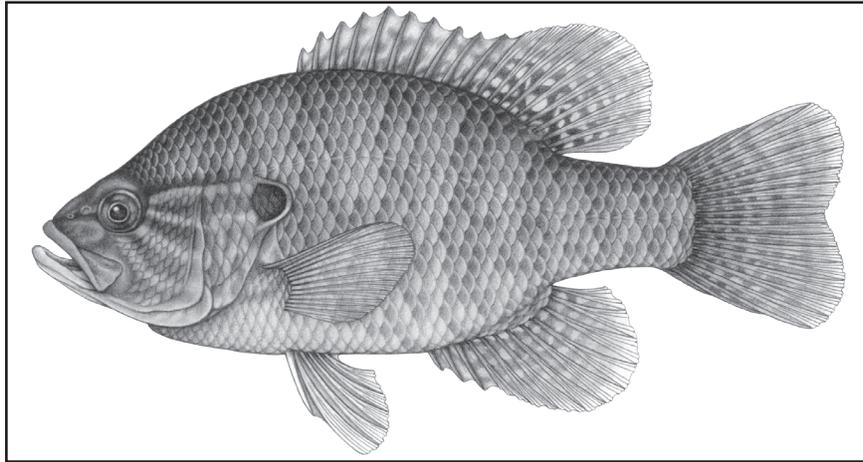
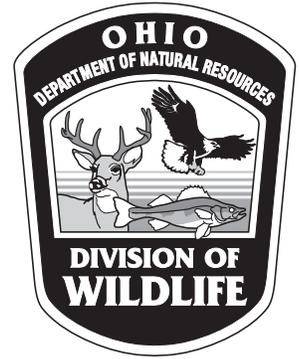


Life History Notes

Warmouth Sunfish

Common Names: Mud bass

Scientific Name: *Lepomis gulosus*



Publication 5160
(R0413)

Identification:

Warmouth look similar to rock bass and green sunfish with a thick, oblong body. The mouth is large, with the upper jaw extending to or beyond the middle of the eye. The coloration is dark olive-brown and it is mottled with dark brown blotches over the body. In addition, they have dark colored stripes extending from the eye to the opercle (ear) flap. Warmouth have only three anal fin spines while rock bass have six.

Range and Habitat:

Warmouth sunfish are native to Ohio, but their distribution is limited to glaciated streams and lakes in the northeast part of the state. They are abundant in one of the few natural lakes in Ohio, Nettle Lake in Williams County, and in the Scioto River drainage in south-central Ohio. Warmouth prefer weedy lakes, sluggish streams, oxbows, marshes and ponds. They are a secretive fish seeking cover in rocky banks, stumps, or weed masses to avoid direct sunlight.

Life History:

Warmouth are not colonial spawners like other sunfish species. However, males do fan out a nest, usually near a rock, stump, clump of vegetation, or other large object. The male guards the nest until the fry disperse. During this time the male will chase intruders off with gill covers spread wide and mouth open, to make himself appear larger. Adults eat primarily crayfish, aquatic sowbugs, aquatic insect larvae, and small fish. Warmouth can take four years to reach 6 inches in length.

Adult Size:

Adults usually range from 4 to 10 inches in length with the largest warmouth reported in Ohio measuring 11.2 inches.

Fishing Methods:

Warmouth will bite on both natural and artificial baits. However, because of their small size and limited distribution in Ohio, warmouth are seldom sought by anglers.