

Minnesota Fish Watch

Warm Water Sport Fish Edition



Welcome to MINNESOTA FISH WATCH!

If you're an avid angler, scuba diver, or underwater camera enthusiast Minnesota Fish Watch can be a valuable guide to help you enjoy and explore the fish fauna of Minnesota.

This guide is designed to help you know where and when to look for different species of fish, where they are likely to be found, what curious habits aid them in survival, which foods are on their menu and what tackle you should use if you choose to angle for them. Each species has a full color illustration and a description to assist you in identification.

Keep a lifetime record of the fish that you observe or catch in Minnesota by downloading the Life List from our website:

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/minnaqua/index.html> or call DNR Information for a free copy at **1-888-MINN-DNR**.

Contents

Page 2	Glossary	18	White Bass
4	Topography	19	Yellow Bass
5	Bluegill	20	White Perch
6	Green Sunfish	21	Muskellunge
7	Pumpkinseed	22	Northern Pike
8	Rock Bass	23	Channel Catfish
9	Longear Sunfish	24	Flathead Catfish
10	Warmouth	25	Black Bullhead
11	Black Crappie	26	Yellow Bullhead
12	White Crappie	27	Brown Bullhead
13	Largemouth Bass	28	Blue Catfish
14	Smallmouth Bass	29	Lake Sturgeon
15	Walleye	30	Shovelnose Sturgeon
16	Sauger	31	Paddlefish
17	Yellow Perch	32	Burbot (Eel Pout)

Glossary

adipose fin- a small, fleshy structure with no rays or spines, located on the midline of the back of the fish, behind the dorsal fin. Found on catfish or trout species.

Note: this fin is removed on stocked trout.

anal fin- the single fin located on the midline of the fish (on the underside), behind the anus.

barbel- a fleshy, flap-like or whisker-like appendage (very small and hard to see on some minnows) found near the mouth. Used as a sensory organ (taste, smell, touch). Barbels are most obvious on sturgeon and catfish.

body depth- the greatest vertical distance between the midline of the back and the midline of the belly, the “height” of the fish.

body width- the greatest distance from one side of the body to the other.

caudal peduncle- the part of the body between the base of the anal fin and the base of the tail fin.

ctenoid- the most common scale type for bony fishes. This scale type is scalloped on the edges and feels like sandpaper due to the ctenii or spines on the scale.

cycloid- scale type found on most soft-rayed fish. Typically, smooth and disc-like.

dorsal fin- a fin (or fins) situated along the midline of the back, having spines or rays, sometimes both.

exotic alert- it is unlawful (a misdemeanor) to possess, import, purchase, transport, or introduce these species (non-native) except under a permit from the Division of Fisheries.

Glossary continued

fin ray- a slender, rod-shaped structure that supports the membranes of the fins. There are two types of rays: soft rays and spines. Soft rays are jointed, often branched, and flexible near their tips. Spines are unjointed, unbranched, and usually sharp at the tip and stiff along the shaft.

gill cover- the large, flat bone on the side of the head, covering the gills.

lateral line- a series of sensory tubes and pores that extend from the head along the side of the body.

lateral line scales- the scales that bear the pores and tubes of the lateral line.

opercular lobe- a flattened, flexible structure extending back from the rear edge of the gill cover (operculum). Can best be seen on some sunfishes.

operculum- the scientific name of the gill cover.

paired fins- the pectoral and pelvic fins. Fins are paired, one on each side of the body.

pectoral fins- the farthest forward or uppermost of the paired fins.

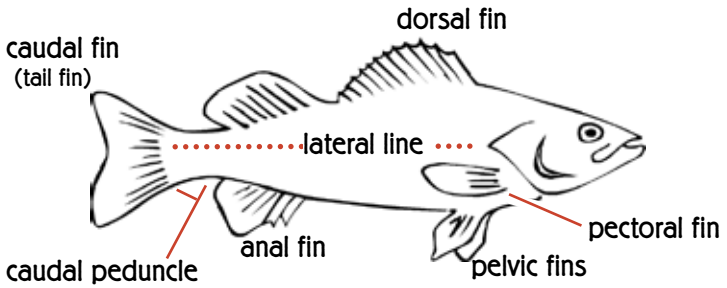
pelvic fins- the paired fins located beneath or behind the pectoral fins.

snout- the part of the head forward of the eye, not including the lower jaw. The “nose” of the fish.

