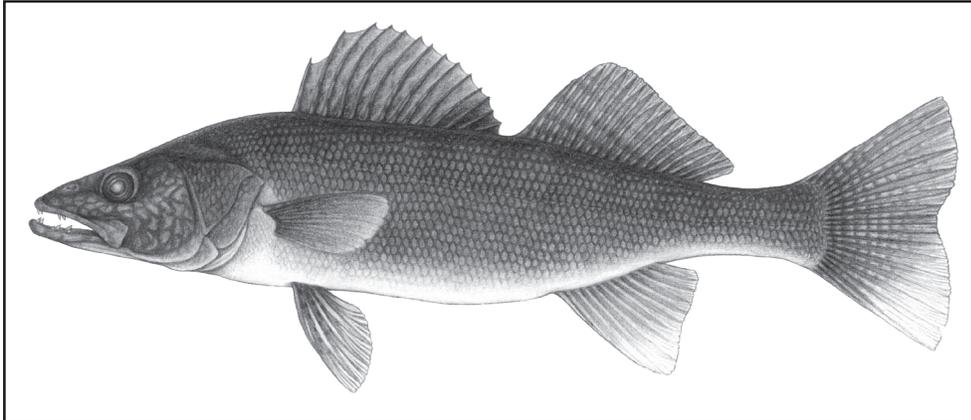
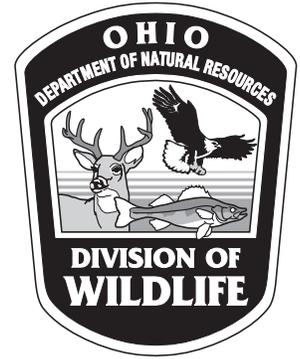


Life History Notes

Walleye

Common Names: Pickerel, Yellow pike, Walleye pike

Scientific Name: *Stizostedion vitreum vitreum*



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Identification

The walleye has a long slender body with a yellow-olive color with a brassy overcast on the sides. The tail fin has a white spot on the bottom edge. The eye is large and cloudy, and there is a dark blotch on the webbing between the last three spines of the first dorsal fin. The mouth is filled with sharp canine teeth. The walleye looks similar to the sauger and saugeye.

Range and Habitat

The walleye is native to Ohio. Walleyes are most abundant in Lake Erie, but also occur in larger streams. Walleye have now been stocked into a number of larger reservoirs around the state. They also occur in the Ohio River. Walleye prefer clear to slightly turbid waters. They usually occur in greatest abundance over reefs, shoals of gravel, bedrock, and other firm bottoms.

Life History

Walleye spawn throughout the month of April when water temperatures are between 40 and 55° F. Walleye are free spawners that deposit their eggs in the riffle areas of tributary streams or over gravel to boulder-sized rocks in reef

areas of Lake Erie. The eggs hatch in about 10 days. Females can lay as many as 400,000 eggs. Young walleye feed on zooplankton and insect larvae for most of the first year. Following this stage the young shift to a diet of small fish. Adults in lake Erie feed mainly on emerald shiners, gizzard shad, alewives and rainbow smelt. When these species are not available they will feed on almost any suitable sized prey. Adult walleye feed primarily during low-light intensity periods of the day (sunrise and dusk).

Adult Size

Walleye average 2 to 4 pounds and are between 14 and 22 inches. The state record walleye weighed 15.95 pounds and measured 33 inches in length.

Fishing Methods

Walleye will bite a variety of lures. Some of the more popular lures and methods include bottom bouncers with a nightcrawler harness, casting weight forward spinners with worms, and controlled depth trolling with crankbaits. Anglers are usually more successful during low-light intensity time periods.