

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

# Quick ID Features for Baitfish

**DEALER EDITION**

PUB 5487-D



# Quick ID Features for Baitfish

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# Common Bait Fish At a Glance



Golden Shiner

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Fathead Minnow

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Striped Shiner

Photo by Brian Zimmerman



Emerald Shiner

Photo by Brian Zimmerman



Common White Sucker

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Northern Hog Sucker



Creek Chub

Photo by Brian Zimmerman

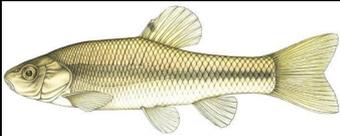


Gizzard Shad

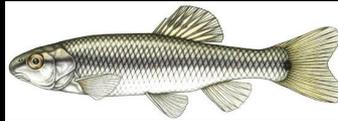
John Lyons

## Common Minnows: Family Cyprinidae

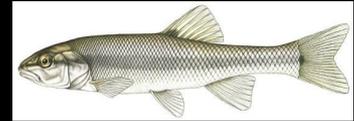
Generally small (less than 7 inches), no spines (except carp and goldfish). More than 45 species in Ohio. Fathead minnows commonly called “crappie minnow” or “bass minnow” based on their size.



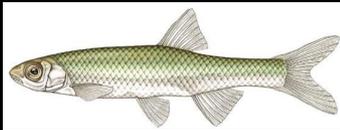
Fathead Minnow



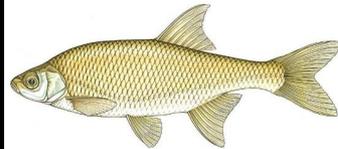
Bluntnose Minnow



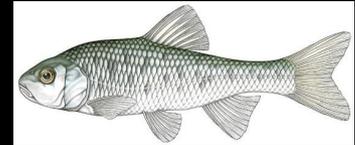
Creek Chub



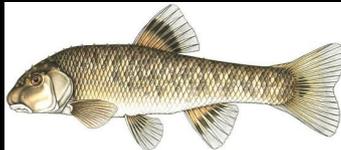
Emerald Shiner



Golden Shiner



Striped Shiner



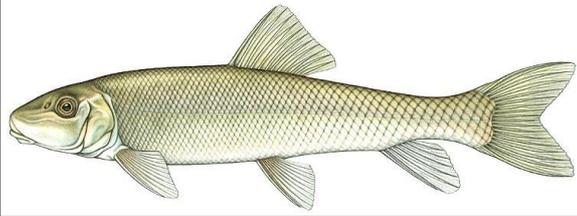
Stoneroller Minnow



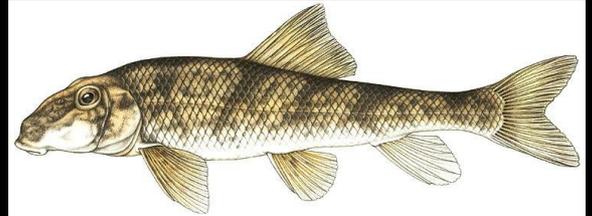
Southern Redbelly Dace

## Suckers: Family Catostomidae

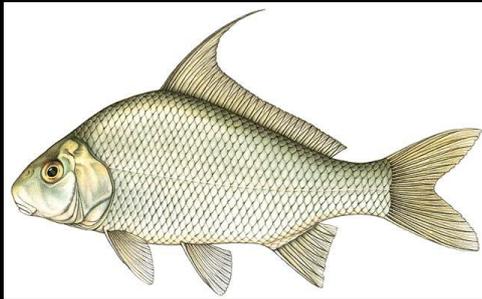
Can grow large (greater than 24 inches). No spines; downturned soft fleshy mouth. About 20 species in Ohio. Common white suckers and northern hogsuckers are commonly used as catfish or musky bait.