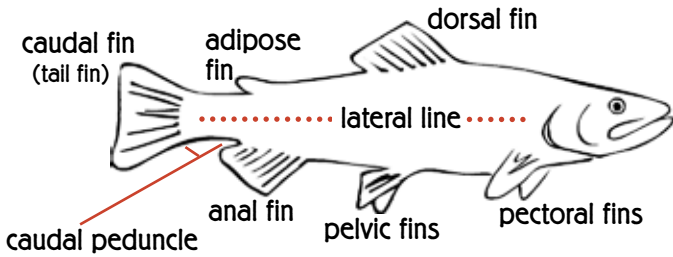
soft dorsal- a dorsal fin containing only soft rays, or the soft-rayed hind part of the dorsal fin, if both spines and soft rays are present (as in perches).

total length- the straight-line distance from the most forward tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin, when the mouth is closed and the lobes of the tail fin are squeezed together.

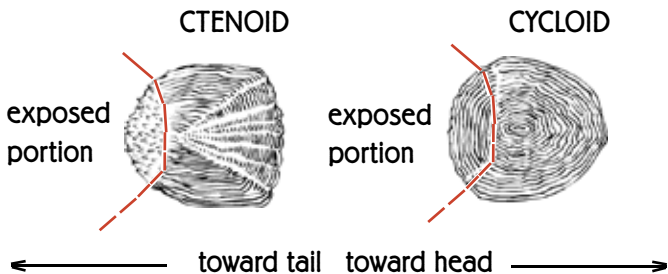
TOPOGRAPHY of SPINY-RAYED FISH



TOPOGRAPHY of SOFT-RAYED FISH



SCALE TYPES



BLUEGILL

Scientific Name: *Lepomis macrochirus*, for the Greek *lepomis* (scaled operculum) and *macrochirus* (large hand).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Flat, round.

Size: 3-5 inches in length weighing .5-1 pound.

Mouth: Small "o" shape.

Fins: Solidly connected two-part dorsal with a spot at the base; dorsal even with pectorals, long pointed pectorals.

Scales: Small and round, ctenoid.

Color: Olive purplish tinge with orange to blue belly; solid black opercular lobe; vertical bars on sides; varies with sex, age, and between individuals.

Habitat: Heavily vegetated, clear warm lakes; state-wide.

Habits: Travels in loose school; daytime is spent in pools or shade; dusk/dawn moves into shallows; sucks insects from surface; nibbles on bait.

Food: Small fish, insects, snails, and zooplankton.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; still fishing or slow retrieve of worms/crickets/grasshoppers/small jigs/fly; Angling in June is best. Fly rod with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



GREEN SUNFISH

Scientific Name: *Lepomis cyanellus*, for the Greek *lepomis* (scaled operculum) and *cyanellus* (blue).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Flat, oval.

Size: Seldom exceeds 5 inches in length weighing .5-.75 pounds.



Mouth: Forward and large compared to other sunfish.

Fins: Solidly connected two-part dorsal; dorsal even with pectorals.

Scales: Small and round, ctenoid.

Color: Back and sides are olive green. Each scale is flecked with yellow. Belly is yellowish. Opercular lobe is black with a pale border.

Habitat: Prefers small, shallow lakes and is common in creeks. Occurs in many small lakes in the Twin Cities and the backwaters of the lower Mississippi River.

Habits: Congregates from the middle of May to the middle of June for spawning. Prefers sandy bottoms in which the males fan out depressions for nests. Known to hybridize with other sunfish.

Food: Aquatic insects, amphipods, and terrestrial insects.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; still fishing or slow retrieve of worms/crickets/grasshoppers/small jigs.



PUMPKINSEED

Scientific Name: *Lepomis gibbosus*, for the Greek *lepomis* (scaled operculum) and *gibbosus* (wide margin).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Flat, round.

Size: 6-8 inches in length weighing 6-10 ounces.



Mouth: Small "o" shape.

Fins: Solidly connected two-part dorsal; dorsal even with pectorals.

Scales: Small and round, ctenoid.

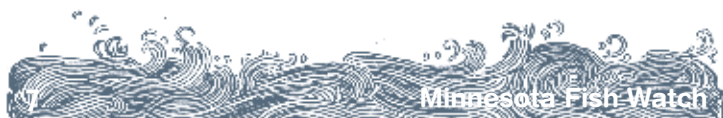
Color: Speckled greenish with yellowish-orange belly; blood red edge of opercular lobe; iridescent blue radiating lines on the cheek.

Habitat: Vegetated, clear quiet waters; statewide.

Habits: Spawns with bluegill; congregates beneath cover; feeds on surface.

Food: Aquatic insects, snails, and small fish.

Tackle: 4-8 lb. line; worms, grasshoppers, small spinners around vegetation. During June cast to spawning beds; during July-August cast to plant bed edges; early morning and late afternoon are best fishing times. Fly rod with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



ROCK BASS

Scientific Name: *Ambloplites rupestris*, for the Greek *ambloplites* (blunt armature) and *rupestris* (living among rocks).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Oval, thicker bodied and stout.



Size: 6-10 inches.

