

# Fish – *Perca flavescens* (yellow perch)

## Fish Classification

Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata (having a notochord, dorsal nerve cord, postanal tail)
Subphylum:	Vertebrata (cartilaginous or bony vertebrae surround nerve cord)
Class:	Actinopterygii (bony, ray-finned fishes with paired fins)
Superorder:	Teleostei (most living fish; swim bladder with hydrostatic function)
Order:	Perciformes (true perches, basses, tuna)

## Natural History

The most numerous of all vertebrates are the bony fishes. They occupy every marine environment and also comprise the vast majority of the freshwater fish population. The perch belongs to this group of fish and is a good example of an aquatic vertebrate.

**Yellow perch** (*Perca flavescens*) are often called “jumbo perch” and are found in the United States and Canada. They have 6-8 dark vertical bars on their sides. Yellow perch size can vary greatly between bodies of water, but adults are usually between 4-10 inches (10-25.5 cm) in length. The perch can live for up to 11 years, and older perch are often much larger than average. The maximum recorded length is 21.0 inches (53.3 cm) and the largest recorded weight is 4.2 lb (1.91 kg).

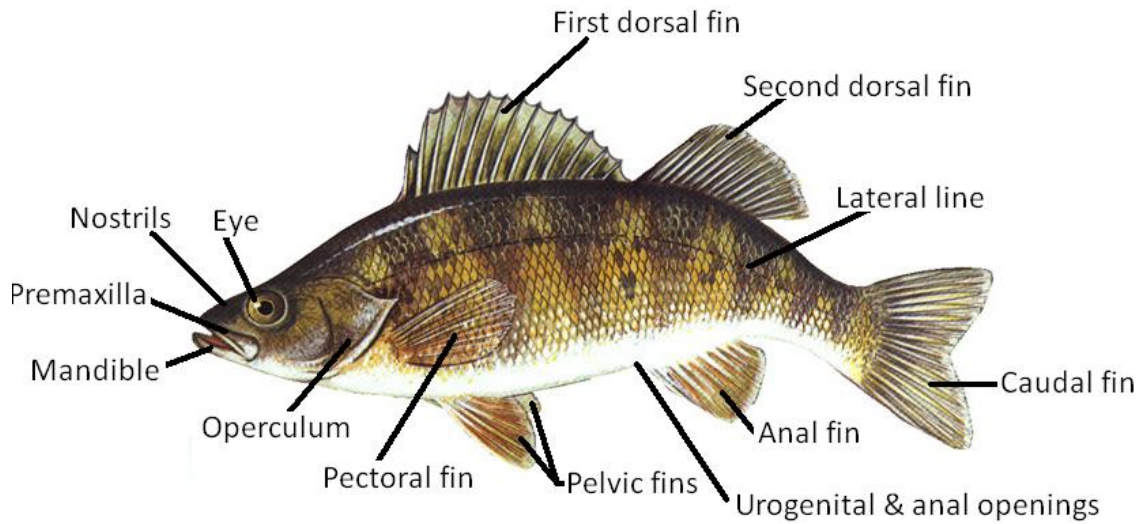
Yellow Perch reach sexual maturity at one to three years of age for males and two to three years of age for females. Spawning occurs at the end of April or beginning of May, depositing 10,000 to 40,000 eggs upon weeds, or the branches of trees or shrubs that have become immersed in the water. After fertilization the eggs hatch in 11 to 27 days depending on temperature and other weather conditions.

Yellow Perch are fairly easy to catch and are often caught while fishing for other species in which they share the same body of water. They are also an important source of food for larger species, and therefore many fishing lures are designed to look like yellow perch.

The distance measured from the anterior tip to the last vertebra is called the **standard length** of the fish. The caudal fin, which is not included in standard length, is inserted in the flesh behind the last vertebra and is included in the **total length**. For taxonomic purposes, average standard lengths are usually given whereas the sports fisherman wanting to boost his "bragging rights" will invariably use total length in describing the catch.