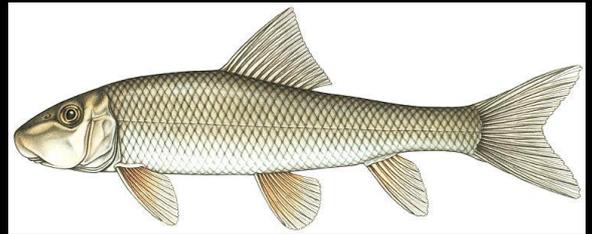
Common White Sucker



Northern Hogsucker



Quillback Carpsucker



Golden Redhorse

## Gizzard Shad: Family Clupeidae

Moderate sized fish (up to 20 inches). Extremely abundant member of the herring family found throughout Ohio and an important prey species. They are oily, “smelly” fish, making them popular as baitfish.



Photo by: Brian Zimmerman

## Skipjack Herring: Family Clupeidae

Can grow large (greater than 15 inches). Uprturned, bony plated mouth. Common in Ohio River and very popular as live or cut bait for catfish and hybrid striped bass.



## Smelt (Rainbow): Family Osmeridae

Can grow over 12 inches long. Found in Lake Erie and its tributaries. Has an adipose fin, similar to trout and catfish.



Photo by: Brian Zimmerman



John Lyons

## Brook Silverside: Family Atherinidae

Small fish (less than 4 inches) found in streams and lakes across Ohio.  
Translucent body with beak-like mouth and large eye.



## Brook Stickleback: Family Gasterosteidae

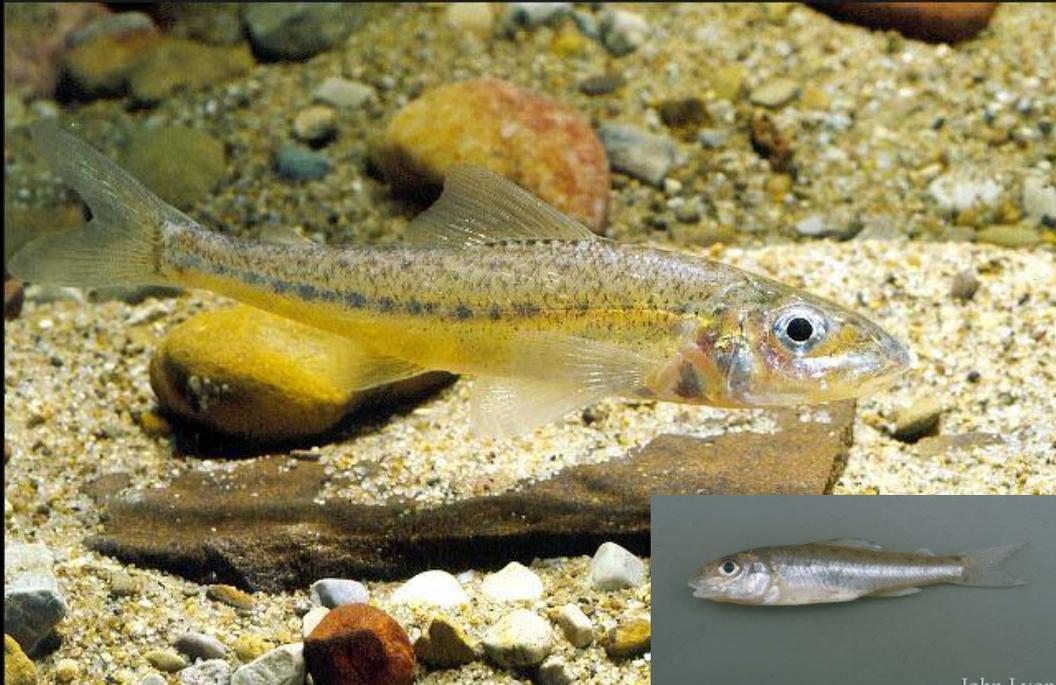
Small fish (less than 3 inches). Five distinct spines on back and narrow caudal peduncle (area in front of tail). Prefers cold streams north of the glacial boundary line (not common in south eastern Ohio).



Photo by: Brian Zimmerman

## Trout-Perch: Family Percopsidae

Small fish (less than 5 inches). Only Ohio fish with an adipose fin (similar to trout and catfish) and ctenoid scales (rough scales similar to sunfish). Scattered populations, not as common in western ohio.