Mouth: Large extending past middle of the eye.

Fins: Solidly connected two-part dorsal; dorsal even with pectoral.

Scales: Ctenoid scales, each with a black spot.

Color: Brassy with distinct black spots; distinct reddish eye; changes pigmentation to match surroundings.

Habitat: Shallow, weedy, soft bottom lakes and rocky reefs in lakes in central and northern Minnesota.

Habits: Travels in schools; feeds primarily in daytime near structure.

Food: Insects, snails, crayfish, and small fish.

Tackle: 4-8 lb. line; worms/grasshoppers/small plugs/spinners/flyes slightly off bottom. Best fishing time is mid-June to July.



RARE SPECIES

LONGEAR SUNFISH

Scientific Name: *Lepomis megalotis*, from the Greek *leporis* (scaled gill cover) and *megalotis* (great ear).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Short, deep, round.

Size: 3-6 inches.

Mouth: Small "o" shape.

Fins: Fins are orange with bluish rays. Pectoral fins are short and rounded.

Scales: Small and round, ctenoid.

Color: Olive drab background, brilliant blue and orange spots, opercular lobe bordered by red or cream colored margin.

Habitat: Associated with sluggish waters of clear lakes, ponds and streams; often found in moderate vegetation.

Habits: Congregates in loose aggregates around cover. Nests are generally built close together to form colonies. Can be found in the Rainy River, upper Mississippi River and above Taylor's Falls in the St. Croix River.

Food: Snails, leeches, and aquatic insects make up the diet of this sunfish.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; still fishing or slow retrieve of worms/small jigs/flyes.



WARMOUTH

Scientific Name: *Lepomis gulosus*, from the Greek *lepomis* (scaled gillcover) and *gulosus* (large mouthed).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Stout, robust oval, resembles Rock Bass in many respects.



Size: Around 8 inches.

Mouth: Forward and large.

Fins: Three spines in anal fin.

Scales: Upper scales each have a black spot, ctenoid.

Color: Back and sides are olive drab and mottled with brown and violet shades. Belly is pale green or yellow and speckled with gold or with dark spots. Distinctly dark streaks radiating onto the operculum from the back of the eye.

Habitat: Prefers shallow mud-bottom lakes and sloughs, especially backwaters of the Mississippi River in SE Minnesota. Also found below Taylor's Falls in the St. Croix River.

Habits: Males guard their nests vigorously until fry swim away. In general, warmouth prefer complex habitat with aquatic vegetation, sunken logs, and stumps.

Food: Small fish, snails, and crayfish.

Tackle: Good sporting fish when using ultra light tackle.

BLACK CRAPPIE

Scientific Name: Pomoxis nigromaculatus, from the Greek pomoxis (sharp opercle) and the Latin nigromaculatus (black spotted).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Flat, deep, round.



Size: 7-10 inches in length, averaging 1 pound.

Mouth: Large with paper thin lips, best seen when extended.

Fins: Well connected two-part dorsal; dorsal even with pectorals; 7-8 spines in dorsal.

Scales: Ctenoid.

Color: Silvery-white sides with black speckling found on most of the body.

Habitat: Clear lakes that allow good visibility of prey; weed lines and submerged woody debris is preferred although they tend to suspend in mid-water especially in winter.

Habits: Congregates in loose groups around cover.

Food: Small fish and invertebrates, zooplankton.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; still fishing or deep slow retrieve of small minnows/worms/plugs/spoons/jigs; flies only in late spring; winter and spring fishing is best.



WHITE CRAPPIE

Scientific Name: Pomoxis annularis, from the Greek pomoxis (sharp opercle) and annularis (having rings).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Flat, deep, round.

Size: 8-10 inches in length, averaging 1-2 pounds.



Mouth: Large with paper thin lips, best seen when extended.

Fins: Solidly connected two part dorsal; dorsal even with pectorals; 5-6 spines in dorsal.

Scales: Ctenoid.

Color: Greenish on top; silvery-white sides with light black vertical stripes.

Habitat: Turbid warm rivers, backwaters, and lakes. Found in the drainages of the Red, St. Croix, Minnesota and lower Mississippi Rivers.

Habits: Congregates in loose groups around cover.

Food: Small fish, invertebrates, and zooplankton.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; still fishing or deep slow retrieve of small minnows/worms/plugs/spoons/jigs; winter and spring fishing is best.



LARGEMOUTH BASS

Scientific Name: *Micropterus salmoides*, from the Greek *micropterus* (small or short fin) and from the Latin *salmoides* (salmon).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Greater body width than other sunfish; cross-section is a broad oval.



Size: 10-13 inches, weighing 2-3 pounds.

Mouth: Large; jaw extending beyond eye.

Fins: Connected two-part dorsal with a deep notch.

