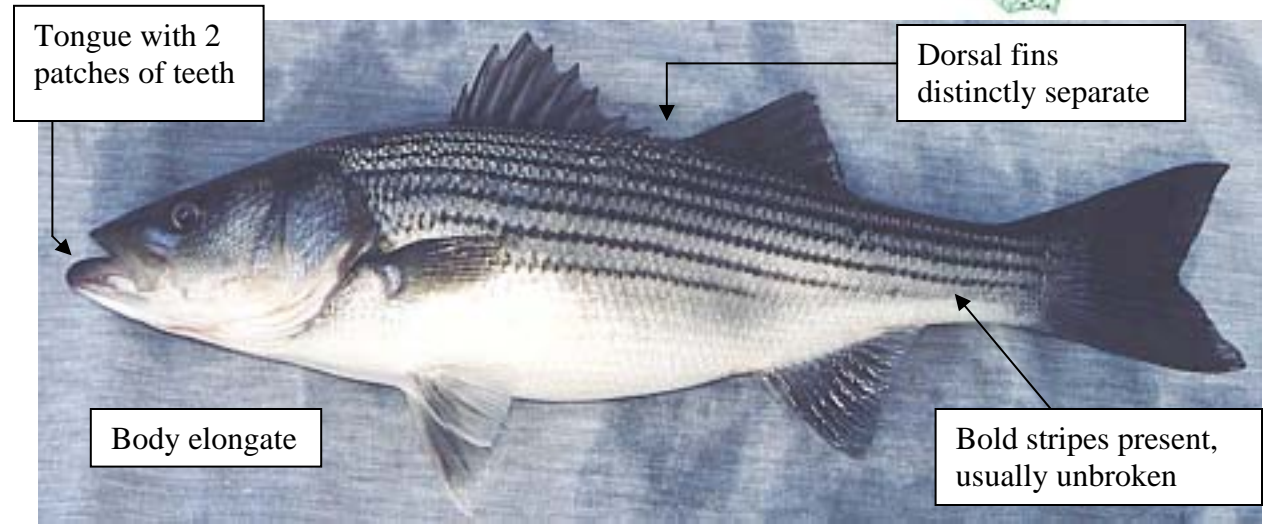


ROANOKE BASS
Ambloplites cavifrons
(goggle eye, redeye)
**Game fish*

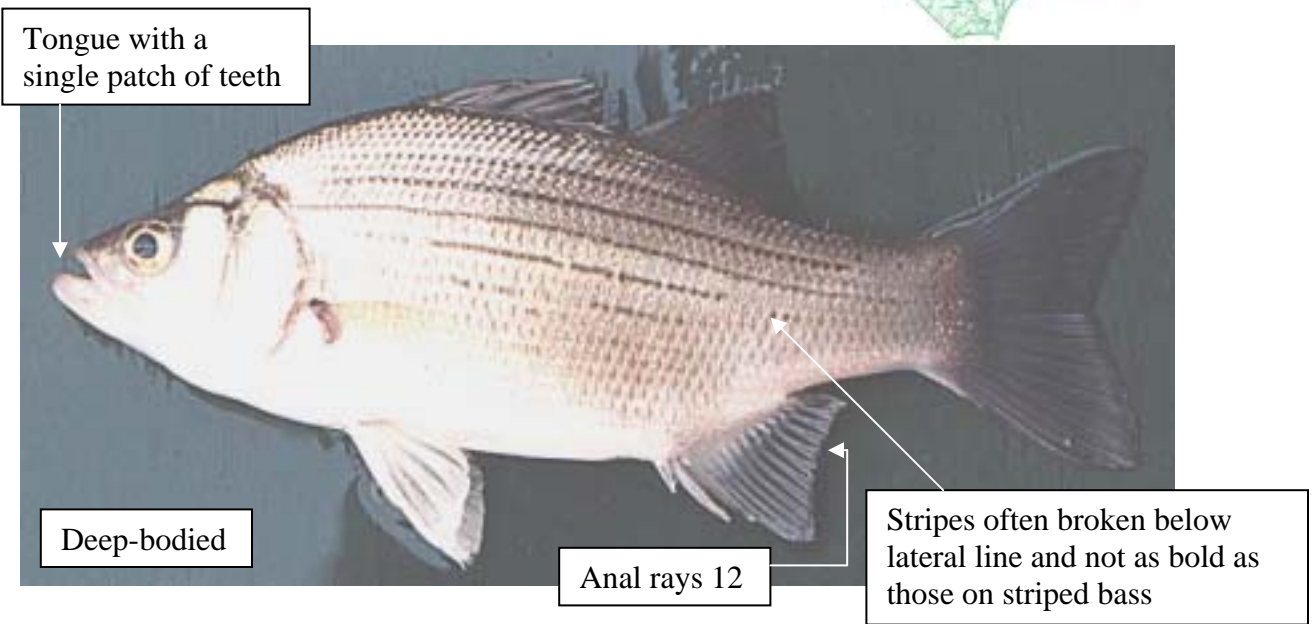


Temperate Basses (Family Moronidae)

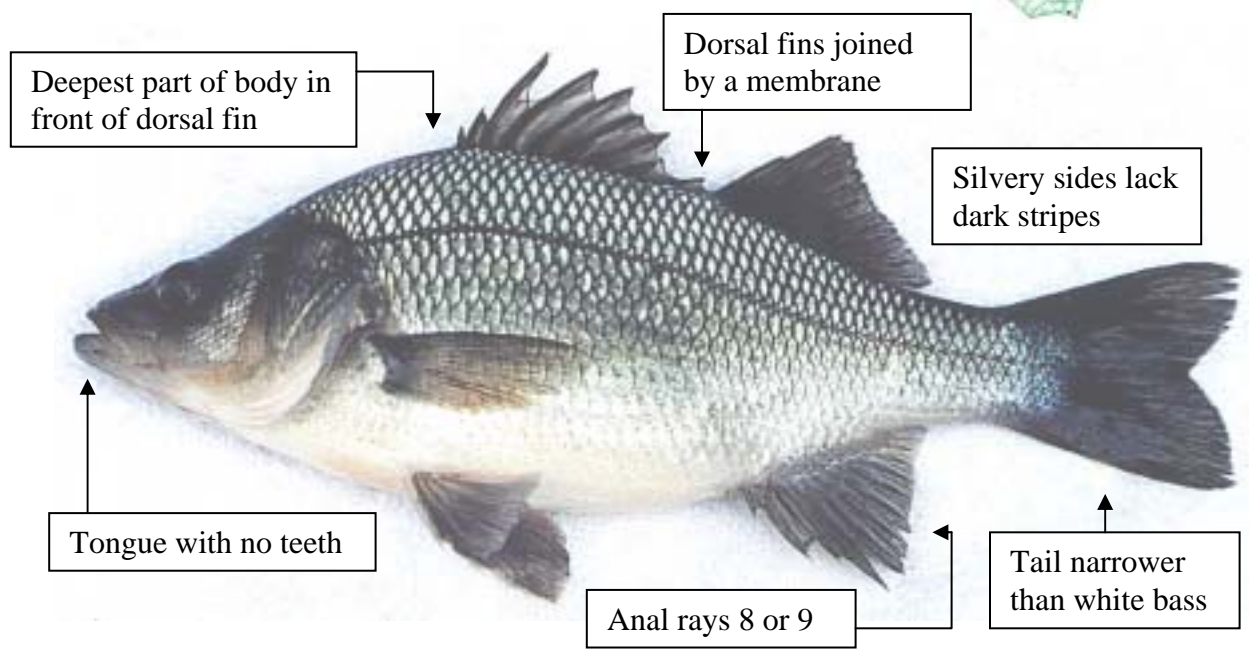
STRIPED BASS
Morone saxatilis
(rock, rockfish, striper)
**Game fish (inland waters only)*



WHITE BASS
Morone chrysops
(silver bass, striper)
**Game fish*

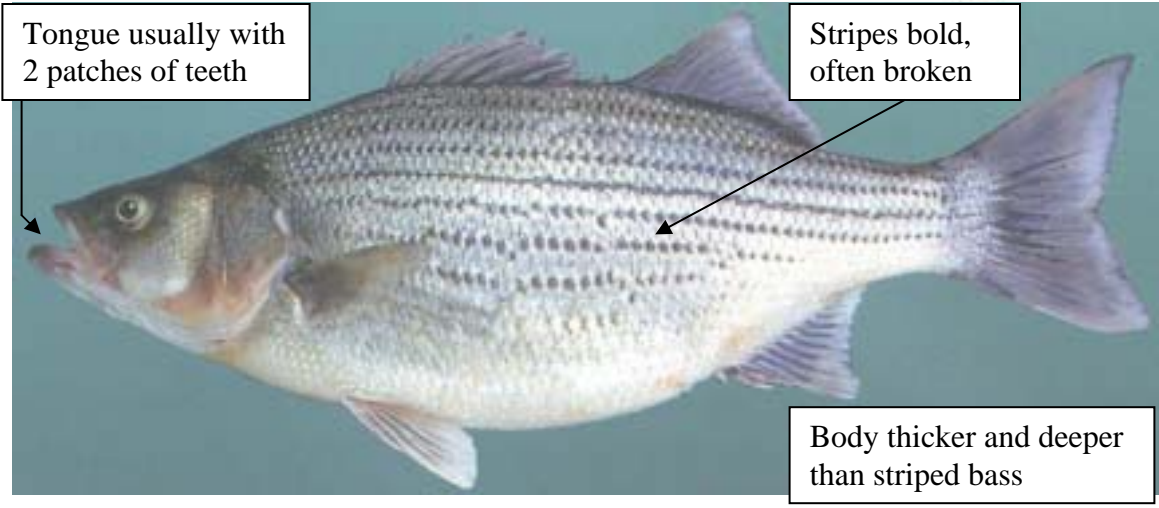


WHITE PERCH
Morone americana
(silver perch, bluenose perch, sea perch, black perch, waccamaw)
**Game fish (inland waters only)*

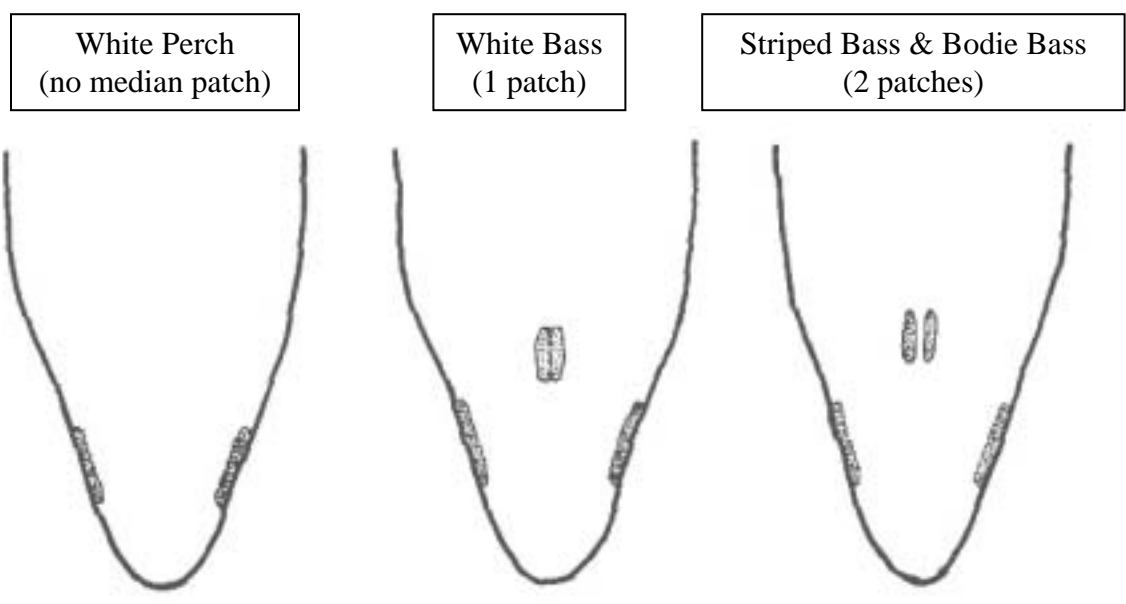


BODIE BASS

Morone chrysops x saxatilis
(hybrid striped bass, cherokee bass,
palmetto bass, sunshine bass, wiper)
**Game fish*



Tooth Patches on Tongues of Temperate Basses (*Morone spp.*)
(Adapted from Jenkins and Burkhead, 1994)



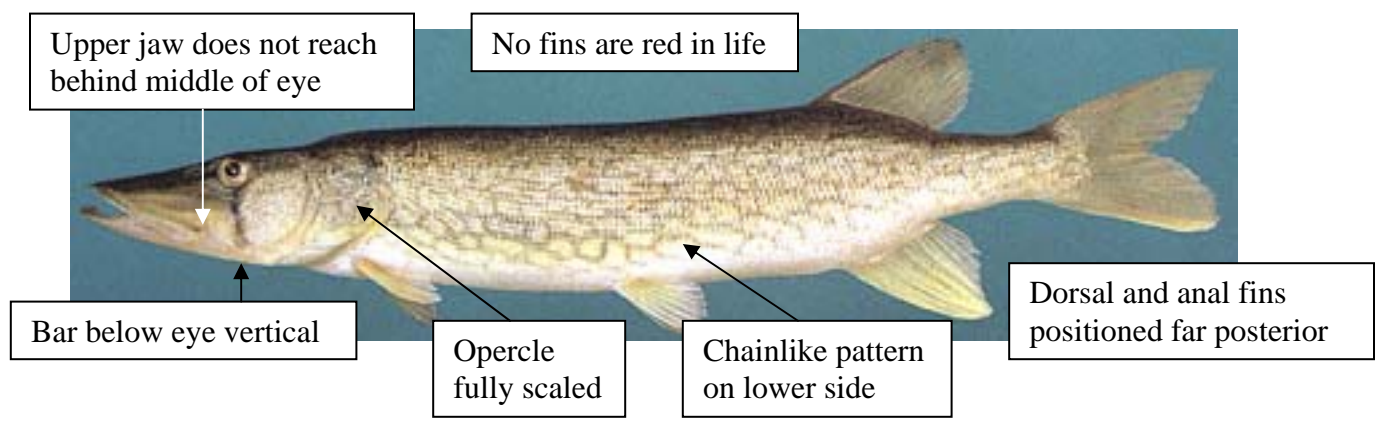
Pikes (Family Esocidae)

CHAIN PICKEREL

Esox niger

(pike, river pike, grass pike, jack, jackfish, eastern pickerel)