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## Sculpins: Family Cottidae

Small fish (less than 5 inches). Frog-like face with eyes high on the head, scaleless body and thin flexible dorsal spines. Common in streams with good flow and riffles.



Photo by: Brian Zimmerman

## Darters: Family Percidae

Generally smaller fish (less than 7 inches). Related to yellow perch, walleye, sauger and saugeye. Thin spines on dorsal and anal fins. Large pectoral fins. There are more than 20 species of darters found in streams and lakes throughout Ohio, some very common and others extremely rare.



**Logperch Darter**



**Fantail Darter**



**Greenside Darter**



**Rainbow Darter**

## Blackstripe Topminnow: Family Fundulidae

Small fish (less than 3 inches). Strongly upturned mouth to feed near the water's surface. Dorsal fin far back on body, distinct black stripe along body's midline. Rounded, oar-like tail and speckling in the fins. More common in western Ohio streams and near-shore in some lakes.



## Central Mud Minnow: Family Umbridae

Small fish (less than 5 inches). Rounded caudal fin, heavily mottled coloration of body. Prefers clear water and organic debris/muck substrate .



# Separating the Carp



## Silver and Bighead Carp

- 1: Lower jaw extends well beyond upper jaw
- 2: Scales much smaller in ratio to body size





**Silver Carp**



**Young Bighead Carp**

**Gizzard Shad**

**Young Silver Carp**



**Young Bighead Carp**

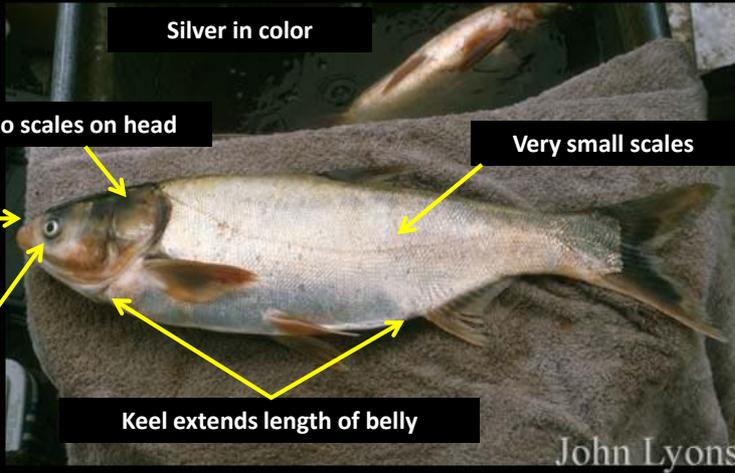


**Bighead Carp**

## Silver Carp (Invasive)

Downward slanting mouth (frown)  
and no barbels

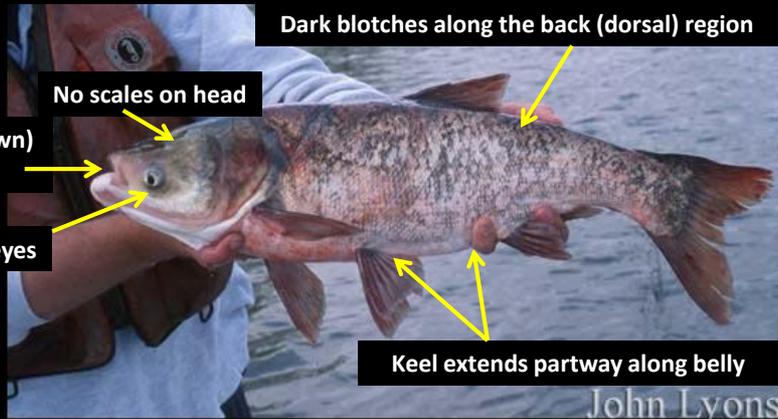
Low set eyes

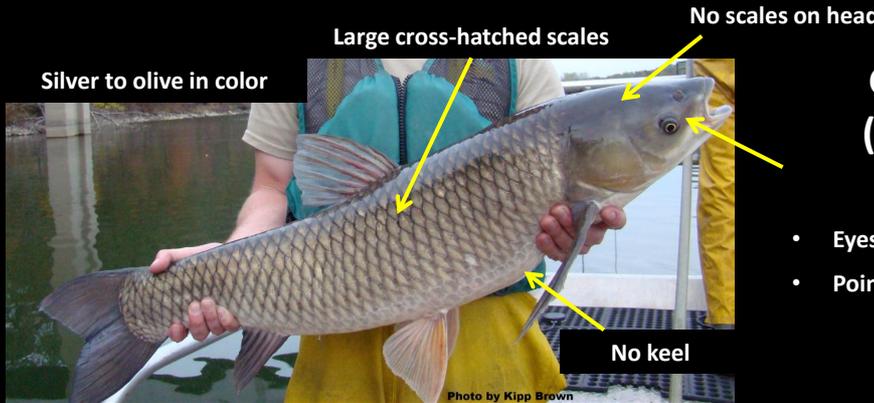


## Bighead Carp (Invasive)

Downward slanting mouth (frown)  
and no barbels

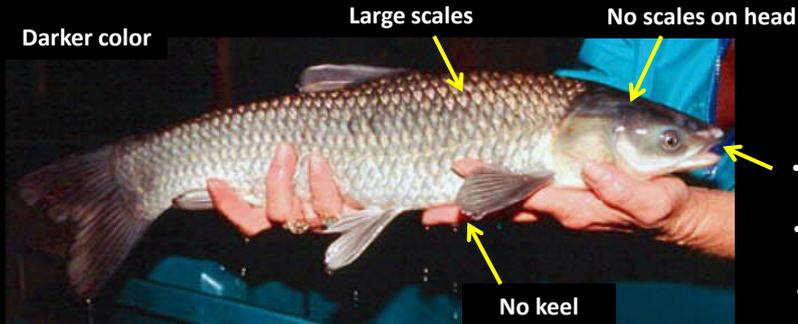
Low set eyes





## Grass Carp (Fertile fish Invasive)

- Eyes sit even with the mouth
- Pointy shaped face and no barbels

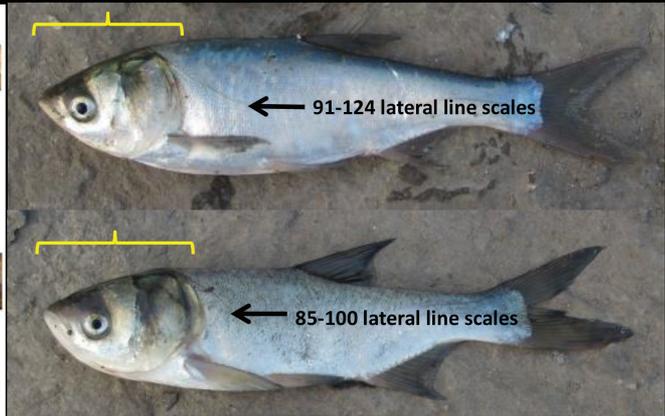
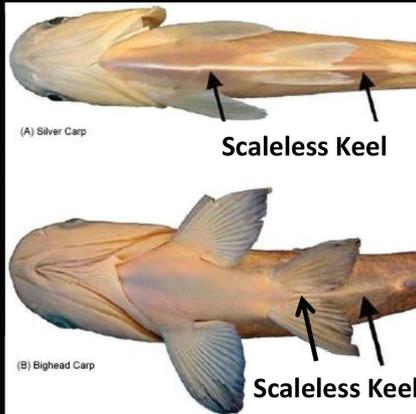


## Black Carp (Invasive)

- Eyes sit even with the mouth
- Pointy shaped face and no barbels
- Teeth that look like human molars

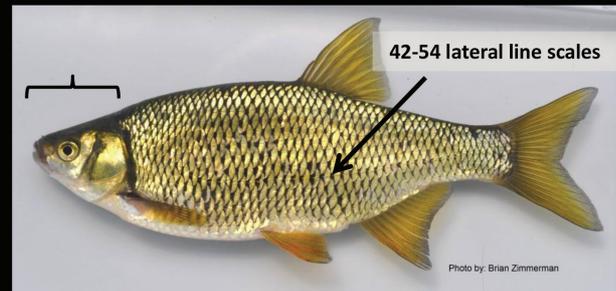
# Silver Carp, Bighead Carp and Golden Shiner

