

# Fish Species Information

A silhouette of a person fishing is shown against a sunset background. The person is standing on a rocky shore, holding a fishing rod that extends diagonally across the frame. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the water and sky. The water reflects the light from the sun, and the overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

## **Black Crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*)**

**Description:** Deep bodied with dark overall color; body color is basically silvery on the sides with black blotches overlaid, the pattern of blotches on the median fin often gives the appearance of white spots on a black background; 7-8 dorsal fins; 6-7 anal spines; 16-19 soft rays

**Ecology:** Prefer clear water with more vegetation; partial to brush piles and similar sources of cover; feed on small fish and aquatic insects

**Note:** Black Crappie are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on small fish and insects

## **Bluegill Sunfish (*Lepomis macrochirus*)**

**Description:** Large, deep bodied sunfish with a small mouth, slender gill rakers; Black opercular flap; Black spot at the base of the posterior dorsal rays

**Ecology:** Does best in clear, quiet waters with limited vegetation; Feed mainly on microcrustaceans and insects though larger adults will feed on small fish

**Notes:** Bluegill Sunfish are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on microcrustaceans and insects

## **Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctuatus*)**

**Description:** Elongated, slender body with a deeply forked tail; Color is gray-blue gradually grading into whitish underside with small dark spots scattered on the sides; Anal fin is rounded with 24-29 rays

**Ecology:** Do equally well in streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds; Prefer cover such as logs but when they venture out to feed will eat almost any dead or alive organic material

**Notes:** Channel Catfish are typically lower in mercury because they eat a variety of organisms and organic material

## **Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)**

**Description:** Deep bodied with strongly arched back and very long dorsal fin of 18-21 rays; Dark olive color that grades quickly to bronze or golden sides with yellowish/white below; Fins are golden, orange or light olive

**Ecology:** Very adaptable though it prefers quiet, shallow waters of rivers; Feeds on plants, insect larvae, and crustaceans

**Notes:** Common Carp are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on microcrustaceans and insects

## **Flathead Catfish (*Pylodictis olivaris*)**

**Description:** Broad, flat head; Caudal fin is slightly notched with a white triangle on the upper rays, Anal fin is rounded and short with 14-17 rays; Lower jaw protrudes beyond the upper; Pectoral spine is serrated on both edges

**Ecology:** Successful in both quiet and flowing waters; tolerates a wide range of turbidity; Prefer deep holes and channels of rivers and lakes; Feed on smaller fish

**Notes:** Flathead Catfish are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed mostly on small to medium size fish

## **Smallmouth Buffalo (*Ictiobus bubalus*)**

**Description:** Deep-bodied, highly compressed fish with a straight ventral contour and highly arched back; Long dorsal fin with 26-31 rays; Dark golden to olive in color with whitish belly

**Ecology:** Prefers deeper, less turbid waters; Diet consists of small aquatic benthic animals and algae

**Notes:** Smallmouth Buffalo are typically lower in mercury levels because they feed very low on the food chain

## **White Crappie (*Pomoxis annularis*)**

**Description:** Deep bodied, fairly elongated with large mouth and over all silvery appearance with faint, dark vertical bars; Median fins are lightly mottled; 6 dorsal spines; protruding lower jaw

**Ecology:** Quite tolerant of turbidity, prefer brush piles or submerged trees in shallow water close to vegetation; feed on smaller fish and insects

**Note:** White Crappie are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on small fish and insects

# Fish Species Information

A silhouette of a person fishing is shown against a background of a sunset over water. The person is on the left, holding a fishing rod that extends diagonally across the frame. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and reflecting on the water's surface.

## Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)

**Description:** Elongated body with white underside; Large mouth with upper jaw extends beyond posterior edge of the eye; Spinous dorsal fin is barely connected to the soft-rayed dorsal fin; the shortest dorsal fin is less than half the length of the longest dorsal spine; 9 dorsal spines; 12 or 13 dorsal rays

**Ecology:** Largemouth bass inhabit warm, quiet waters with low turbidity, soft bottoms, and beds of aquatic plants; typical habitats include farm ponds, swamps, lakes, reservoirs, sloughs, creek pools, and river coves and backwaters; In lakes and reservoirs these fishes are usually close to shore; Feeds mainly on fish, crayfish, and insects

**Note:** Largemouth Bass are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed aggressively on small to medium size fish and are cannibalistic when they get larger

## Smallmouth Bass (*Micropterus dolmieu*)

**Description:** Large, elongated body with a low spinous dorsal fin joined to the soft rayed portion; 68-76 Lateral line scales; Bronze color with dark vertical bars on sides; Three dark bars are visible on cheek

**Ecology:** Located in cool, clear, and rocky streams; Feed mainly on crayfish, fish, and aquatic insects

**Notes:** Even though they feed on insects and crayfish when they are younger, Smallmouth Bass are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed on small fish as they mature