Scales: Large compared to other sunfish, ctenoid.

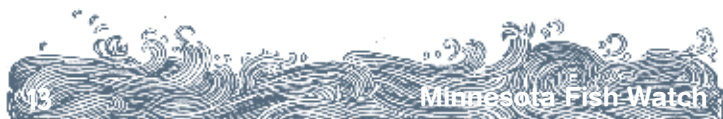
Color: Dark green with silvery-yellow/green sides and white belly; black lateral stripe; background color varies with habitat and water color.

Habitat: Clear to turbid, weedy, quiet, sandy/muddy bottom lakes and streams in central and southern Minnesota.

Habits: Ambush sight feeder; most active in morning and evening; very territorial.

Food: Small fish, crayfish, and frogs.

Tackle: 4-8 lb. line; slow retrieve of plastic worms/frogs/minnows/plugs/spoons in vegetation beds. Fly rods with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



SMALLMOUTH BASS

Scientific Name: *Micropterus dolomieu*, from the Greek *micropterus* (small or short fin) and *dolomieu* (after M. Dolomieu, a French geologist).

Family: Sunfish.

Shape: Greater body width than other sunfish; cross section is a narrow oval.



Size: 8-15 inches in length weighing 2-4 pounds.

Mouth: Large; jaw extending to middle of eye.

Fins: Connected two-part dorsal with a deep notch.

Scales: Large compared to other sunfish, ctenoid.

Color: Brassy, bronze with dark vertical stripes, dusky white on belly.

Habitat: Lakes and rivers; near rocks, boulders and submerged woody debris near drop-offs. Introduced in the Red and Rainy Rivers and found also in the St. Croix, Minnesota and upper and lower Mississippi Rivers.

Habits: Ambush sight feeder; most active in morning and evening; very territorial.

Food: Small fish, crayfish and leeches.

Tackle: 4-8 lb. line; slow to fast retrieve of plastic worms/minnows/plugs/spoons/spinners along rocks, logs and undercuts. Fly rods with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



WALLEYE

Scientific Name: Stizostedion vitreum, from the Greek stizostedion (pungent throat) and the Latin vitreum (glassy, from its large milky eyes).

Family: Perch.

Shape: Torpedo-like.

Size: 13-20 inches in length weighing 6-10 pounds.



Mouth: Medium and forward with teeth.

Fins: Two-part dorsal with front portion spiny and rear portion soft-rayed; forked tail; two spines in anal fin.

Scales: Ctenoid.

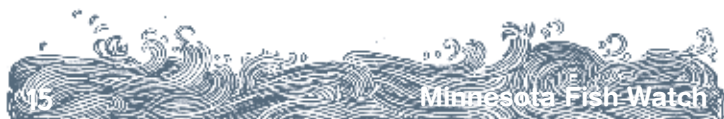
Color: Dark olive brown to black; black spot at rear base of dorsal; white margin on lower part of tail.

Habitat: Rocky/vegetated lakes and open/deep pools in streams/rivers, statewide.

Habits: Migrates up streams to spawn; feed at night; loose schools.

Food: Small fish, insects, snails, leeches, and crayfish.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; spoons, jigs and live bait fished on bottom; evening/dusk/dawn fishing is best. Fly rod with streamers.



SAUGER

Scientific Name: Stizostedion canadense, from the Greek stizostedion (pungent throat) and canadense (of Canada).

Family: Perch.

Shape: Torpedo-like.

Size: 10-16 inches in length weighing 1-2 pounds.



Mouth: Medium and forward with teeth.

Fins: Two-part dorsal with front portion spiny and rear portion soft-rayed; forked tail; two spines in anal fin.

Scales: Ctenoid.

Color: Dark olive brown to black; dark saddle bars over back and on sides; tail uniform in color; black spots on dorsal fin.

Habitat: Rocky/vegetated lakes and open/deep pools in streams/rivers. Found below Taylor's Falls in the St. Croix River, in the Minnesota, Rainy and lower Mississippi Rivers and in Lake of the Woods.

Habits: Migrates up streams to spawn in deeper water than walleyes, but uses similar habitat.

Food: Small fish, insects, snails, leeches, and crayfish.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; spoons, jigs and live bait fished on bottom. Best fishing times are evening, dusk and dawn.



YELLOW PERCH

Scientific Name: *Perca flavescens*, from the Greek word perca (perch) and the Latin flavescens (yellow).

Family: Perch.

Shape: Stocky, torpedo-like.



Size: 8-10 inches in length weighing 6-10 ounces.

Mouth: Small and forward.

Fins: Two-part dorsal with front portion spiny and rear portion soft-rayed; forked tail; two spines in anal fin.

Scales: Ctenoid.