**Silver  
Carp  
(Invasive)**



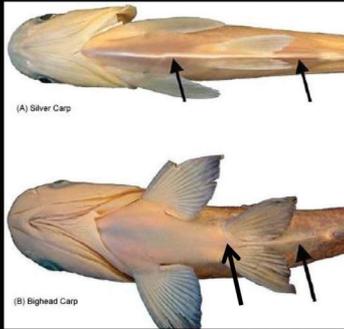
**Bighead  
Carp  
(Invasive)**

**Golden  
Shiner  
(Native)**  
Smaller head,  
larger scales for  
size of fish.

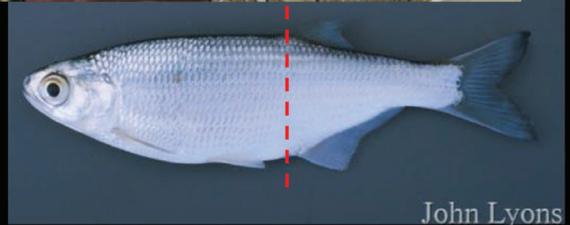
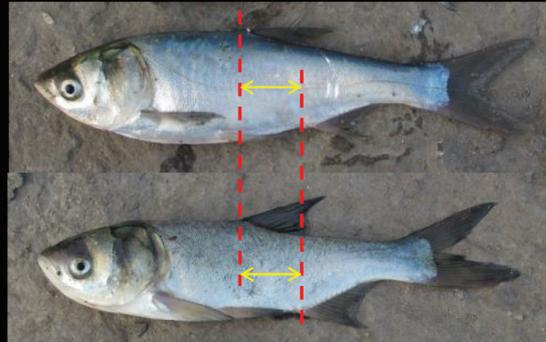
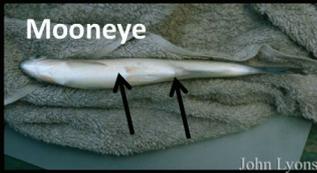
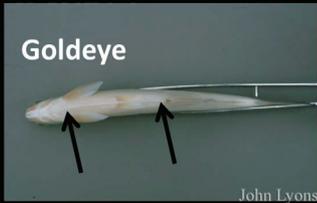