**Game fish*

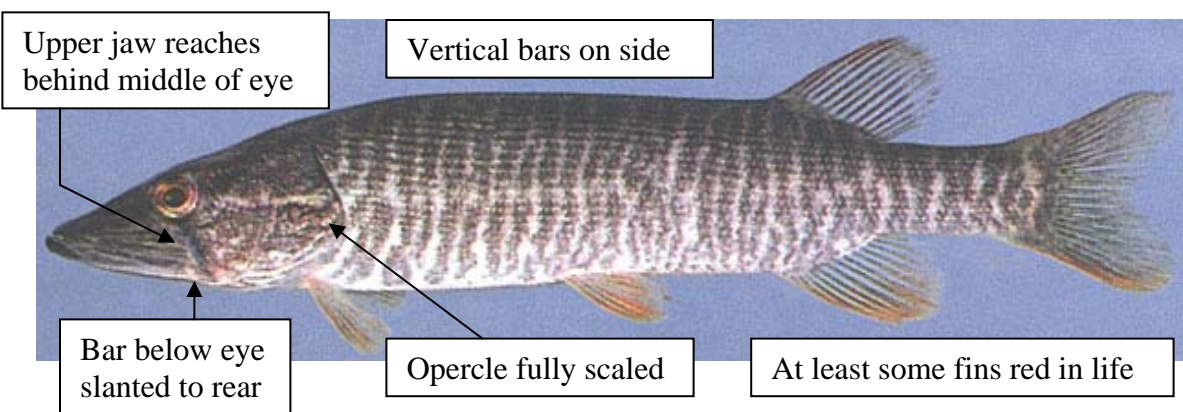


REDFIN PICKEREL

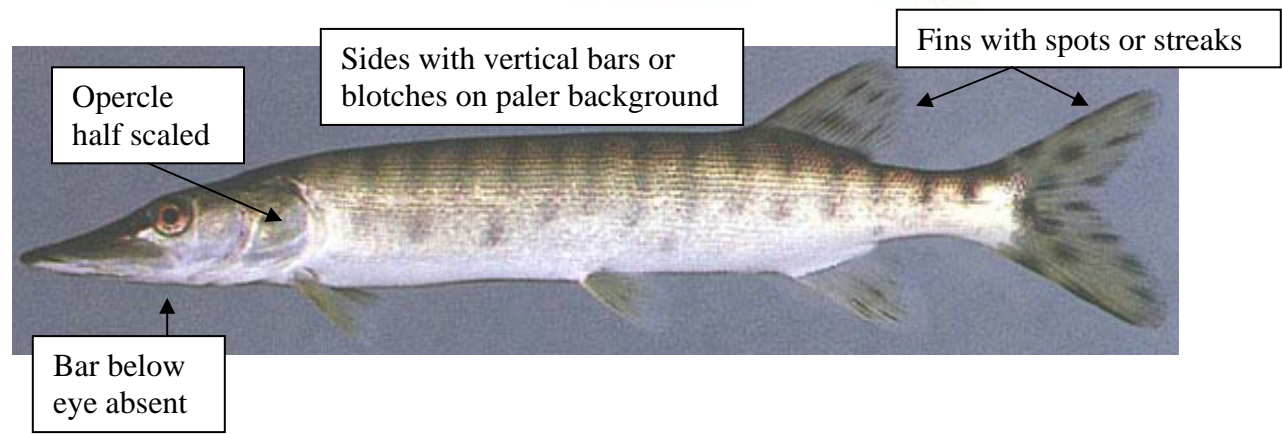
Esox americanus

(redfinned pike, banded pickerel, jack, grass pike)

**Game fish*

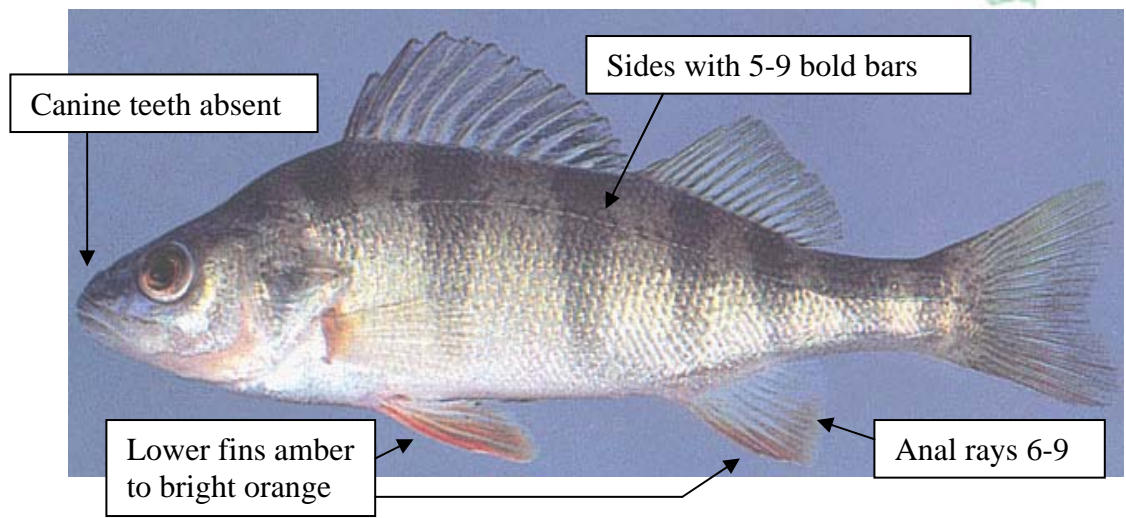


MUSKELLUNGE
Esox masquinongy
(musky, great pike)
**Game fish*



Perches (Family Percidae)

YELLOW PERCH
Perca flavescens
(redfin perch, raccoon perch, englishman)
**Game fish (inland waters only)*

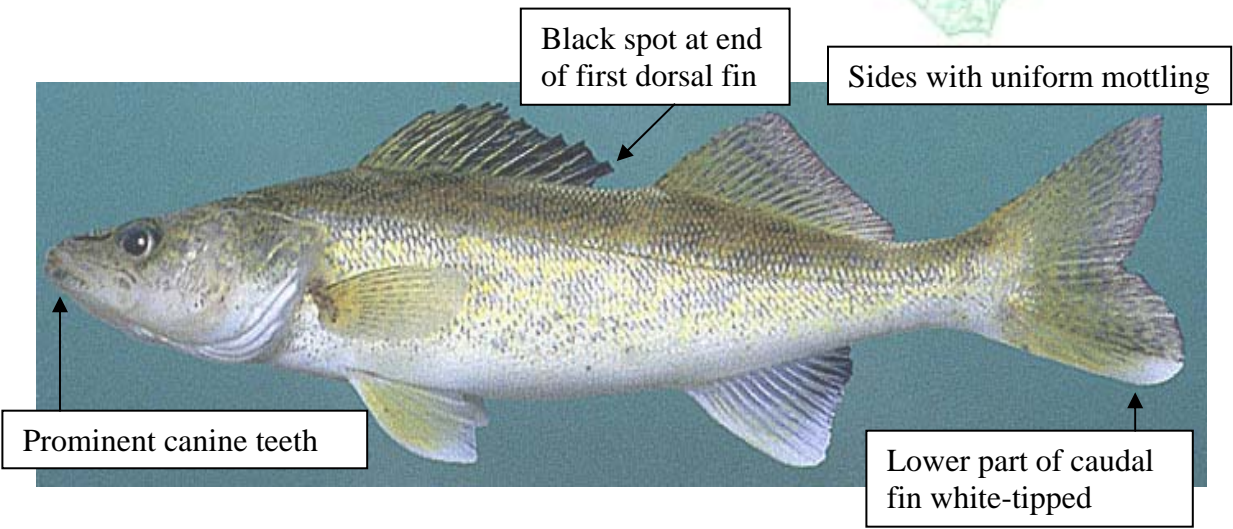
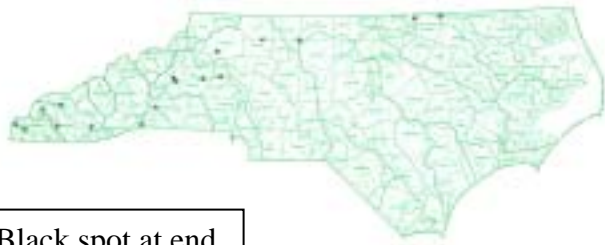


WALLEYE

Stizostedion vitreum

(walleyed pike, jackfish, pike-perch, jack salmon)

**Game fish*

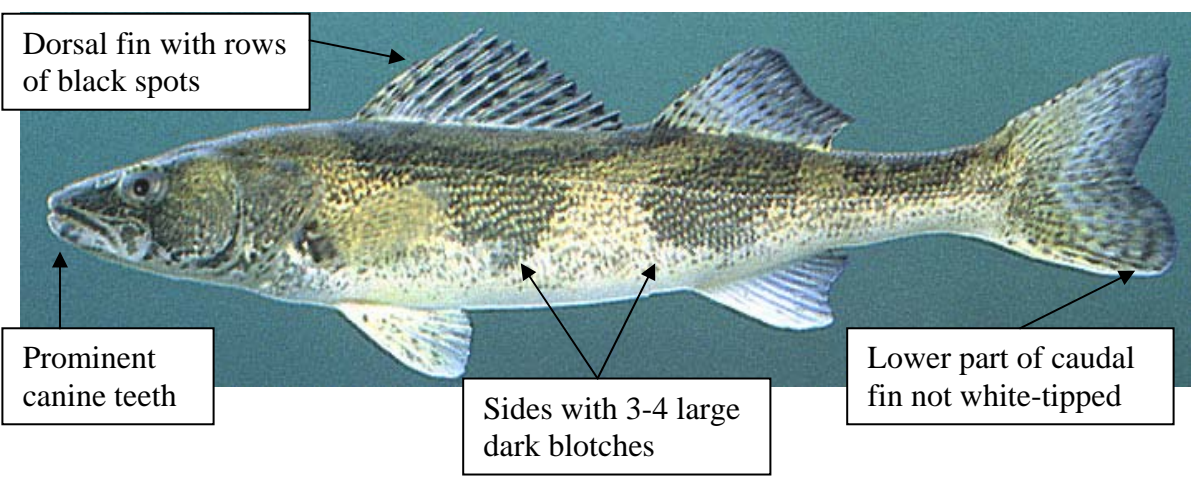


SAUGER

Stizostedion canadense

(sand pike, river pike, spotfin pike, gray pickerel)

**Game fish*



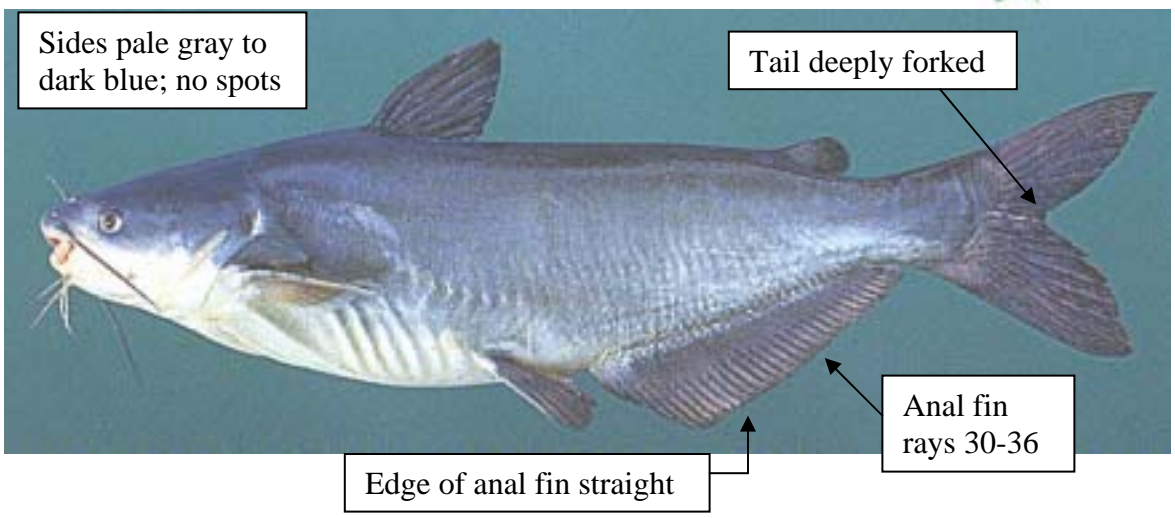
Catfishes (Family Ictaluridae)

BLUE CATFISH

Ictalurus furcatus

(Arkansas cat, forktail cat, chucklehead, silver cat)

**Non-game fish*

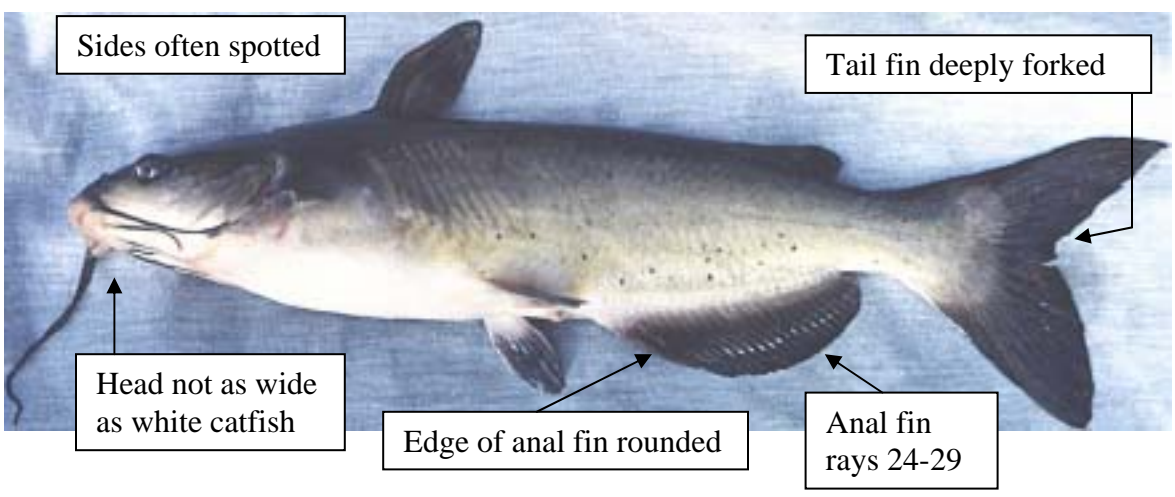


CHANNEL CATFISH

Ictalurus punctatus

(spotted cat, fiddler)

**Non-game fish*

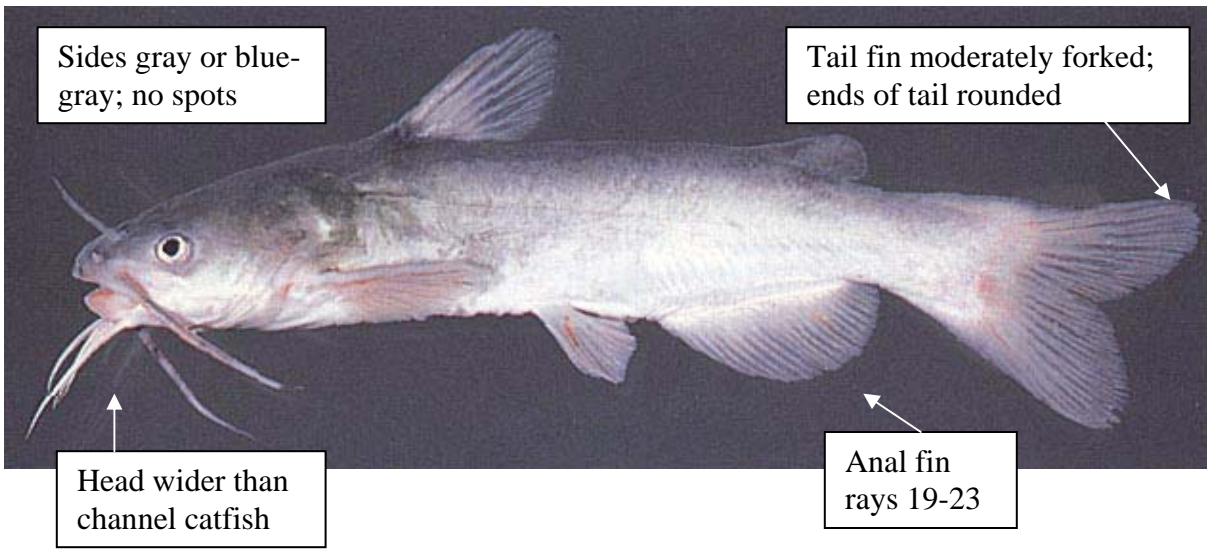


WHITE CATFISH

Ameiurus catus

(river catfish, forked-tail cat)