Color: Pale yellow to bright orange; 6-7 dark, vertical bars on side.

Habitat: Rocky, vegetated, fairly deep lakes and rivers statewide.

Habits: Swim in large schools.

Food: Small fish, zooplankton, insects, snails and crayfish.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; jigs/flyes/live bait at night in vegetation off bottom or day in open water.



WHITE BASS

Scientific Name: *Morone chrysops* from the Greek *morone* (unknown) and *chrysops* (golden eye).

Family: Temperate Bass.

Shape: High, elliptical, flattened plate.

Size: 13 inches in length weighing 2-2.5 pounds.

Mouth: Forward; jaw extends to middle of eye; lower jaw protrudes slightly.

Fins: Completely divided two-part dorsal; dorsal even with pectorals; anal fin has three spines and 11-12 soft rays.

Scales: Ctenoid.

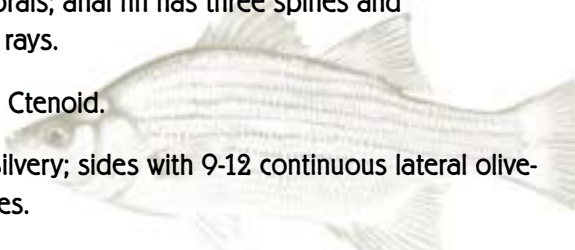
Color: Silvery; sides with 9-12 continuous lateral olive-gray stripes.

Habitat: Large, sand/rock bottom river systems in southern and central Minnesota. Introduced in the Red River and found in the Minnesota and lower Mississippi Rivers, and in the St. Croix River below Taylor's Falls.

Habits: Frequents open water near surface; active schooling.

Food: Minnows, crayfish, insects and small gizzard shad.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; minnows and small, white colored plugs/spinners/flyes; cast to mouths of feeder creeks. Best fishing time is spring or mid summer. Fly rod with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



YELLOW BASS

Scientific Name: *Morone mississippiensis*, from *morone* (unknown) and *mississippiensis* (named for the Mississippi River).

Family: Temperate Bass.

Shape: High, elliptical, flattened plate.

Size: Average 3 pounds.

Mouth: Forward; jaw extends to middle of eye; lower jaw protrudes slightly.

Fins: Completely divided two-part dorsal; dorsal even with pectorals; 3 anal spines with 9-10 soft rays.

Scales: Ctenoid.

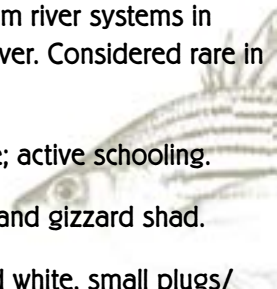
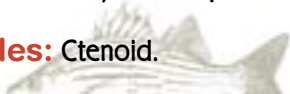
Color: Yellowish, sides with 9-12 horizontal stripes, stripes below that lateral line tend to be broken in appearance from the soft dorsal fin back.

Habitat: Large, sand/rock bottom river systems in southern Minnesota; Mississippi River. Considered rare in the state.

Habits: Open water near surface; active schooling.

Food: Minnows, crayfish, insects and gizzard shad.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; minnows and white, small plugs/spinners/flyes; cast to mouths of feeder creeks. Best fishing times are spring or mid-summer. Fly rod with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



WHITE PERCH

Scientific Name: *Morone americana* from the Greek *morone* (unknown) and *americana* (from America).

Family: Temperate Bass.

Shape: Like the white bass, but chunkier with a slightly humpbacked appearance.



Size: 5-7 inches in length.

Mouth: Forward; jaw extends to middle of eye.

Fins: The two dorsal fins are not completely separated, but are deeply notched. Pelvic and anal fins each have one stout spine.

Scales: Ctenoid.

Color: White perch usually lack stripes; back is dark and sides are pale silvery green, fading to a pale silvery white belly.

Habitat: Open water near surface.

Habits: White perch school in large numbers, keeping to deep water during the day and moving inshore at night.

Food: Known to feed on eggs of other species. Will also feed on a variety of aquatic invertebrates and small fish.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; minnows and small plugs/spinners/fly. Fly rod with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



MUSKELLUNGE

Scientific Name: *Esox masquinoy*, from the Greek *esox* (pike) and *masquinoy* (native american name for this fish).

Family: Pike.

Shape: Long, torpedo-like.



Size: 28-48 inches in length weighing 5-36 pounds.

Mouth: Duckbilled with many teeth; 6-9 pores on bottom side of each lower jaw.

Fins: One part dorsal; dorsal even with anal; forked tail.

Scales: Lower half of cheek may be partially scaled.