# Silver Carp, Bighead Carp, Mooneye and Goldeye

**Silver and Bighead Carp (Invasive)**  
Dorsal fin forward of anal fin

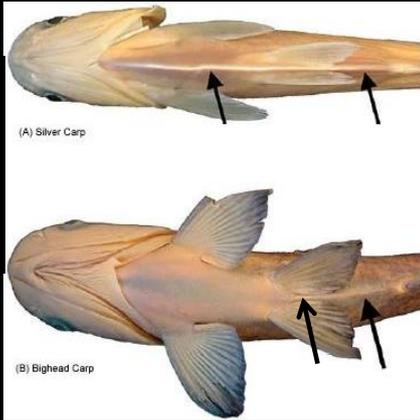


**Goldeye and Mooneye (Native)**  
Dorsal fin directly over anal fin

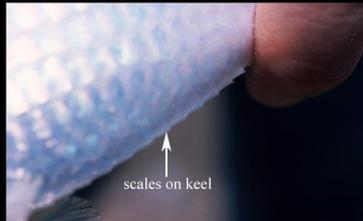


# Silver Carp, Bighead Carp and Skipjack Herring

**Silver Carp  
(Invasive)**  
No scales on keel.



**Skipjack Herring  
(Native)**  
Eye high on head, bony plated mouth and scales on keel give saw-like appearance

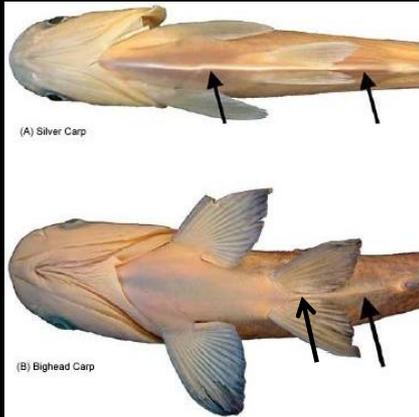


John Lyons

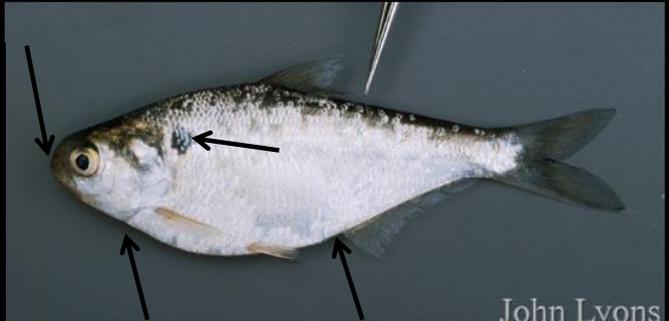


# Silver Carp, Bighead Carp and Gizzard Shad

**Silver Carp  
(Invasive)**  
No scales on keel.



**Gizzard Shad  
(Native)**  
Rounded snout,  
conspicuous  
dark spot  
behind head,  
keel with saw-  
like scales



Keel with saw-like scales

# Bowfin, Burbot and Snakehead

**Bowfin (Native) :** Two short barbels on nose and short anal fin



**Snakehead (Invasive) :** No barbels on head, extremely long single dorsal fin and anal fin



**Burbot (Native):** Single long chin barbel and short first dorsal fin, no scales



# Blackstripe Topminnow and Northern Studfish



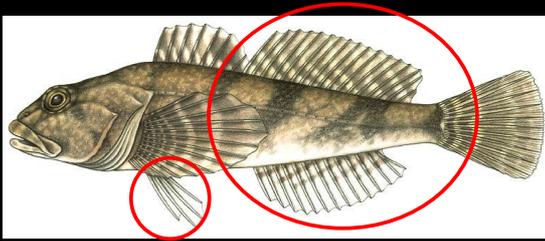
**Blackstripe Topminnow (Native)**

Blackstripe Topminnow has one thick dark band down side, the northern studfish has narrow horizontal rows. The northern studfish has conspicuous white/yellow wedge just in front of dorsal fin.



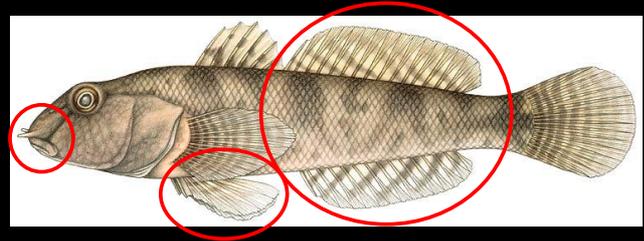
**Northern Studfish (Invasive)**

# Mottled Sculpin, Tubenose Goby and Round Goby



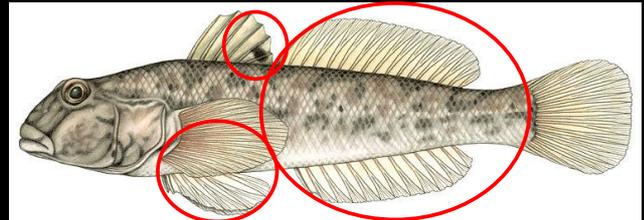
**Mottled Sculpin (Native)**

Mottled Sculpin has unbranched rays supporting the soft dorsal and anal fins. Pelvic fins separate.



**Tubenose Goby (Invasive)**

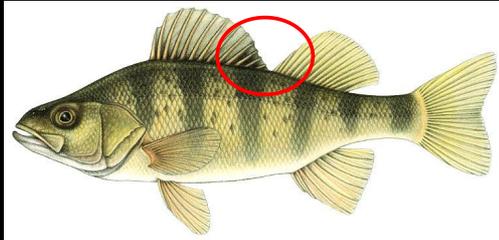
Gobies have branched rays in soft dorsal and anal fins. Pelvic fins are fused together to form a cup shape.