**Non-game fish*

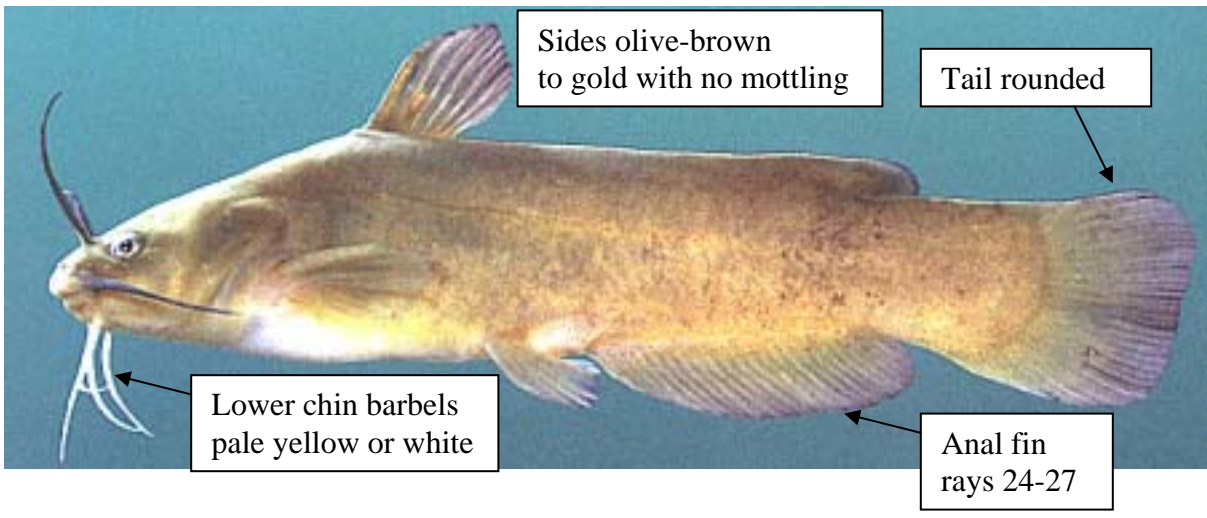


YELLOW BULLHEAD

Ameiurus natalis

(yellow cat, creek cat, white-whiskered bullhead, greaser)

**Non-game fish*

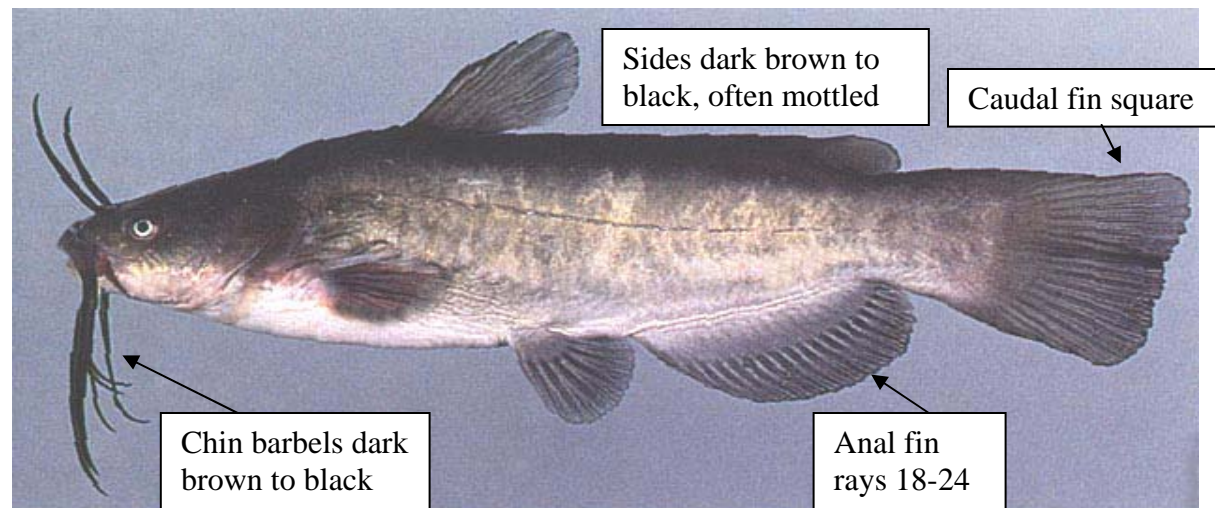


BROWN BULLHEAD

Ameiurus nebulosus

(mud cat, creek cat)

**Non-game fish*

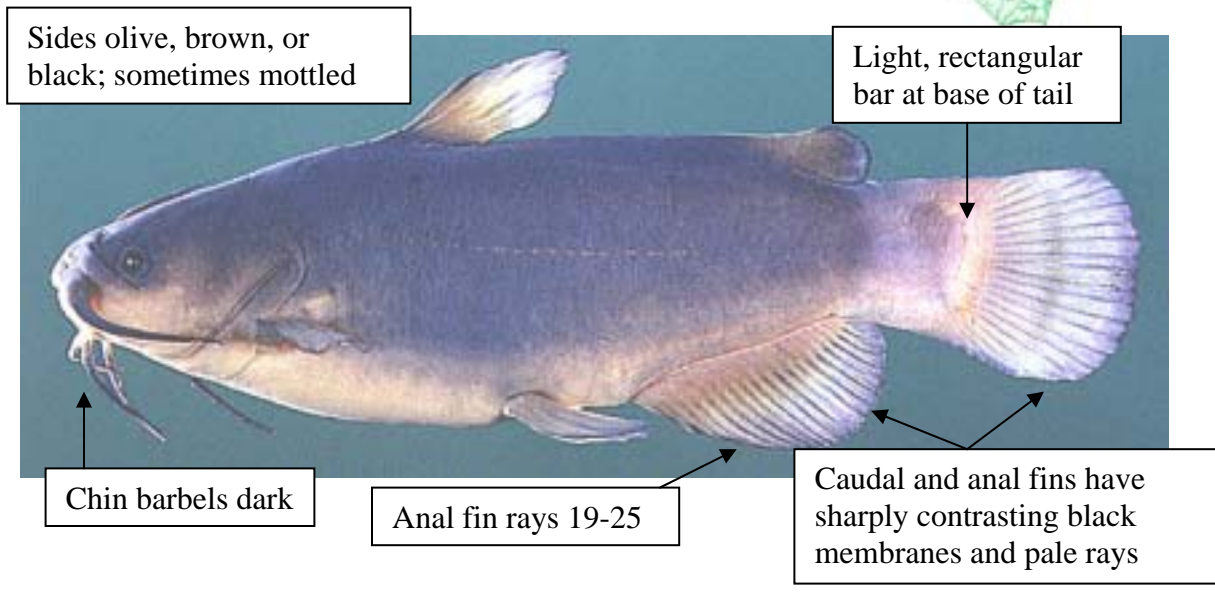


BLACK BULLHEAD

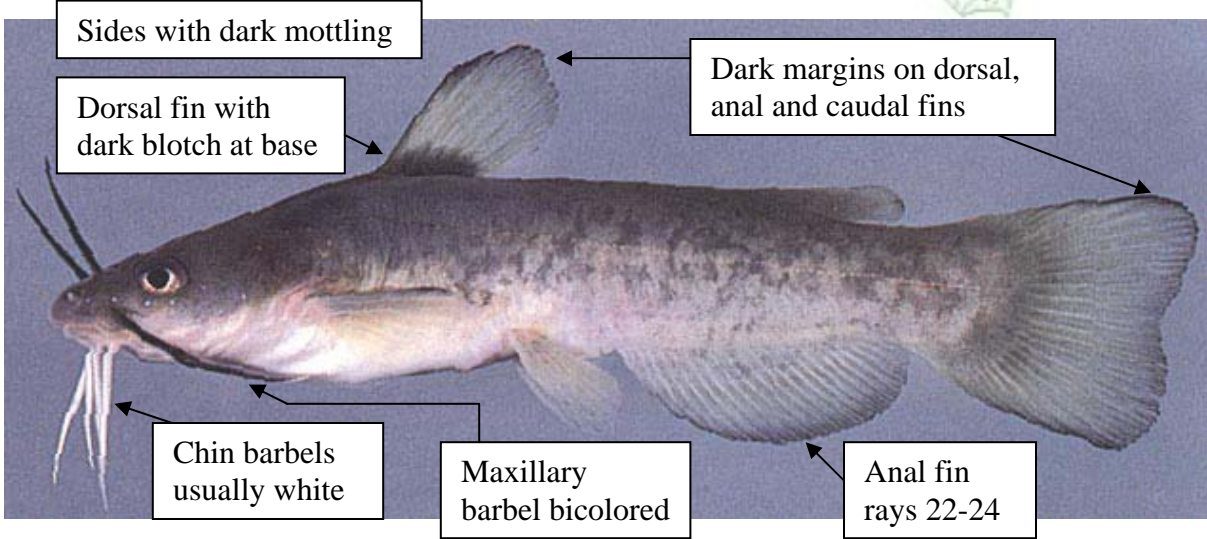
Ameiurus melas

(yellowbelly bullhead, black catfish)

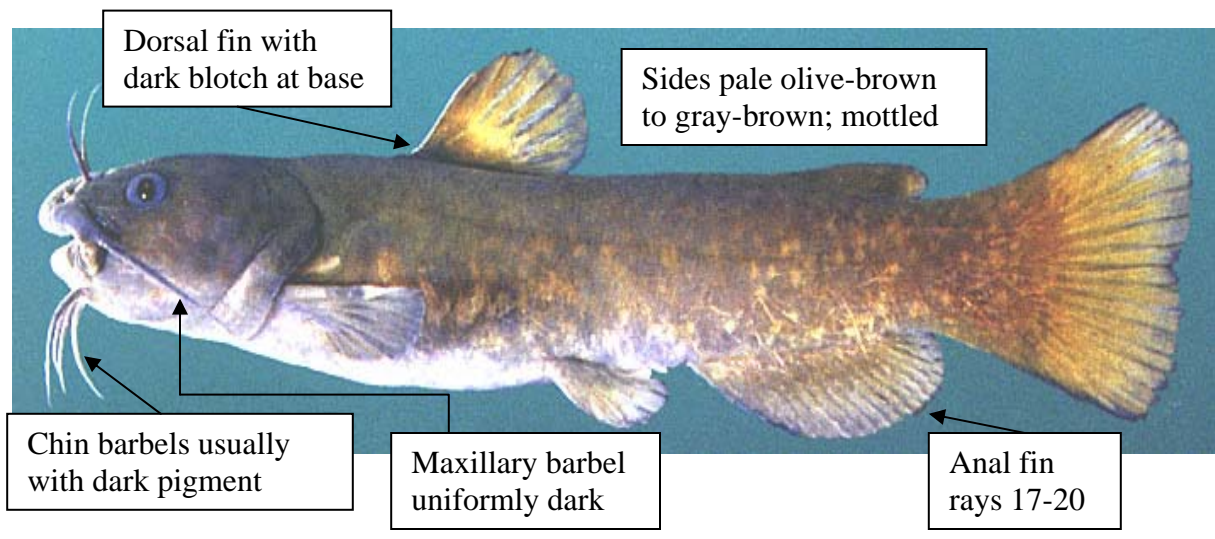
**Non-game fish*

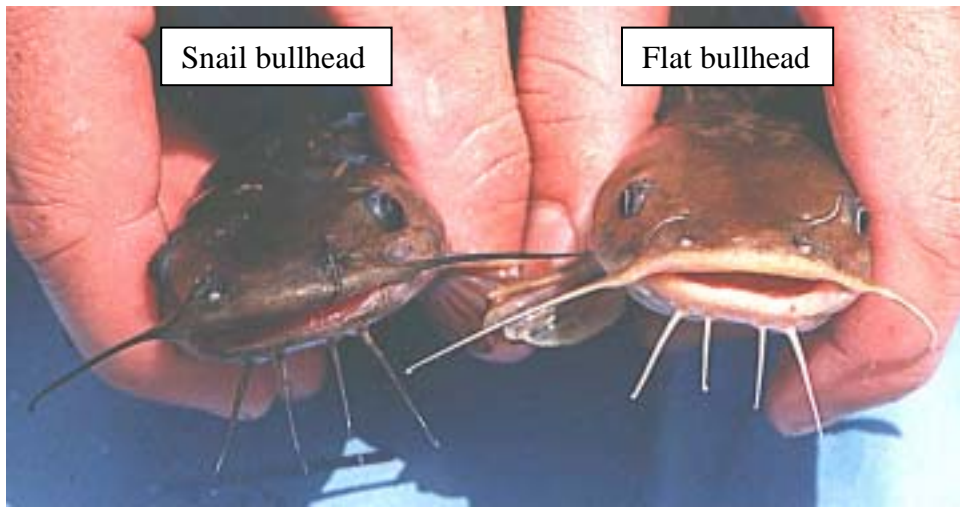


FLAT BULLHEAD
Ameiurus platycephalus
**Non-game fish*

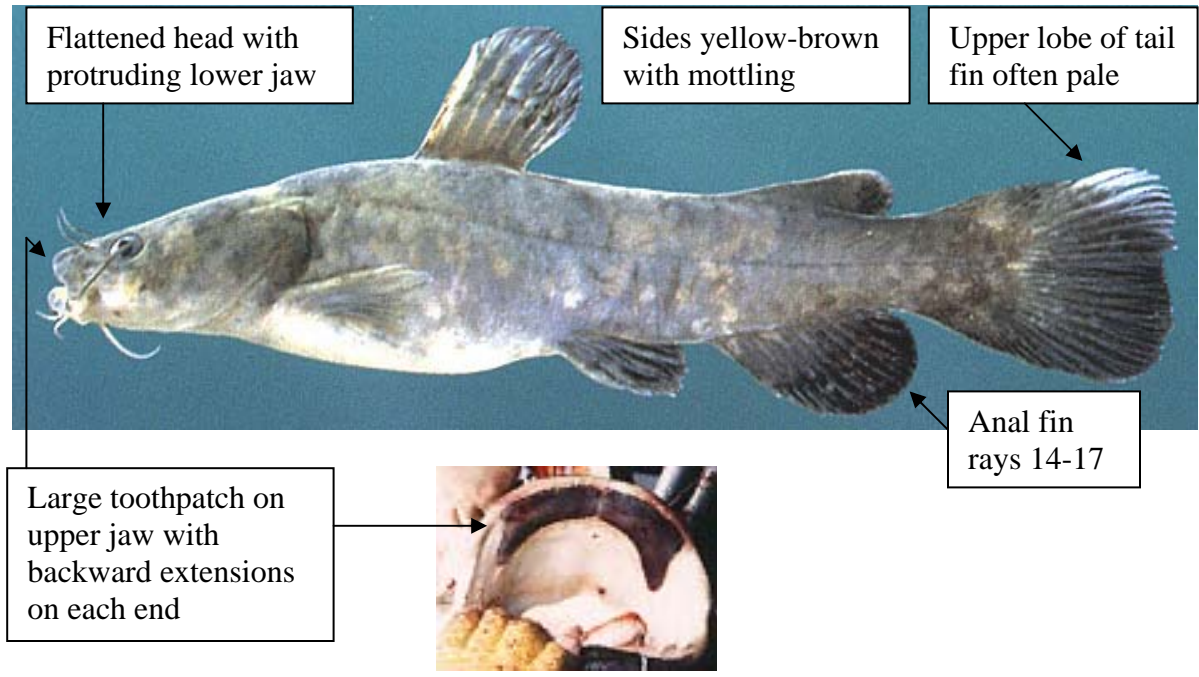


SNAIL BULLHEAD
Ameiurus brunneus
**Non-game fish*





FLATHEAD CATFISH
Pylodictis olivaris
(shovelhead cat, mud cat, yellow cat)
**Non-game fish*