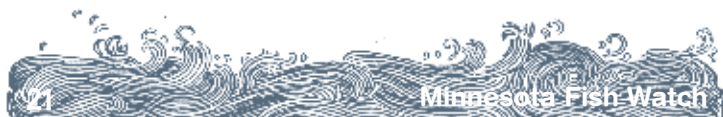
Color: Silvery to greenish or brown; markings variable—dark bars or spots on a light background (when present).

Habitat: Clear vegetated lakes and large rivers in north.

Habits: Sedentary “lone wolf”; ambush feeder.

Food: Small to medium fish.

Tackle: 10-12 lb. line; fast retrieve of heavy, active plugs/spoons. Fly rods with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



NORTHERN PIKE

Scientific Name: *Esox lucius*, from the Greek *Esox* (pike) and *lucius* (Latin name for this fish).

Family: Pike.

Shape: Long, torpedo-like.



Size: 18-30 inches in length weighing between 5-30 pounds.

Mouth: Duckbilled with many teeth; 5 pores on bottom side of each lower jaw.

Fins: One part dorsal; dorsal even with anal; forked tail.

Scales: Cheek fully scaled.

Color: Greenish above and white below; light spots on a dark background.

Habitat: Vegetated quiet or slow-moving lakes, rivers and streams, statewide.

Habits: Sedentary “lone wolf”; ambush feeder.

Food: Small and medium fish.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; spoons, plugs, minnows and suckers in the fall and winter. Fly rods with streamers, surface poppers and nymphs.



CHANNEL CATFISH

Scientific Name: *Ictalurus punctatus*, from the Greek ictalurus (fish cat) and punctatus (spotted).

Family: Catfish.

Shape: Comet shaped.



Size: 19-23 inches in length weighing 3-5 pounds.

Mouth: Wide and flat with bristle teeth; barbels present; lower jaw protrudes beyond upper jaw.

Fins: Adipose fin; forked tail with slender base; spines in dorsal and pectorals; anal round.

Scales: None.

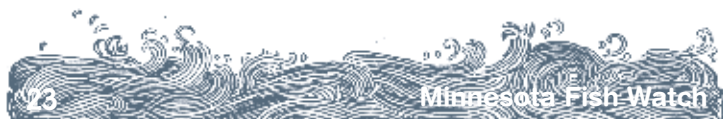
Color: Blue-gray with scattered black spots on back and sides (large fish often loose spots).

Habitat: Clear, swift rocky riffles; deep pools of streams and rivers.

Habits: Locates food by taste/smell.

Food: Small fish, insects, crayfish, snails, and clams.

Tackle: 8-12 lb. line; fish riffles/shallows off bottom at night with "stink baits", crayfish, worms, minnows, or cut bait. Fly rods with streamers, or rods with Rapalas and spinners. Fish pools or cover during the day or after a rain.



FLATHEAD CATFISH

Scientific Name: *Pylodictis olivaris*, from the Greek *pylodictis* (mud fish) and *olivaris* (olive colored).

Family: Catfish.

Shape: Slender with depressed head, greater body width than Channel Catfish.



Size: Can reach 36 inches or more and weigh over 50 pounds.

Mouth: Large and wide on flattened head; protruding lower jaw; bristle teeth; barbels.

Fins: Adipose fin; dorsal and pectorals with a spine; squared-off tail.

Scales: None.

Color: Olive to dark brown to sandy yellow mottled.

Habitat: Large, sluggish, turbid rivers with cover and deep pools in central and southern Minnesota. Found in the Mississippi, St. Croix and Minnesota Rivers.

Habits: Rests on bottom away from current during day; feeds at night in swift areas.

Food: Small fish.

Tackle: 10-25 lb. line; live creek chubs/suckers at night below wing dams or log jams, prefers live bait.



BLACK BULLHEAD

Scientific Name: Ameiurus melas, from the Greek ameiurus (unforked caudal fin) and melas (meaning black in color).

Family: Catfish.

Shape: Short and heavy, more stout than other bullhead species.



Size: 6-10 inches in length, weighing around 1 pound.

Mouth: Forward and wide with black barbels.

Fins: Adipose fin; dorsal and pectoral fins with spines; rounded tail.

Scales: None.

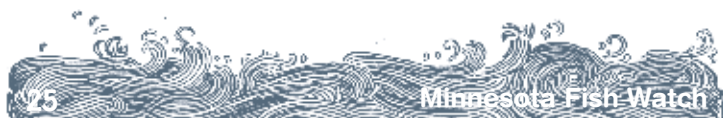
Color: Greenish brown to black on the dorsal side and yellow on the ventral; light colored bar at base of tail fin.

Habitat: Found in stagnant or slow-moving water over soft bottom throughout Minnesota.

Habits: Spawns April thru June; nest and young are guarded by adults; able to exist in warm, muddy, low oxygen areas.

Food: Vegetation, insects, frogs, crayfish, small fish and aquatic invertebrates.