## Spotted Bass (*Micropterus punctulatus*)

**Description:** Large, slim, elongated green body with a white under body and a series of dark blotches that form a horizontal band on the side; Low spinous dorsal fin; 10 dorsal spines; 12 dorsal rays

**Ecology:** Best adapted to turbid waters such as small streams but do fairly well in clear lakes; Diet consists mostly of crayfish and insects but small fish are also eaten

**Notes:** Even though they feed on insects and crayfish when they are younger, Spotted Bass are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed on small fish as they mature

## Striped/Hybrid Bass (*Morone saxatilis*)

**Description:** Thinner, silver body with 7-8 distinct horizontal dark lines across the side; Spiny dorsal fin that is separated from the second dorsal fin

**Ecology:** Lakes and rivers with moderately strong currents; feeds mainly on fish and crustaceans

**Notes:** Striped/Hybrid Bass can have medium to high levels of mercury depending on the forage fish they eat; If their diet consists of shad, they will have lower mercury levels

## Walleye (*Lepomis microlophus*)

**Description:** Large, streamlined body with high fins and large mouth with both villiform and large canine jaw teeth; Spinous dorsal fin has a black spot on posterior membranes; 19-22 soft dorsal rays; white tip on the lower lobe of the caudal fin

**Ecology:** Prefers deep or weedy areas in fairly clear water with dim light; Feeds mainly on fish

**Notes:** Walleye are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed aggressively on small to medium size fish

## White Bass (*Morone chrysops*)

**Description:** Deep and compressed steely blue body; two separated dorsal fins, the first with 9 spines and the second with 3 spine and 13 rays; the anal fin has 3 spines, the second shorter than the third with 11-13 rays; 6-10 horizontal stripes on the side

**Ecology:** do well in both rivers and lakes; Feed on smaller fish

**Notes:** White Bass are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed aggressively on smaller fish

## Redear Sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*)

**Description:** Short opercular lap with bright red posterior crescent; Long, pointed pectoral fin; Body color is pale olivaceous above and silvery below

**Ecology:** Does well in lakes and ponds; Congregates around brush and stumps; Feeds primarily on invertebrates and small snails

**Notes:** Redear Sunfish are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on microcrustaceans and insects

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## Green Sunfish (*Lepomis cyanellus*)

**Description:** Large mouth with blue/green lines on cheeks; Black spots at the bases of the posterior rays of dorsal and anal fins

**Ecology:** Prefers small streams and ponds; Feeds primarily on insects and fish

**Notes:** Green Sunfish are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on microcrustaceans, small fish, and insects

## Warmouth (*Lepomis gulosus*)

**Description:** Brown body and yellowish belly sunfish that have teeth on the tongue, red eyes, and large mouth; Large supramaxillary bone; Several mottled, dark vertical bars on sides; Opercle flap is short with a black spot

**Ecology:** Typically found in ponds and lakes but can be located in pools of sluggish streams and rivers; Prefers weedy or brushy habitats in quiet waters; Feeds on fish crayfish and insects

**Notes:** Warmouth are typically lower in levels of mercury because they are smaller fish that feed on microcrustaceans and insects

## Saugeye (*Sander vitreus* x *Sander canadense*)

**Description:** dark bars or oblong vertical spots between the spines of the first dorsal fin; white tips on the lower part of the tail and anal fins;

**Ecology:** highly adaptable to most lake and river environments and are tolerant of murky waters; Feed on small fish

**Notes:** Saugeye are typically higher in mercury levels because they feed aggressively on small to medium size fish

## Blue Catfish (*Ictalurus furcatus*)

**Description:** Large, heavy-bodied catfish with deeply forked tail; conspicuously humped in front to the dorsal fin; Long anal fin has 30-35 rays; Color is bluish to pale gray grading to white sides and belly

**Ecology:** Live in large lakes and deeper portions of major rivers with swift water; Feed on a variety of living or dead animals

**Notes:** Blue Catfish are typically lower in mercury because they eat a variety of organisms and organic material

## Black Bullhead Catfish (*Ameiurus melas*)

**Description:** Heavy bodied with dark coloration and a slightly notched caudal fin; Gray chin barbels and pectoral spines without well-developed serrae; Membranes of the anal fin are dark with light fin rays; 17-21 rays in the anal fin

**Ecology:** Prefer quite, soft-bottomed backwaters, oxbows, and pools of small streams; Feed on animals and plants

**Notes:** Black Bullhead Catfish are typically lower in mercury because they eat a variety of organisms and organic material

## Reference:

- Miller, R.J. and Robinson H.W. Fishes of Oklahoma Norman, Ok. University of Oklahoma Press. 2004.
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources. 2011.
- Accessed on 2-22 11. [http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Home/species\\_a\\_to\\_z/SpeciesGuideIndex/saugeye/tabid/6750/Default.aspx](http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Home/species_a_to_z/SpeciesGuideIndex/saugeye/tabid/6750/Default.aspx)