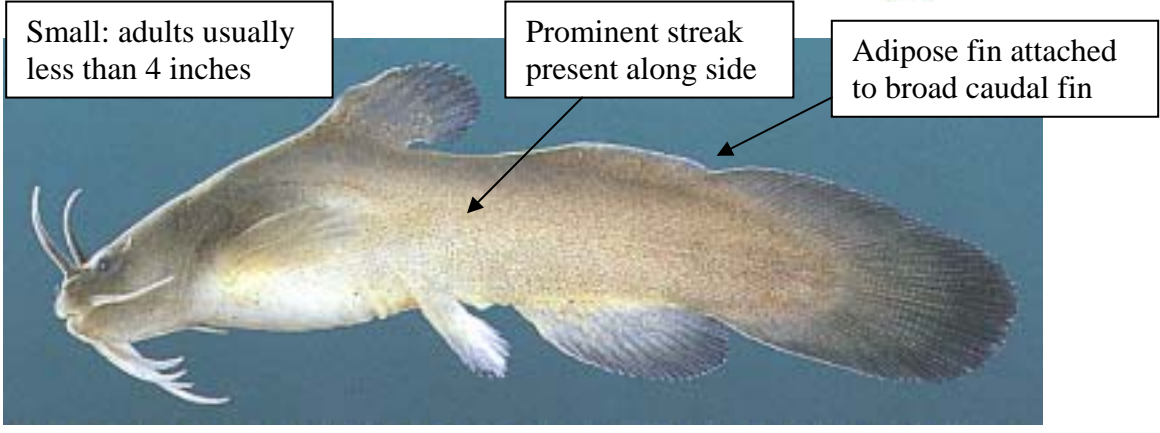


TADPOLE MADTOM

Noturus gyrinus

(catminnows)

**Non-game fish*



Shads/Herrings (Family Clupeidae)

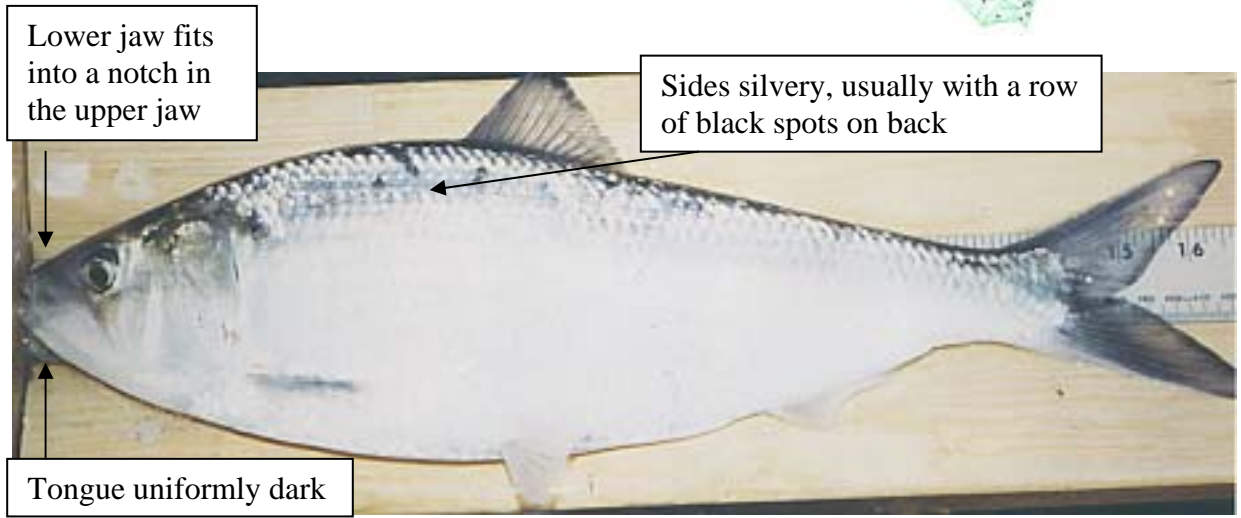
AMERICAN SHAD

Alosa sapidissima

(white shad, roe shad,

Atlantic shad, jack)

**Game fish (inland waters only)*

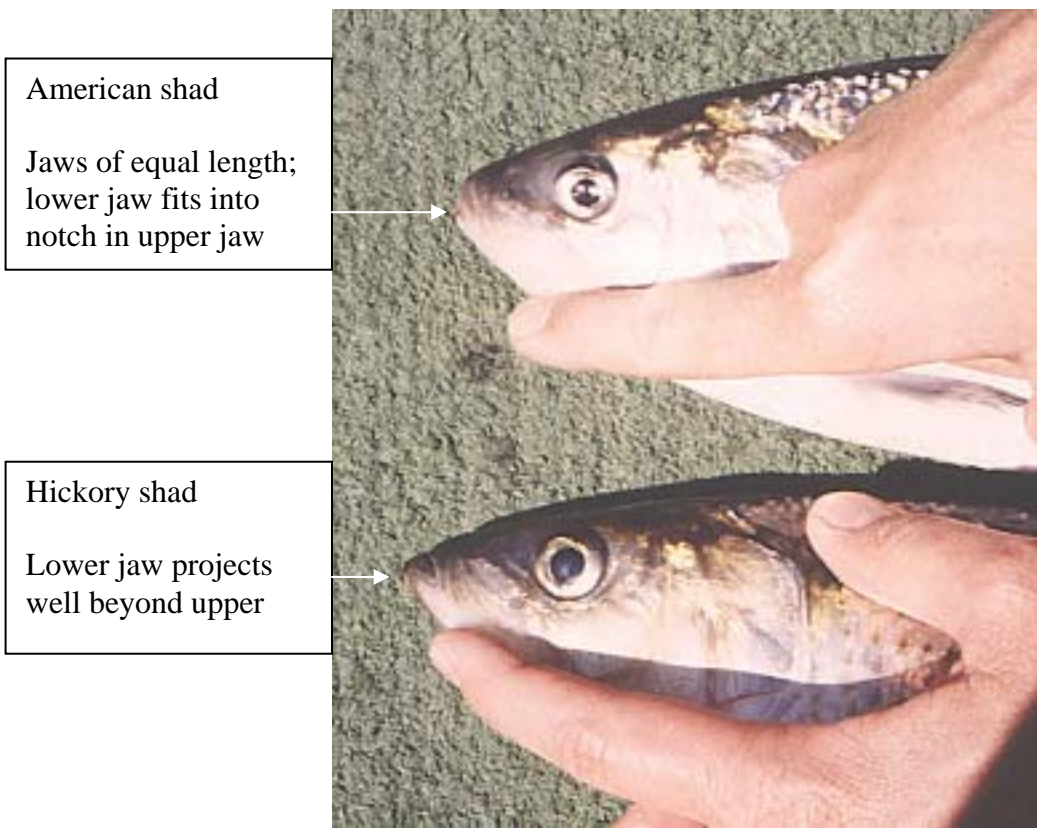
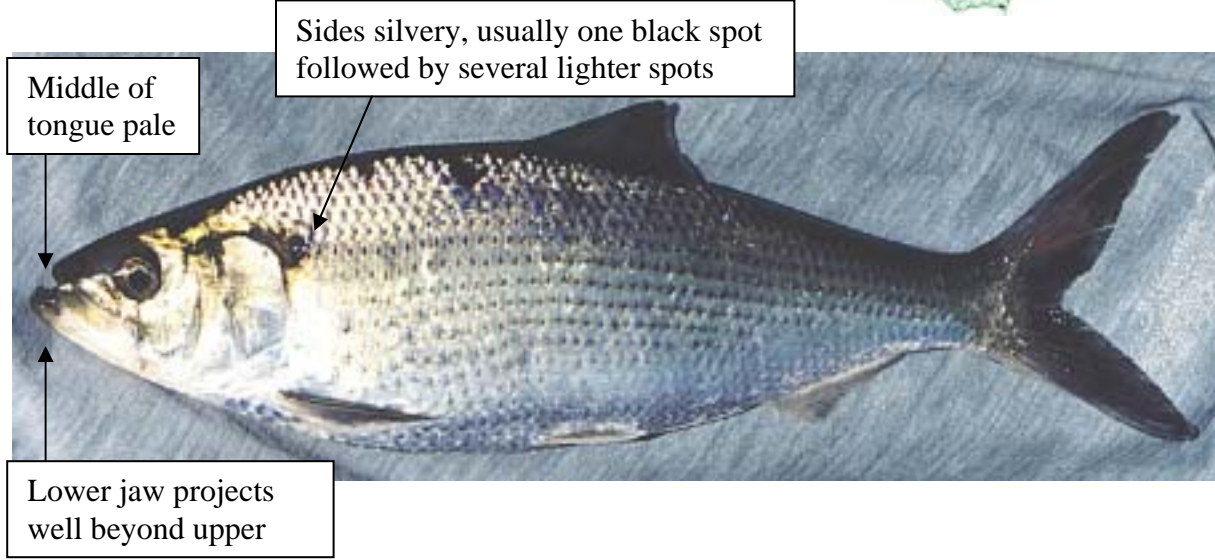


HICKORY SHAD

Alosa mediocris

(hick, tailor shad)

**Game fish (inland waters only)*



American shad
Jaws of equal length;
lower jaw fits into
notch in upper jaw

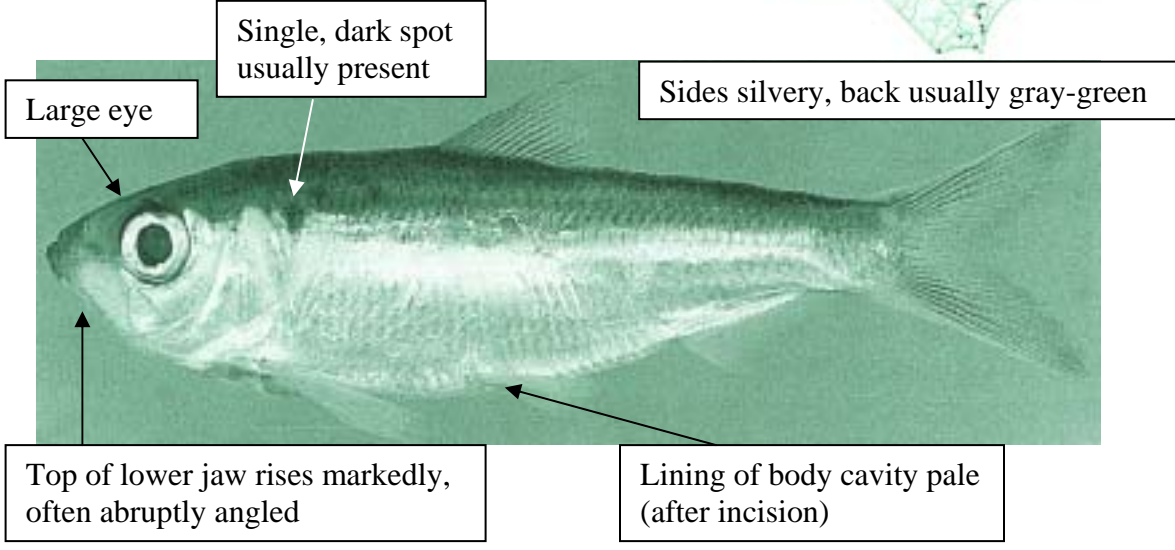
Hickory shad
Lower jaw projects
well beyond upper

ALEWIFE

Alosa pseudoharengus

(river herring, roe, goggle-eye)

**Non-game fish*

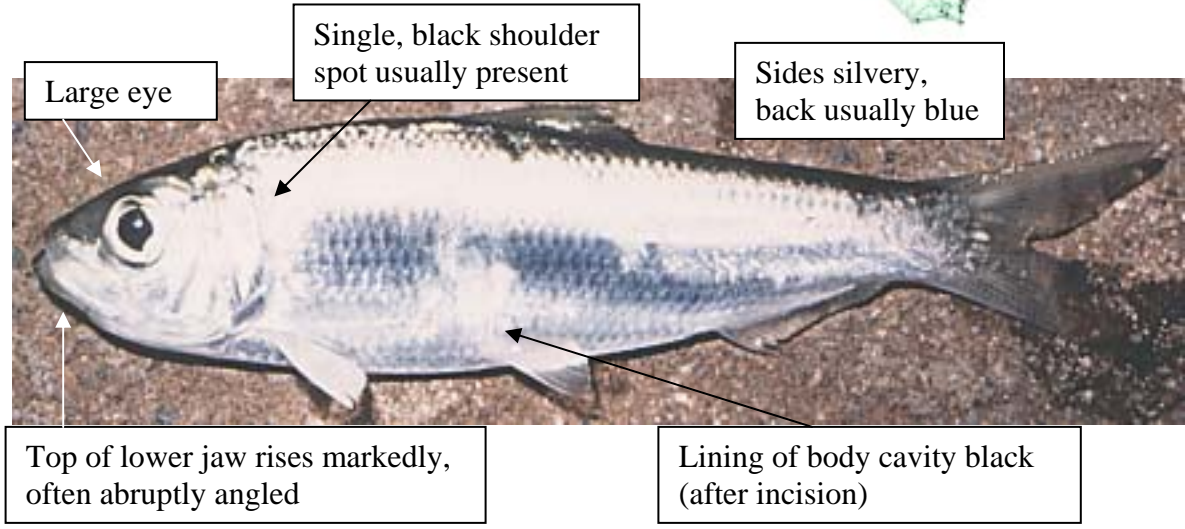


BLUEBACK HERRING

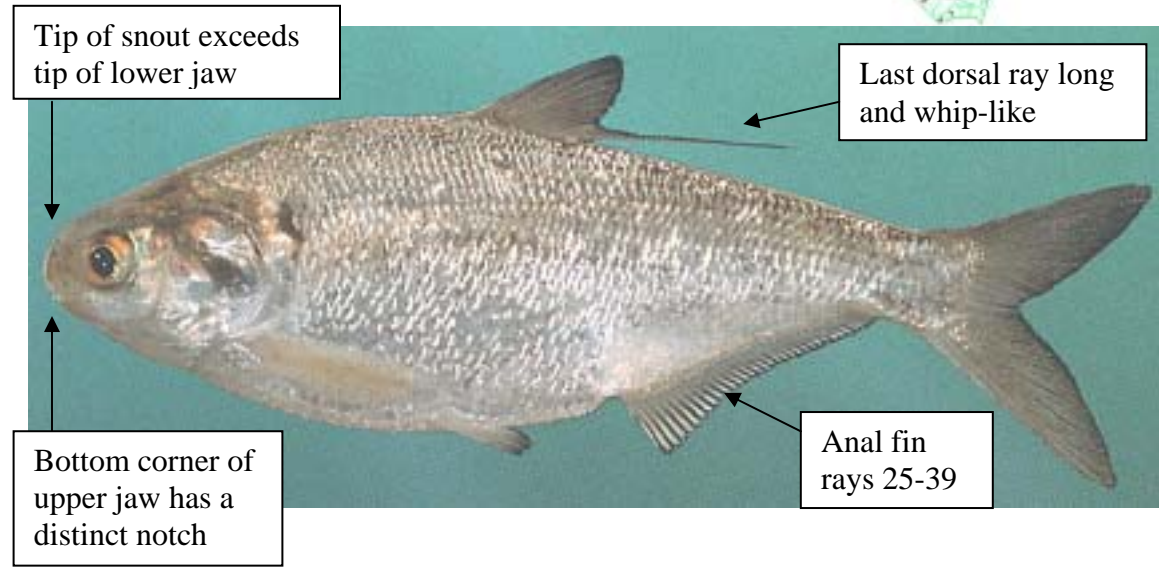
Alosa aestivalis

(river herring, roe)