Tackle: 4-6 lb. line; still fishing with worms; fish on or close to the bottom.



YELLOW BULLHEAD

Scientific Name: Ameiurus natalis, from the Greek ameiurus (unforked caudal fin) and Latin natalis (having large buttocks).

Family: Catfish.

Shape: Short and heavy.



Size: 8-12 inches in length weighing 1-2 pounds.

Mouth: Wide on a short head; bristle teeth; white barbels.

Fins: Adipose fin; dorsal and pectoral fins with spines; rounded tail.

Scales: None.

Color: Yellowish brown to black with yellow belly.

Habitat: Clear, shallow, vegetated, mud/sand/gravel/rock bottom lakes and slow streams in central and southern Minnesota.

Habits: Very hardy, locates food by taste/smell. Presence of this fish indicates better water quality.

Food: Insects, crayfish, minnows, or almost anything dead or alive.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; still fishing with worms; fish on or close to the bottom.



BROWN BULLHEAD

Scientific Name: Ameiurus nebulosus, from the Greek ameiurus (unforked caudal fin) and Latin nebulosus (clouded).

Family: Catfish.

Shape: Short and heavy.



Size: 8-14 inches in length weighing 3-4 pounds.

Mouth: Forward and wide; barbels range from gray to black in color.

Fins: Adipose fin; dorsal and pectoral fins with spines; barbs or serrations on the rear of pectoral spines; rounded tail.

Scales: None.

Color: Body yellowish to black, but tends toward yellowish-brown mottled with dark green; yellow coloration on belly.

Habitat: Inhabits lakes and quiet streams and rivers. Often found in association with riverine backwater areas.

Habits: Often found in silty water and soft mud bottoms and avoids cold, clear water. Parents guard young by patrolling edges of school.

Food: Feeds on almost anything, dead or alive, such as minnows, crayfish, snails, insects, and aquatic worms.

Tackle: 6-8 lb. line; still fishing with worms; fish on or close to the bottom.



BLUE CATFISH

Scientific Name: *Ictalurus furcatus*, from *ictalurus* (fishcat) and *furcatus* (forked).

Family: Catfish.

Shape: Robust comet shape.



Mouth: The upper jaw protrudes slightly beyond the lower, and the head is prominently convex.

Fins: Blue catfish are easily distinguished from the channel catfish by the long and flat anal fin of the blue versus the rounded anal fin of the channel catfish.

Scales: None.

Color: Blue or slate-gray above and light below.

Habitat: Principally an inhabitant of the main channels and backwaters of medium sized to large rivers. Believed to have disappeared from Minnesota waters.

Habits: Blue catfish construct a nest, which it cares for until the young hatch. Spawning occurs from April to June.

Food: Crayfish, worms, frogs, small fresh-water mussels, fish, aquatic insects.

Tackle: 10-20 lb. line; fish with "stink baits", crayfish, worms, minnows, or cut bait.



LAKE STURGEON

Scientific Name: *Acipenser fulvescens*, from the Latin *acipsenser* (sturgeon) and *fulvescens* (reddish yellow).

Family: Sturgeon.



Shape: Long, torpedo like, stout.

Size: Can reach 6.5 feet and weigh 100 pounds.

Mouth: Protrusible and surrounded by sensitive barbels.

Fins: Tail fin is heterocercal with the top being longer than the bottom. Dorsal fin situated just ahead of the tail.

Scales: Sparse and more like armored plates which become reduced in older individuals.

Color: Blackish to greenish yellow on the back and sides.

Habitat: Found in large rivers and lakes.

Habits: Lake sturgeon are known to live over 100 years and reach sexual maturity at around 20 years old. Sturgeon spawn in late May to early June. They leave the lakes and large rivers and enter smaller river systems to deposit up to 3 million eggs each. It will take a newly hatched lake sturgeon up to 5 years to reach a size of two pounds.

Food: Snails, clams crayfish and immature insects.

Tackle: 20-30 lb. line, bottom rigged with nightcrawlers or dead minnows. Season is closed in Minnesota's inland waters.



SHOVELNOSE STURGEON

Scientific Name: Scaphirhynchus platyrhynchus, from the Greek scaphirhynchus (spade snout) and platyrhynchus (broad snout).

Family: Sturgeon.



Shape: Long, torpedo like and thinner than Lake Sturgeon.

Size: 36 inches in length weighing 5 pounds.

Mouth: Protrusible and surrounded by sensitive barbels.

Fins: Tail fin is heterocercal with the top being longer than the bottom.

Scales: Large and armor-like. The tail is long, slender and entirely covered with bony plates.

Color: Body is yellowish olive in color and has no blotches above; white on the belly.