**Round Goby  
(Invasive)**

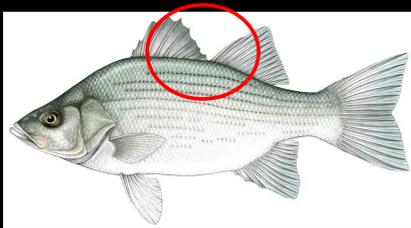


# Yellow Perch, White Bass and Eurasian Ruffe

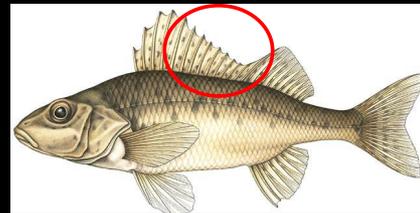
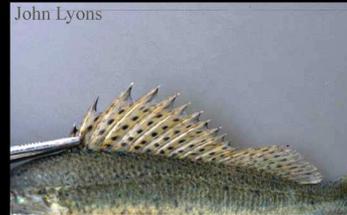


**Yellow Perch (Native)**

Both Yellow Perch and White Bass have a complete separation between the spiny and soft dorsal fin, Eurasian Ruffe is broadly connected.

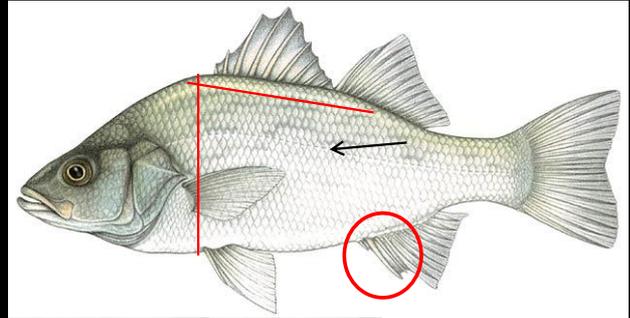
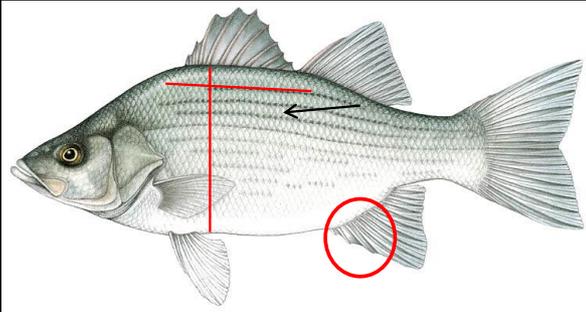


**White Bass (Native)**



**Eurasian Ruffe (Invasive)**

# White Bass, White Perch and Freshwater Drum



## White Bass (Native)

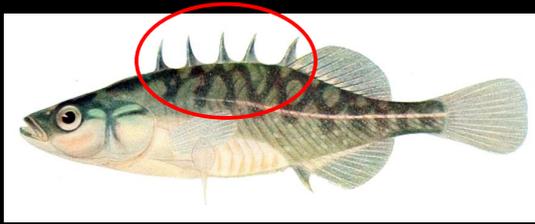
White Bass(WB) body with horizontal lines and deepest below spiny dorsal, White Perch(WP) has no lines other than lateral line and body is deepest before spiny dorsal. WB has “flat top” body shape, WP more slanted like Freshwater Drum. WB 3 anal spines ascend in length, WP 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> anal spines similar length

## White Perch (Invasive)



## Freshwater Drum (Native)

# Brook Stickleback, 3 spine and 9 spine Sticklebacks



**Brook Stickleback (Native)**



**3 spine Stickleback (Invasive)**



**9 spine Stickleback (Invasive)**

## Channel Catfish and Bullheads

**Channel Catfish  
(Native)**



**Bullhead  
(Nuisance)**

# Perch and Sander: Family Percidae



Greenside Darter - Male



Greenside Darter - Female



Rainbow Darter



Logperch Darter

Darters do not have the sharp, conical teeth of a walleye, sauger or saugeye.



Photo by Kipp Brown



Photo by Glenn Trueb

Walleye



Photo by Julie Zimmerman

Sauger



Photo by Brian Zimmerman

Saugeye



John Lyons

Yellow Perch

Logperch Darters have a slim, torpedo shaped body and hog-like snout compared to a Yellow Perch.

# Contact Information

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