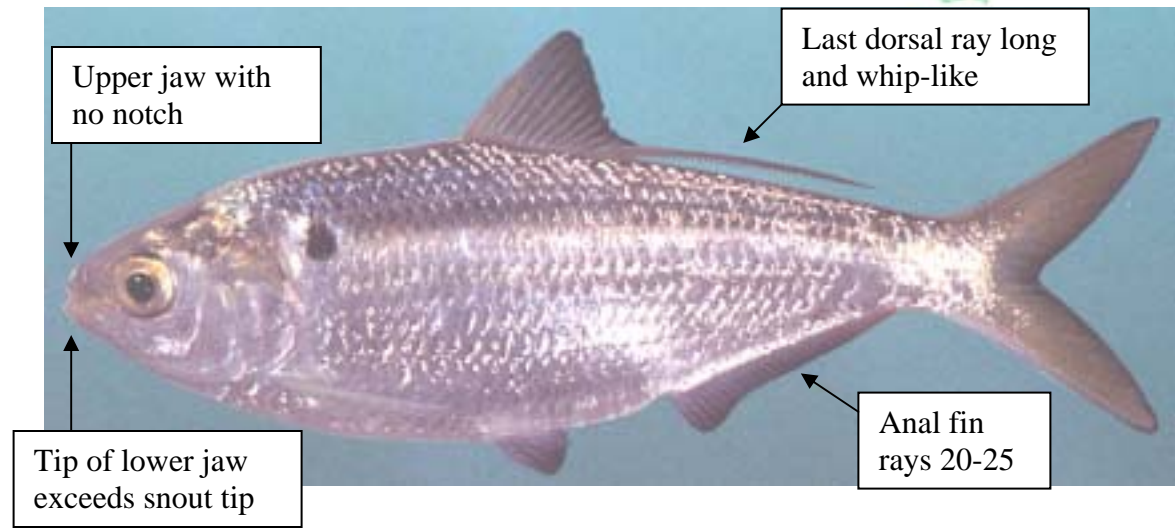
**Non-game fish*



GIZZARD SHAD
Dorosoma cepedianum
(nanny shad, shiner)
**Non-game fish*

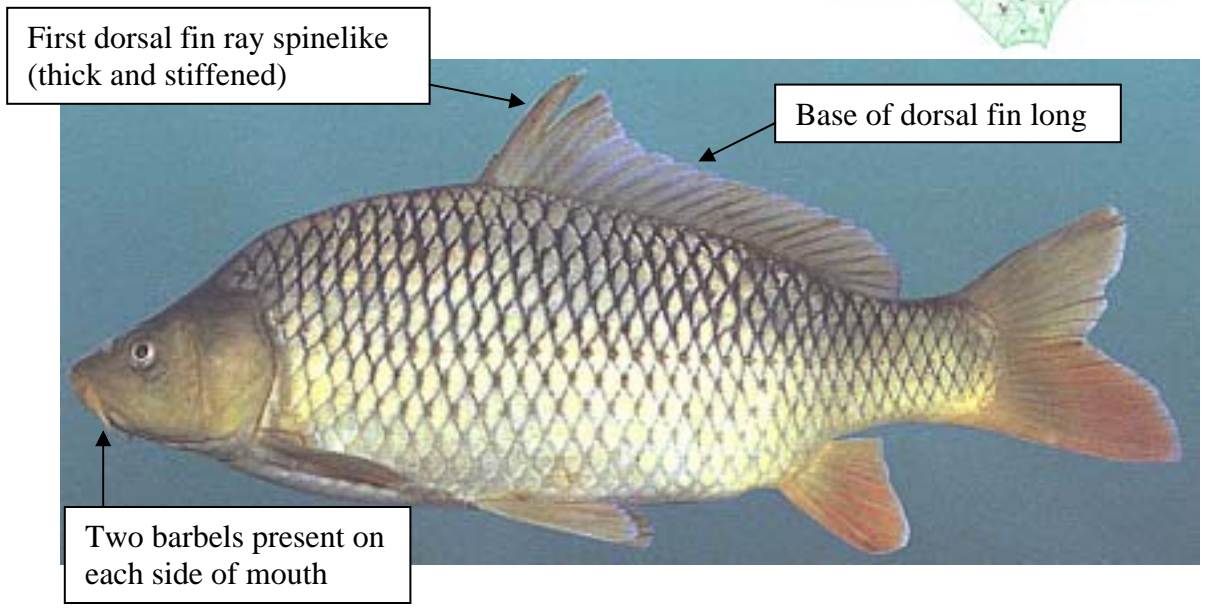


THREADFIN SHAD
Dorosoma petenense
**Non-game fish*

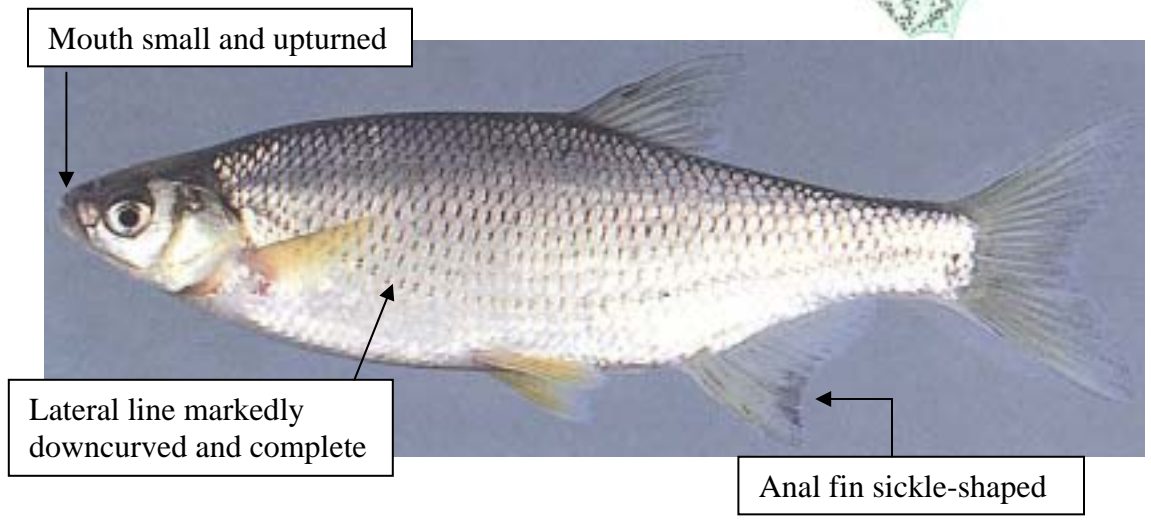


Minnows (Family Cyprinidae)

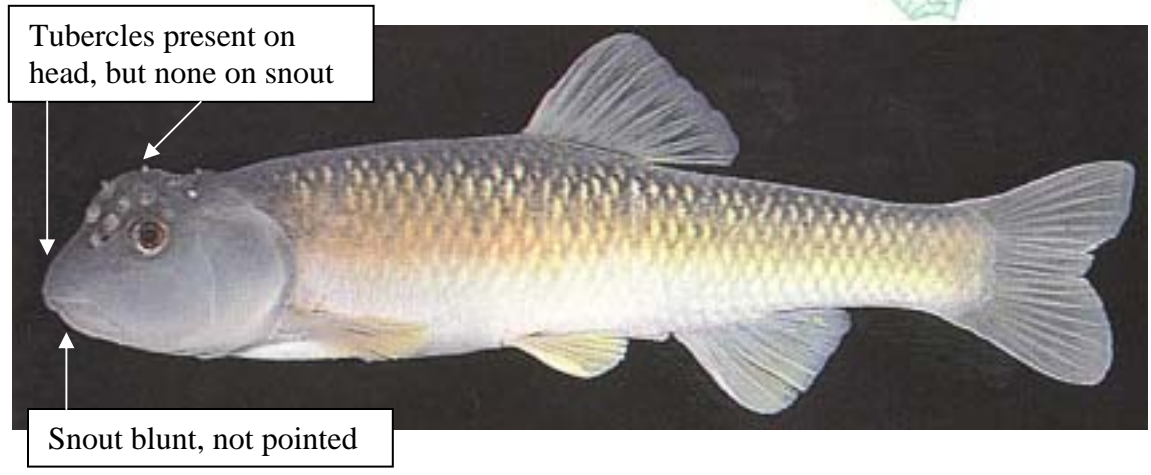
CARP
Cyprinus carpio
**Non-game fish*



GOLDEN SHINER
Notemigonus crysoleucas
(roach, shad roach, shiner)
**Non-game fish*

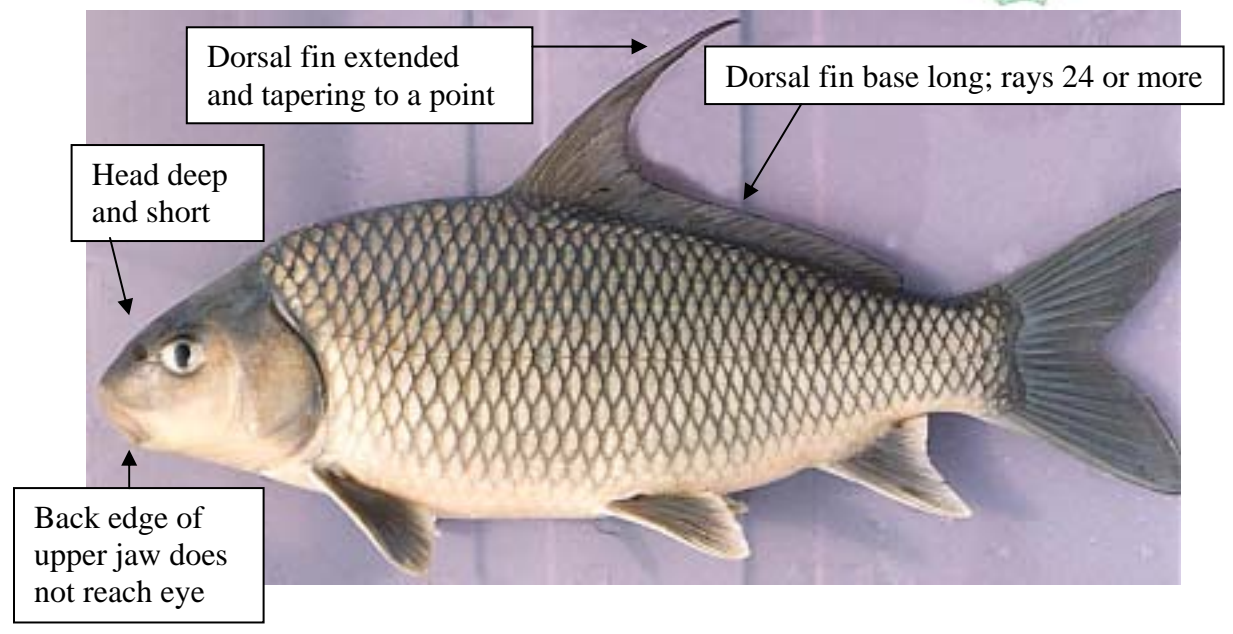


BLUEHEAD CHUB
Nocomis leptocephalus
(creek chub, horny-head chub)
**Non-game fish*



Suckers (Family Catostomidae)

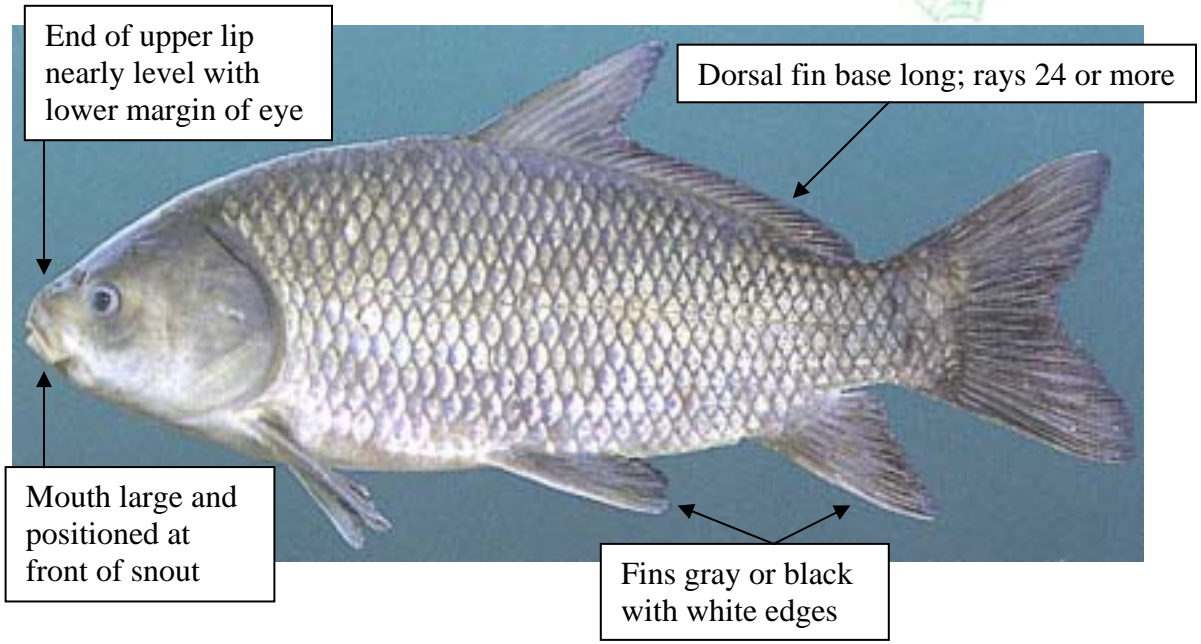
QUILLBACK
Carpionodes cyprinus
**Non-game fish*