Habitat: Prefers fast moving water in large rivers with bottom substrates that consist of sand and gravel. Found below Taylor's Falls in the St. Croix, and in the Minnesota and lower Mississippi Rivers.

Habits: These fish move upstream during their spawning runs in May and June and will congregate below dams and waterfalls that are not passable.

Food: Snails, clams crayfish and immature insects.

Tackle: 10-20 lb. line; fish with worms or dead minnows or cut bait on a bottom rig. Season is closed in Minnesota's inland waters.



PADDLEFISH

Scientific Name: Polydon spathula, from the Greek polydon (many tooth) and the Latin spathula (spatula).

Family: Paddlefish.

Shape: Elongated, and shark-like.



Size: 48-52 inches in length weighing 30-50 pounds.

Mouth: Preceded by an enormous paddle-like snout, the mouth is subterminal and large.

Fins: Tail is heterocercal in shape with the top portion being longer than the lower. The dorsal fin is inserted behind the mid-point of the body.

Scales: Only a few scales are found on the tail fin. These are rhomboid in shape.

Color: Dull gray, sometimes bluish on top and white below.

Habitat: Open water areas of large riverine systems. Found in the St. Croix below Taylor's Falls, in the Minnesota and lower Mississippi Rivers.

Habits: Paddlefish collect food in the gill rakers at the rear of the mouth. This forms an efficient sieve that strains tiny organisms from the water in a way similar to that used by baleen whales. The long snout is thought to contain sensors that allow paddlefish to locate clouds of planktonic organisms.

Food: Plankton.

Tackle: No open season. Species in recovery.



BURBOT (Eel Pout)

Scientific Name: *Lota lota*, from the French la lotte, meaning codfish.

Family: Cod.

Shape: Slender, being heavier in the anterior and compressed to the rear (posterior).



Size: Average 28 inches in length weighing 6-8 pounds.

Mouth: Broad and extending beyond the posterior margin of the eye.

Fins: The long dorsal fin is divided into two with the rear portion extending almost to the tail, as does the anal fin.

Scales: Small cycloid scales embedded in the skin.

Color: Dark olive with darker markings on the back and sides.

Habitat: Deep water haunts during the summer months, moving into the shallower basins or large lakes during the winter months.

Habits: Spawning takes place very early in the year, often before ice melt. Known to gorge on food giving them a distended stomach.

Food: Burbot are voracious eaters that will feed on numerous species of fish including perch, whitefish, ciscoes and suckers.

Tackle: Use a heavy glow jig with a large fathead minnow and jig constantly.



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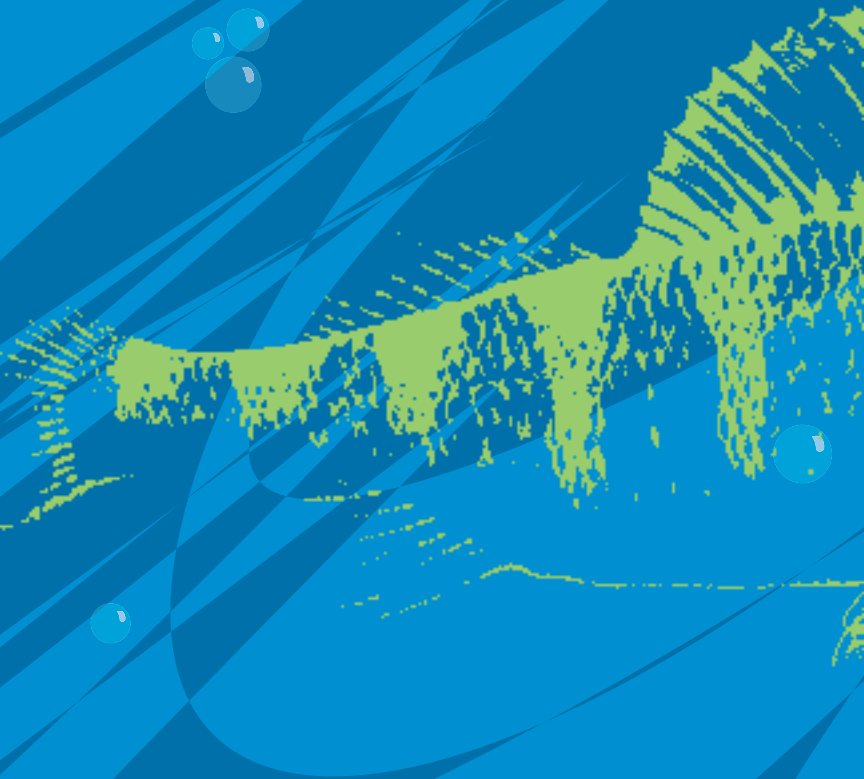
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opercular lobe



adipose fin



caudal peduncle