

ROANOKE BASS

Scientific Name:

Ambloplites cavifrons

Other Names:

google eye, redeye

Identification:

A sunfish rather than a true bass, the Roanoke Bass is shaped similar to a rock bass but is dark olive-green to olive brown, fading to grayish sides with a white belly. The Roanoke Bass has smaller scale spots than the rock bass and small, lighter whitish or yellowish spots on its upper body. It is scaleless or nearly so on its cheeks.

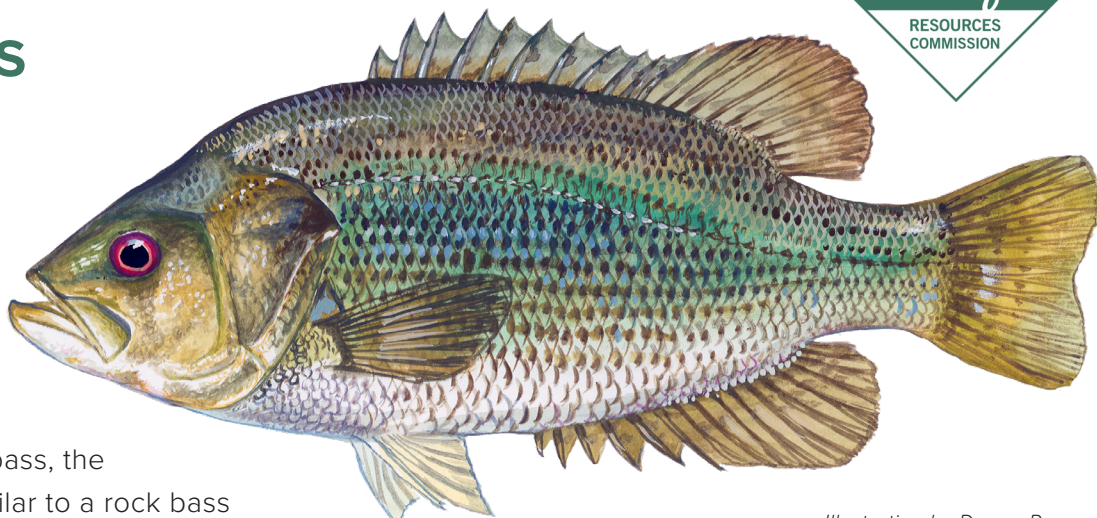


Illustration by Duane Raver

Habitats and Habits:

Roanoke Bass are uncommon in North America. Their native range is restricted to the Roanoke and Chowan River drainages of Virginia and the Tar and Neuse River drainages in North Carolina. Isolated, introduced populations also exist in North Carolina, most notably in the Uwharrie River in the southern Piedmont. The rarity of Roanoke Bass throughout their native range has prompted listing of these sunfish as significantly rare by the N.C. Natural Heritage Program. Loss of habitat that accompanies impoundment construction, pollution and siltation is mostly responsible for their decline. Roanoke Bass prefer habitats in large creeks, streams and small rivers that have moderate flows and rocky substrate.

Young Roanoke Bass eat insects and crustaceans, while adults feed on crayfish and small fish.

Fishing Techniques:

Anglers should use light spincasting tackle. Popular lures include tiny jigs, doll flies, streamers, small crank baits that imitate minnows, small spoons and spinners. If live bait is used, small to medium minnows work best. Anglers should also try fly-fishing for Roanoke Bass.

Good Places to Fish:

Eno River, Little River (Durham County), Tar River (Granville, Franklin and Nash counties), Fishing Creek (Nash and Edgecombe counties), Little Fishing Creek (Halifax County)

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 1 pound or 11 inches

State Record: 2 lbs., 11 oz. from Fishing Creek in Nash County, April 27, 1994

Last updated 2021