BIGMOUTH BUFFALO

Ictiobus cyprinellus

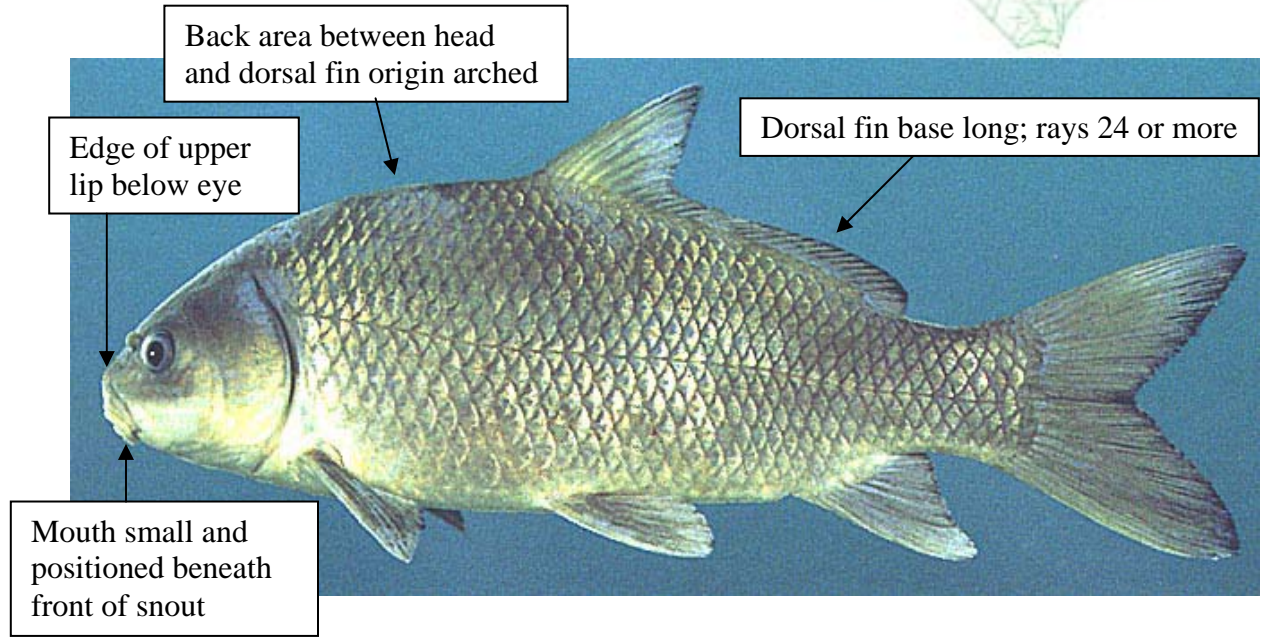
**Non-game fish*



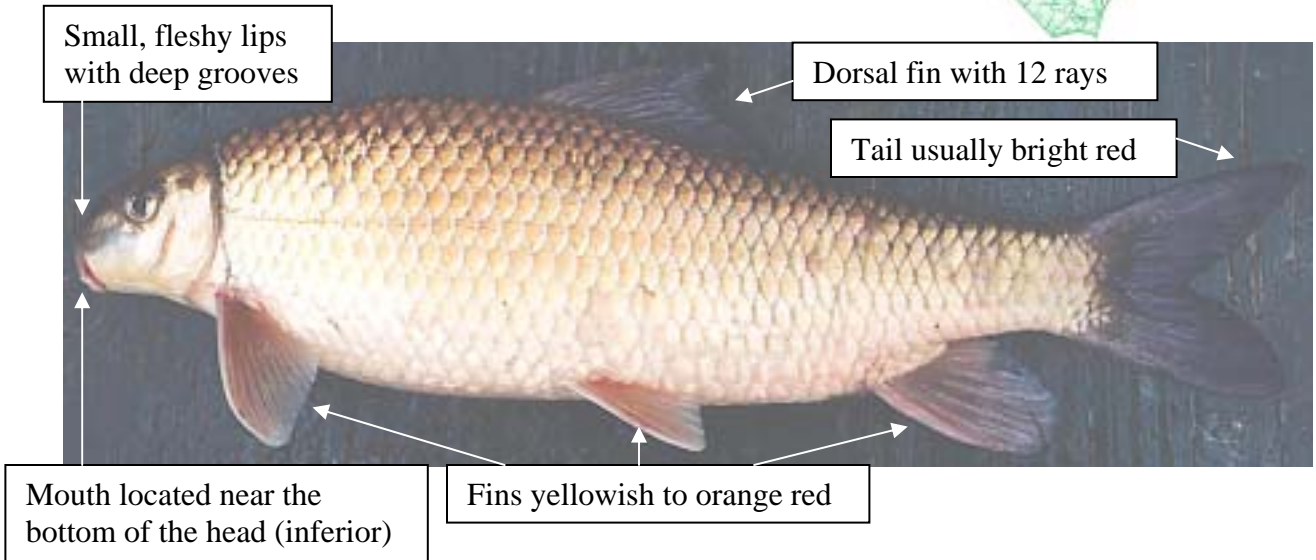
SMALLMOUTH BUFFALO

Ictiobus bubalus

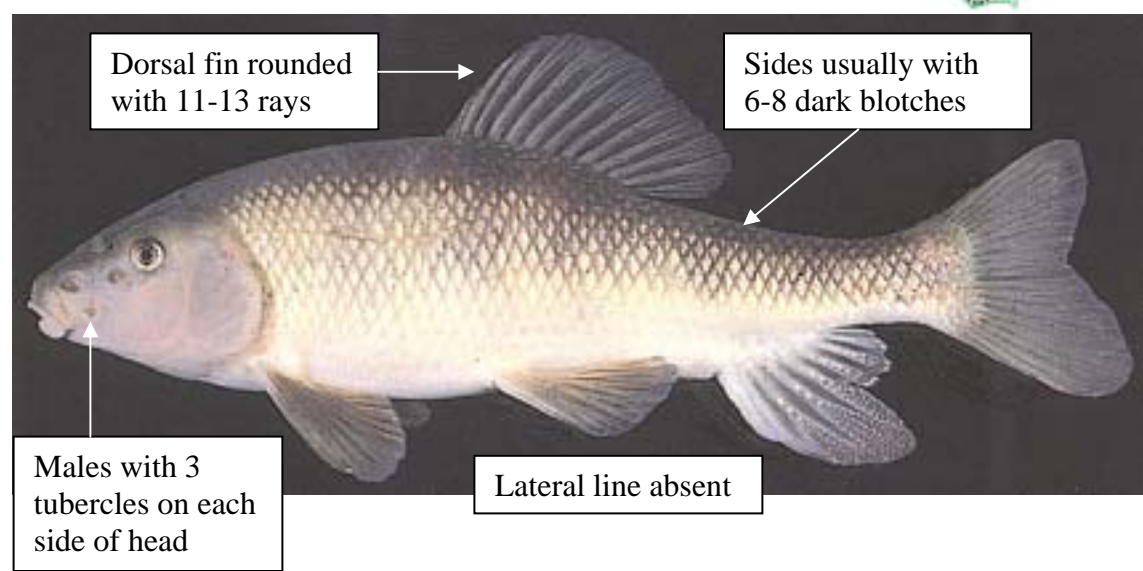
**Non-game fish*



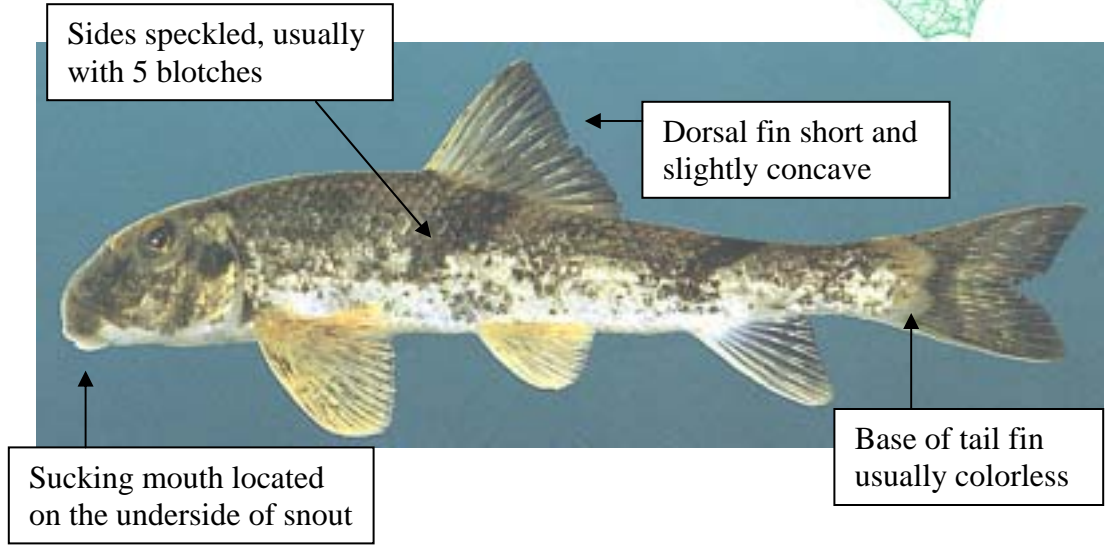
SHORTHEAD REDHORSE
Moxostoma macrolepidotum
**Non-game fish*



CREEK CHUBSUCKER
Erimyzon oblongus
**Non-game fish*

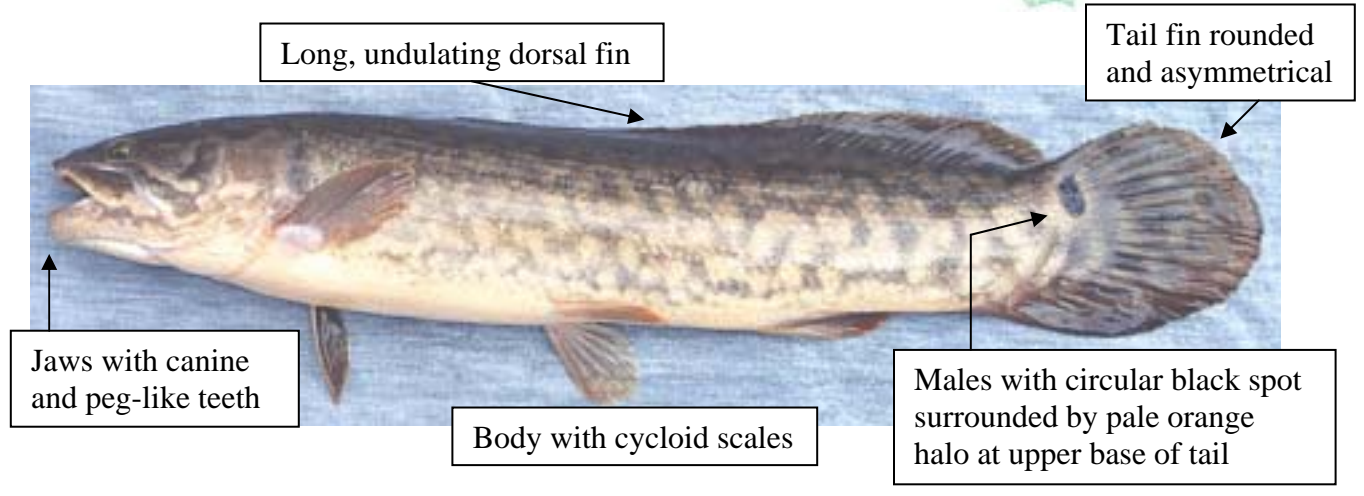


NORTHERN HOGSUCKER
Hypentelium nigricans
**Non-game fish*

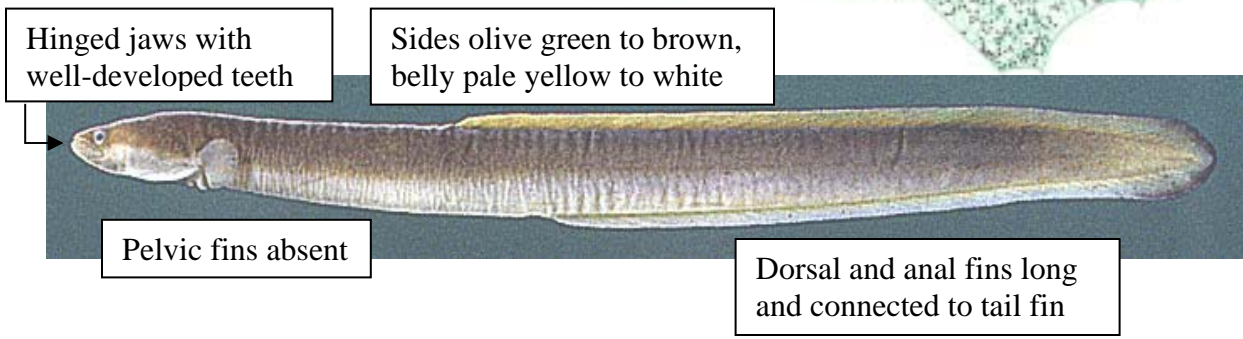


Additional Non-game Species

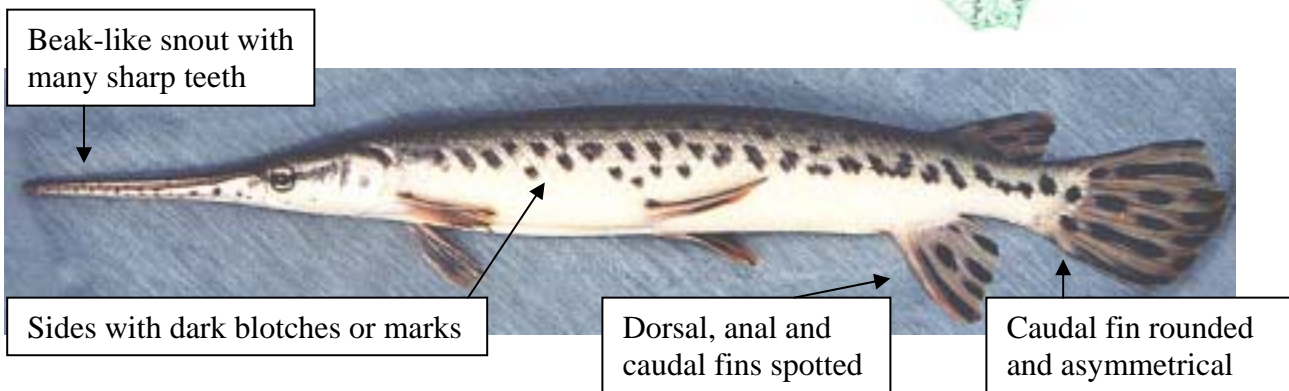
BOWFIN
Amia calva
(grindle, blackfish, mudfish, dogfish, spot-tail)
**Non-game fish*



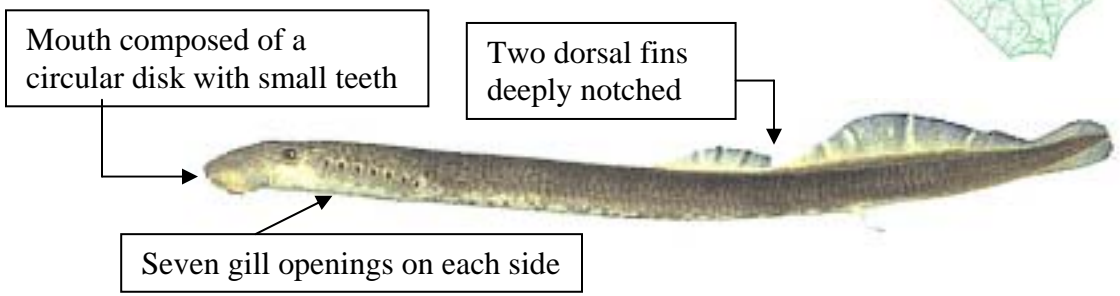
AMERICAN EEL
Anguilla rostrata
**Non-game fish*