Like most fishes, perch have a **swim bladder** to keep them buoyant without which they would sink to the bottom. Most fish gain buoyancy by inflating their swim bladder with gases produced by their blood. But water pressure increases with depth. As a fish swims deeper, the increased water pressure makes its swim bladder smaller and so reduces the fish's buoyancy. The amount of gas in the bladder must be increased so that the bladder remains large enough to maintain buoyancy. A fish's nervous system automatically regulates the amount of gas in the bladder so that it is kept properly filled. In the yellow perch, the swim bladder is immediately dorsal to the peritoneal cavity.

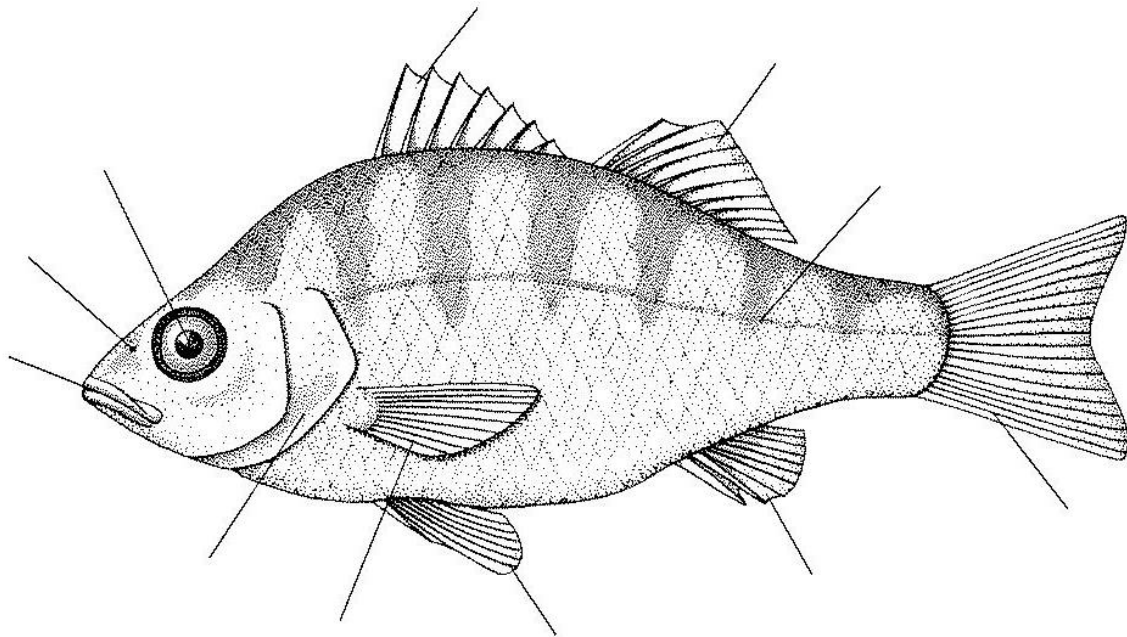
## Basic Body Plan



Drawing modified from: <http://kentsimmons.uwinnipeg.ca/16cm05/16labman05/lb7pg2.htm>

Link to [everything you wanted to know about yellow perch](#) and more!

Organ System	Structures to Identify
External Body	Anal fin, Caudal fin, Eye, First dorsal fin, Lateral line, Mouth, Nostril, Operculum, Pectoral fin, Pelvic fin, Second dorsal fin



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External Body	Anal fin, Caudal fin, Eye, First dorsal fin, Lateral line, Mouth, Nostril, Operculum, Pectoral fin, Pelvic fin, Second dorsal fin
Circulatory	Heart, Gas gland of swim bladder, Oval body of swim bladder, Spleen
Digestive	Cardiac portion of stomach, Duodenum, Liver, Pancreas, Pyloric ceca, Pyloric stomach
Excretory	Bladder, Kidney
Nervous	Brain, Spinal cord
Reproductive	Ovary
Respiratory	Gills