LONGNOSE GAR
Lepisosteus osseus
**Non-game fish*



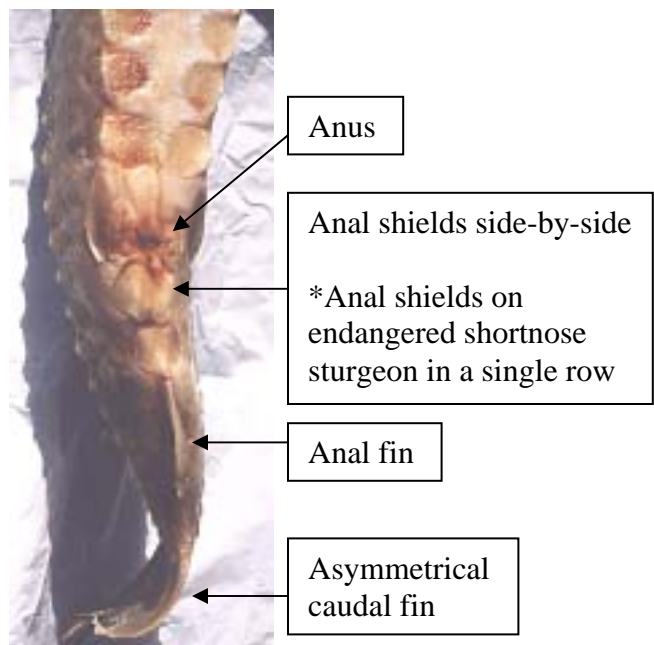
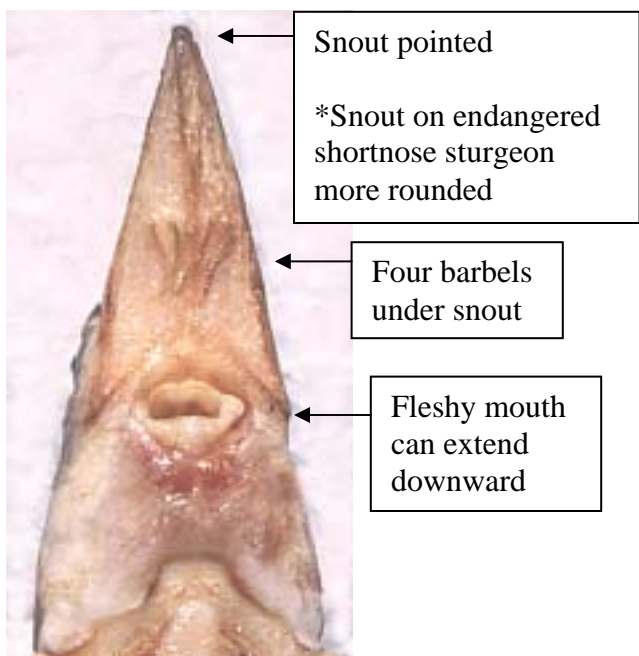
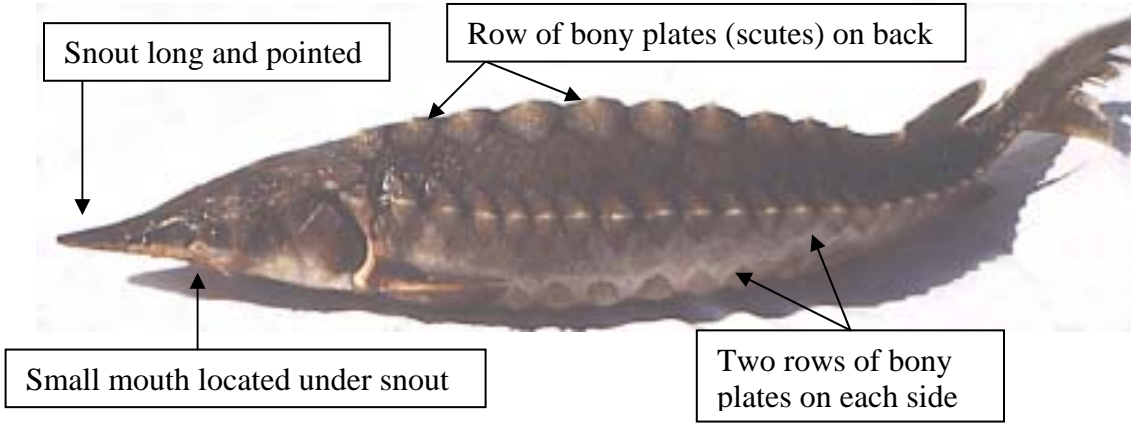
LEAST BROOK LAMPREY
Lampetra aepyptera
**Non-game fish*



ATLANTIC STURGEON
Acipenser oxyrinchus
**Non-game fish*



(All species of sturgeon are illegal to possess)



Shortnose sturgeon
(extremely rare)

Atlantic sturgeon

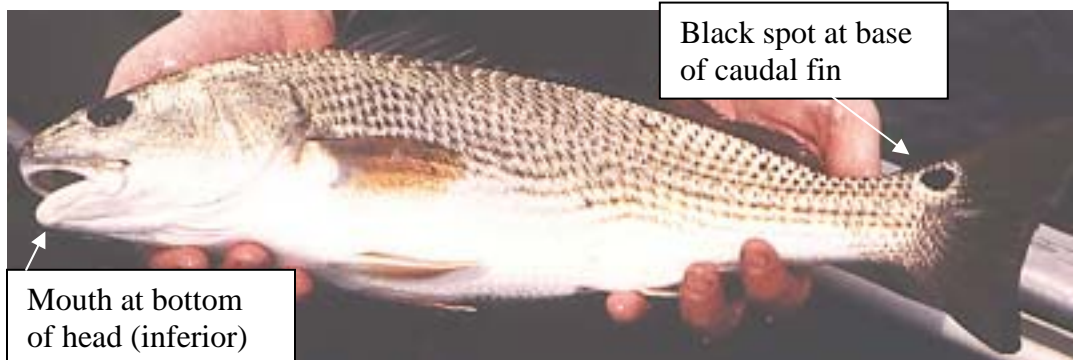


Marine species classified as game fish in inland waters

RED DRUM

Scianops ocellatus

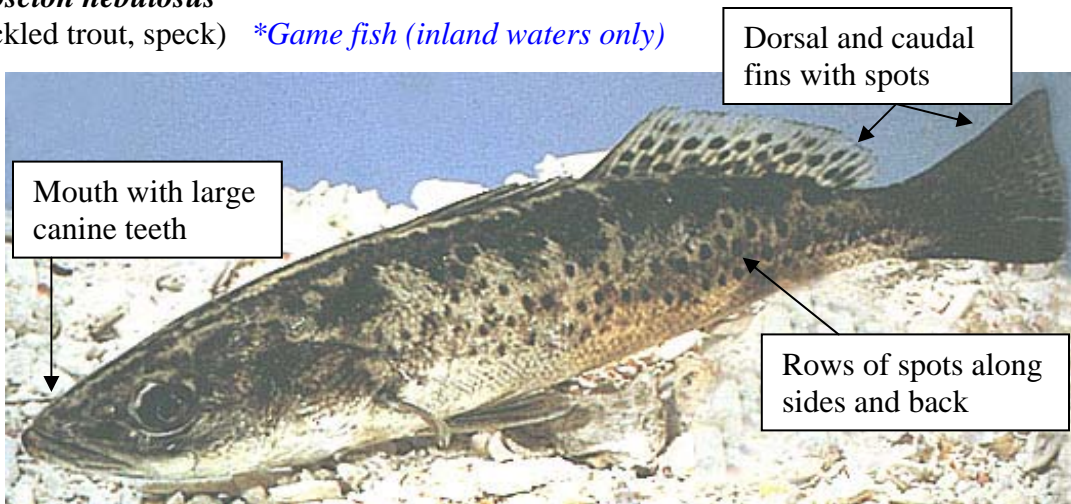
(puppy drum, channel bass) **Game fish (inland waters only)*



SPOTTED SEATROUT

Cynoscion nebulosus

(speckled trout, speck) **Game fish (inland waters only)*



SOUTHERN FLOUNDER (and all other flounder)

Paralichthys lethostigma

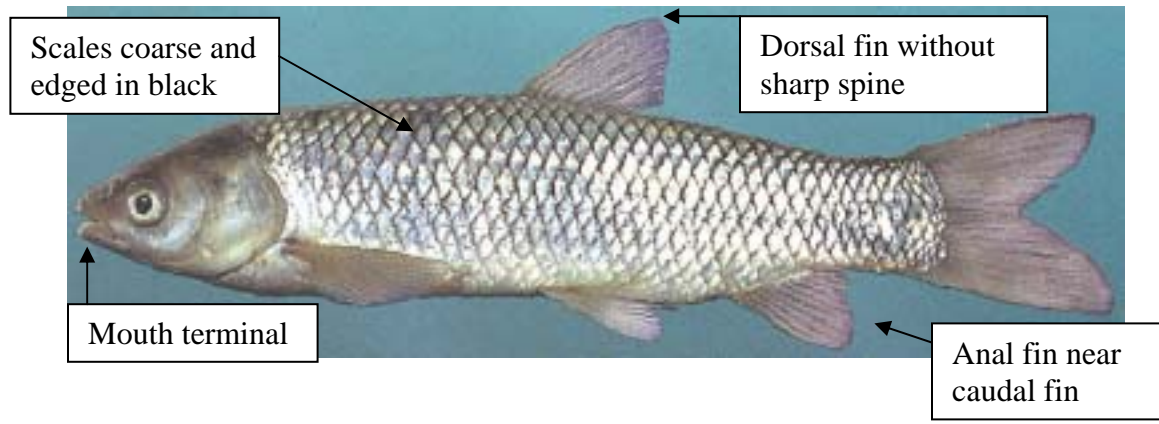
**Game fish (inland waters only)*



Exotics

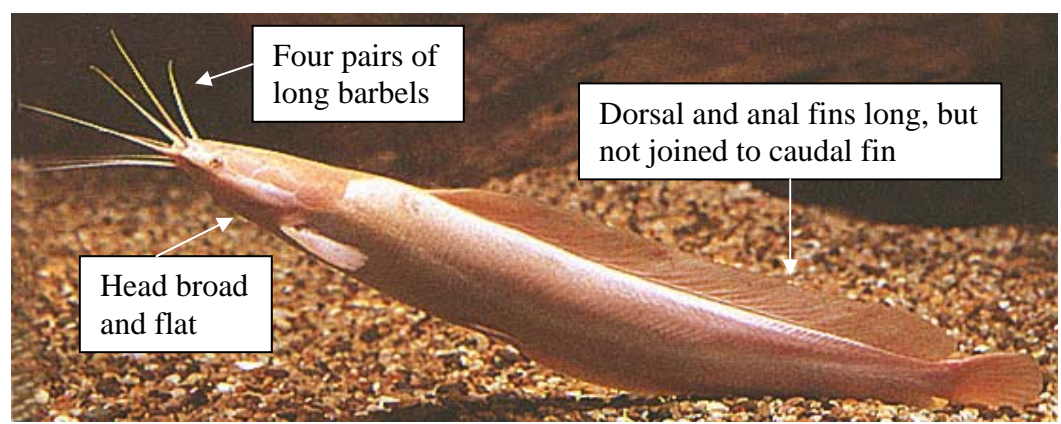
GRASS CARP

Ctenopharyngodon idellus *Non-game exotic
(sterile variety may be possessed when used for weed control in private ponds)



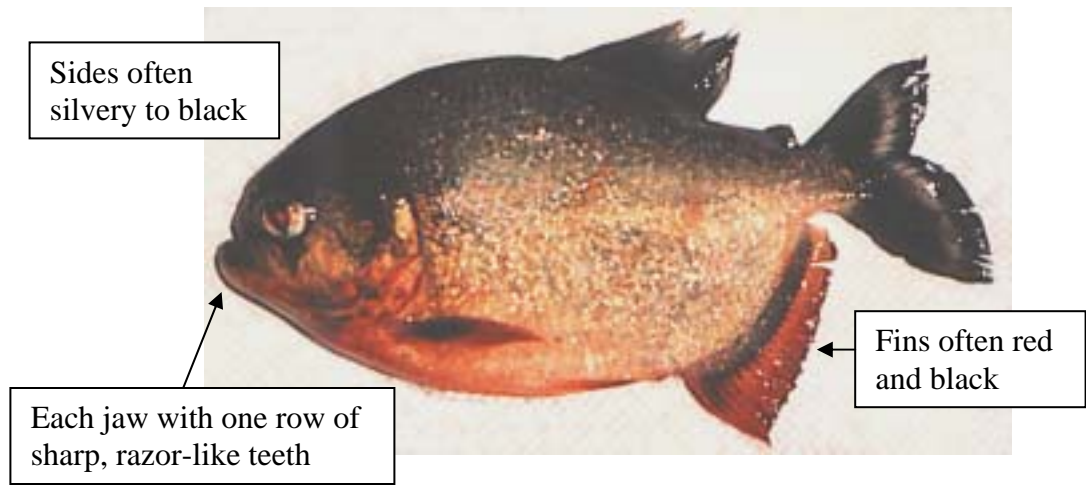
WALKING CATFISH

Clarias batrachus *Non-game exotic (illegal to possess)



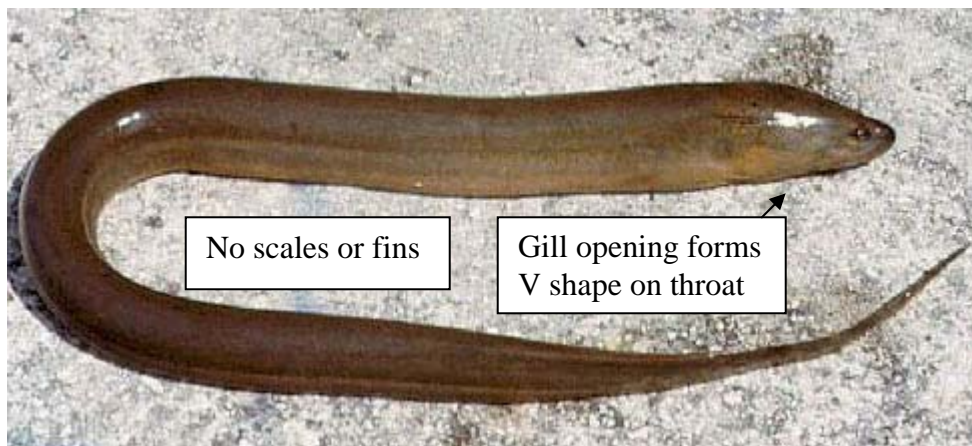
PIRANHA

Serrasalmus spp. *Non-game exotic (illegal to possess)

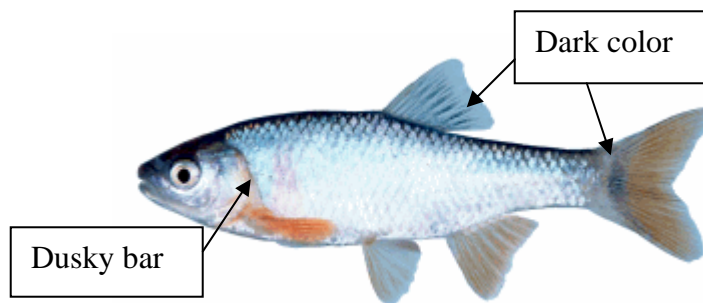


BLACK CARP**Mylopharyngodon piceus** *Non-game exotic

(sterile variety may be bought, possessed and stocked locally under a WRC issued permit)

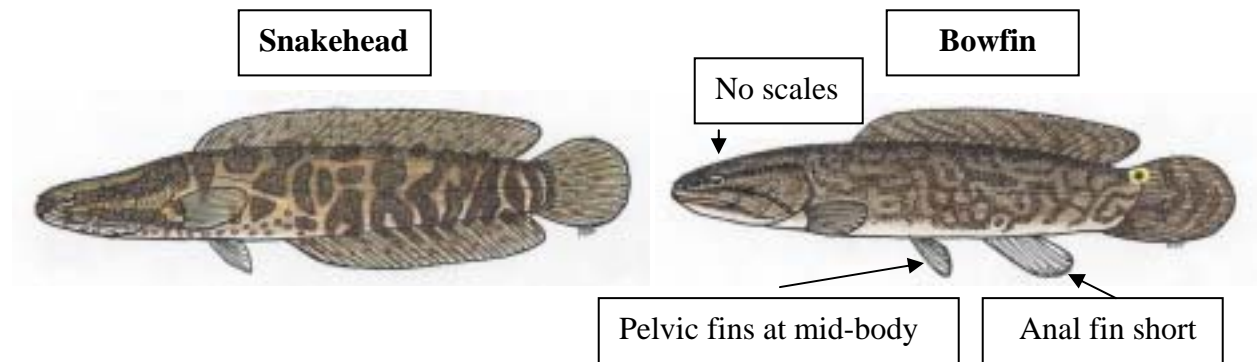
**SWAMP EEL****Monopterus albus** *Non-game exotic (illegal to possess)**RED SHINER****Cyprinella lutrensis**

(redhorse minnow, rainbow dace) *Non-game exotic (illegal to possess)



SNAKEHEAD

Channa argus *Non-game exotic (illegal to possess)



NORTH CAROLINA FRESH WATER FISHING RECORDS

The following table contains the current fishing records for a variety of fresh water species.

Last updated 06/03/02

Species	Weight	Location	Date	Angler	Lure/Bait
BASS					
Bodie (Hybrid)	17/7	Lake Chatuge	3/15/96	Michael R. Hogsed	Rebel Jointed Plug
Roanoke	2/10.75	Nash County Fishing Creek	4/27/94	Richard Elijah Evans	Spinnerbait
Largemouth	15/14	Farm Pond, Union County	3/29/91	William H. Wofford	Crankbait
Rock (redeye)	1/14	Deep River, Carabnton	4/29/98	Robert W. Lytton	Crappie Jig
Smallmouth	10/2	Hiwassee Reservoir	6/1/51	Archie Lampkin	Unknown
Spotted	5/15	Lake Chatuge	11/27/92	Kent Moffitt	Spinnerbait
Striped	54/2	Hiwassee Reservoir	6/7/91	Larry Kleith Verner	Minnow
White	5/14	Kerr Reservoir	3/15/86	Jim King	Bucktail
CATFISH					
Blue	80/0	Cape Fear River	3/21/99	Keith Davis	Unknown
Channel	40/8	Fontana Reservoir	4/15/71	P.P. Paine	Unknown
Flathead	69/0	Cape Fear River	7/26/94	Edward C. Davis	Perch
White	13/0	Lake James	5/21/90	Jerry Wayne Bentley	Night crawler
Brown Bullhead	3/12	Buck Hall Creek, Duplin County	4/26/97	Gregory Dale Hughes	Night crawler
PERCH					
White	2/15	Falls of the Neuse Reservoir	12/16/01	Bob G. Williams, Jr.	Strata Spoon
Yellow	2/9	Indiantown Creek	2/8/90	Evelyn G. Ethridge	Minnow
PICKEREL					
Chain	8/0	Gaston Reservoir	2/13/68	John H. Leonard	Minnow
Redfin	2/4	Gallberry Swamp	6/23/97	Edward C. Davis	Minnow

NORTH CAROLINA FRESHWATER FISHING RECORDS - CONTINUED

Species	Weight	Location	Date	Angler	Lure/Bait
SHAD					
American	7/15.5	Tar River	4/10/74	R.S. Proctor	Shad dart
Hickory	3/8	Tar River	2/20/92	Ralph D. Johnson	Spoon
SUNFISH					
Redear (shellcracker)	4/6*	Lookout Shoals Lake	6/12/88	Ronald Sweet	Orange Rooster- tail
Bluegill	4/5	Henderson County	7/27/67	Danny Case	Catawba worm
Flier	1/5	Private pond	3/17/90	Douglas N. McCall	Cricket
Green	0/8	Farm Pond, Guilford County	9/16/98	Craig Wyrick	Plastic Worm
Redbreast	1/12	Bladen Co. Big Swamp	5/29/83	Ronald Stanley	Beetle spin
Warmouth	1/13	Richmond Co. McLeods Pond	5/7/76	Emma Sears	Minnow
TROUT					
Brook	7/7	Raven Fork River	5/15/80	G.L. Marshall, Jr.	Rooster tail
Brown	24/10	Nantahala River	4/17/98	Robert Lee Dyer	#11 Rapala
Rainbow	16/5	Jackson County	12/20/89	Terry L. Gregory	Night crawler

NORTH CAROLINA FRESHWATER FISHING RECORDS - CONTINUED

Species	Weight	Location	Date	Angler	Lure/Bait
OTHER					
Bowfin	17/15	Black River	6/21/97	Gregory A. Demery, Sr.	Cut bait bream
Carp	48/0	Mecklenburg Co. pond	3/11/86	William Houston, Jr.	Unknown
Crappie	4/15	Asheboro City Lake #4	4/27/80	Dean Dixon	Minnow
Freshwater Drum	8/7	Kerr Lake	3/15/02	Kevin R. Alley	Rat-L-Trap
Grass Carp	68/12	Summerlins Pond, Leland	6/8/98	David W. Stowell	Rebel Pop R
Longnose Gar	19/4	Northeast Cape Fear River	5/15/02	Joseph M. Mobley	Rapala broken back minnow
Muskellunge	41/8	Lake Adger	1/23/01	Richard W. Dodd	Big Mack
Tiger Muskellunge	33/8	Lake James	4/3/88	Gary Dean Nanney	Buzz bait
Northern Pike	11/13	Lake James	8/26/78	Keith Gilliam	Storm wiggle wart
Sauger	5/15	Norman Lake	7/25/71	David Shook	Top water rapala
Smallmouth Buffalo	88/0	Lake Wylie	11/14/93	Tony Crawford	Pack bait
Walleye	13/8	Lake Chatuge (Shooting Cr.)	8/16/86	Lamar L. Cofer	Old faithful spoon

HOW TO APPLY FOR A NORTH CAROLINA STATE FISHING RECORD

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission's Division of Inland Fisheries keeps lists of the largest common fresh water game fish caught by sporting methods in North Carolina waters. It keeps only all-tackle records. No line-class records are listed, nor does it keep records on all species of fish. It does not recognize fish that have been caught in nets or on set lines or trot lines nor fish that have been speared, snagged or shot. To qualify for state record recognition, a fish must have been caught on hook and line in a sporting manner.

In making application, the angler **must** provide the following information:

- the common name of the fish,
- its weight on certified scales,
- its length from nose to tip of tail,
- its girth,
- the date caught,
- the location of the catch,
- the name and address of a witness to the weighing,
- and the name and address of the angler.

If there is no witness to the catch, an affidavit as to the circumstances of the catch will be required.

Fish caught in joint waters - that is, bodies of water shared by adjacent states - must have been caught in the North Carolina portion of those waters.

The fish must be weighed on **scales that have been certified as accurate** by the NC Department of Agriculture. **Such scales will bear a dated inspection certificate.** Report that date as well as the location of the scales (name and address of the place of business.) Additional information may be required and must be provided if requested. The fish itself must be examined by a qualified expert. Fish should be frozen or otherwise preserved until identified. The Division of Inland Fisheries will arrange for a qualified expert to examine the fish. The above information must be given in written form and the angler must sign his name and provide a full side-view photo of the fish to:

Division of Inland Fisheries
1721 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1721
(919) 733-3633, ext. 281

APPLICATION FOR NORTH CAROLINA STATE RECORD FISH

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

SPECIES (Common Name) _____

WEIGHT (lbs./oz.) _____ LENGTH (in.) _____ GIRTH (in.) _____

CATCH LOCATION _____

CATCH DATE (yy/mm/dd) _____

ANGLER _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE: _____ WORK PHONE: _____

LURE or BAIT _____ ROD _____ REEL _____

SCALES LOCATION (Complete address)

DATE LAST CERTIFIED _____

NAME OF WITNESS TO WEIGHING _____

ADDRESS _____

ANGLER'S SIGNATURE _____

BIOLOGIST'S SIGNATURE OF CERTIFICATION _____

APPLICANT MUST MAIL APPLICATION WITH A FULL SIDE VIEW PHOTO OF FISH TO:

**NCWRC - DIVISION OF INLAND FISHERIES
1721 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH, NC 27699-1721**

APPLICANT WILL BE NOTIFIED BY MAIL IF THE RECORD HAS BEEN ACCEPTED.
TO INQUIRE, PLEASE CALL (919) 733-3633.

NORTH CAROLINA ANGLER RECOGNITION PROGRAM (NCARP)

The North Carolina Angler Recognition Program (NCARP) gives anglers an opportunity to catch and release trophy fish, yet have their fishing skills recognized by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission. Anglers who catch large fish that exceed a certain size can apply to the Commission's Division of Inland Fisheries for NCARP recognition. In turn, the Division of Inland Fisheries sends these accomplished anglers NCARP certificates featuring color reproductions of fish artwork by renowned wildlife artist and former Commission fisheries biologist Duane Raver. The NCARP program should not be confused with the State Record Fish program that recognizes anglers who catch a new state record fish (largest fish recorded for that species in the state). Instead, NCARP recognizes anglers who catch trophy-size fish that are not necessarily state records.

Trophy Fish/Master Angler Certificates

The NCARP program features two levels of angler recognition. Anglers catching a fish exceeding the minimum "trophy" weight or length criteria receive a "Trophy Fish" certificate from the Division of Inland Fisheries. These species-specific certificates feature Duane Raver artwork representative of the species caught by the NCARP applicant. In addition, the certificates are printed on high-quality paper suitable for framing. For anglers catching six trophy-size fish of the same species or six different species of trophy-size fish, the Division of Inland Fisheries awards a "Master Angler" certificate and patch. Because either lengths or weights can be used to certify fish as NCARP-eligible trophy fish, anglers can practice catch-and-release with their fish, allowing other anglers the same trophy fishing opportunity.

Application Forms

Application forms for having a fish certified as a trophy are available at bait and tackle shops, sporting goods stores and Wildlife Cooperator Agents. An application fee of \$5.00 will be assessed to cover costs associated with the program. Additional information about this program can be obtained from the Division of Inland Fisheries at **(919) 733-3633**.

Saltwater Angler Awards Program

The North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries also has an angler recognition program for anglers who catch trophy saltwater fish. Application forms for the Saltwater Angler Awards Program can be obtained from marinas, some charter boat captains and bait and tackle shops located along the coast. For more information about the saltwater trophy fish program, contact Dale Ward of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries at **1 (800) 682-2632**.

NCARP Minimum Trophy Fish Weight or Length Requirements.

Species	Minimum Total Weight	Minimum Total Inches
Largemouth Bass	8 pounds	24 inches
Smallmouth Bass	3 pounds	19 inches
Spotted Bass	2 pounds	15 inches
Striped Bass	10 pounds	30 inches
Bodie Bass (striped bass hybrid)	8 pounds	24 inches
White Bass	2 pounds	17 inches
Bowfin	10 pounds	22 inches
Carp	20 pounds	34 inches
Blue Catfish	30 pounds	41 inches
Channel Catfish	10 pounds	30 inches
Flathead Catfish	30 pounds	41 inches
White Catfish	4 pounds	21 inches
Crappie (black or white)	2 pounds	16 inches
Longnose Gar	10 pounds	48 inches
Muskellunge	20 pounds	41 inches
White Perch	1 pound	12 inches
Yellow Perch	1 pound	14 inches
Chain Pickerel	4 pounds	26 inches
American Shad	3 pounds	16 inches
Hickory Shad	2 pounds	13 inches
Sunfish Redbreast (robin)	1 pound	11 inches
Redear (shellcracker)	1 pound	11 inches
Green Sunfish	1 pound	9 inches
Flier	0.4 pound	8 inches
Bluegill	1 pound	11 inches
Warmouth (goggle eye)	1 pound	11 inches
Rock Bass	1 pound	11 inches
Roanoke Bass	1 pound	11 inches
Mountain Trout Hatchery Supported Brook Trout (speckled)	2 pounds	16 inches
Brown Trout	2.5 pounds	18 inches
Rainbow trout	2.5 pounds	18 inches
Wild Trout Waters Brook Trout (speckled)	0.5 pound	10 inches
Brown Trout	2 pounds	15 inches
Rainbow Trout	0.75 pound	12 inches
Walleye	6 pounds	23 inches

NCARP Application Form



Form must be filled out completely. Please Print.

Angler Information

Full Name First _____ Middle _____ Last _____
 Date of Birth Month _____ Day _____ Year _____ Social Security Number _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone Number () _____

Fish Information

Kind of Fish _____ Date Caught _____
 Weight _____ lbs _____ oz DR Length _____ in.
 Body of Water Where Caught _____ County _____
 Bait Natural Artificial
 Type of Water Pond Reservoir / Lake River / Stream Sound / Bay
 Did you release the fish? Yes No

Enclose a check or money order for \$5.00 payable to NCWRC – NCARP and mail to:

NCARP
NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Division of Inland Fisheries
512 N. Salisbury St., Suite 442
Raleigh, NC 27604-1188

Please allow 8 weeks for delivery.



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REFERENCES AND PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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- Mettee, M. F., P. E. O'Neil, and J. M. Pierson. 1996. Fishes of Alabama. Oxmoor House, Birmingham, Alabama. 820 p. (*Photos*: brook trout, rainbow trout, spotted bass, black crappie, white crappie, flier, redear sunfish, striped bass, white bass, bodie bass, chain pickerel, walleye, sauger, blue catfish, channel catfish, yellow bullhead, black bullhead, snail bullhead, flathead catfish, tadpole madtom, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, common carp, bigmouth buffalo, smallmouth buffalo, northern hogsucker, American eel, least brook lamprey, southern flounder, grass carp)
- Mickey, J. H. (*Photos*: largemouth/spotted bass tooth patch, white bass, flat/snail bullheads, blueback herring, quillback, shorthead redhorse)
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- Sternberg, D. 1987. Freshwater gamefish of North America. Prentice Hall Press, New York, New York. 160 p. (*Photos*: cover striped bass, caudal fins)
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BASIC IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON GAME AND NON-GAME FISHES OF NORTH CAROLINA

