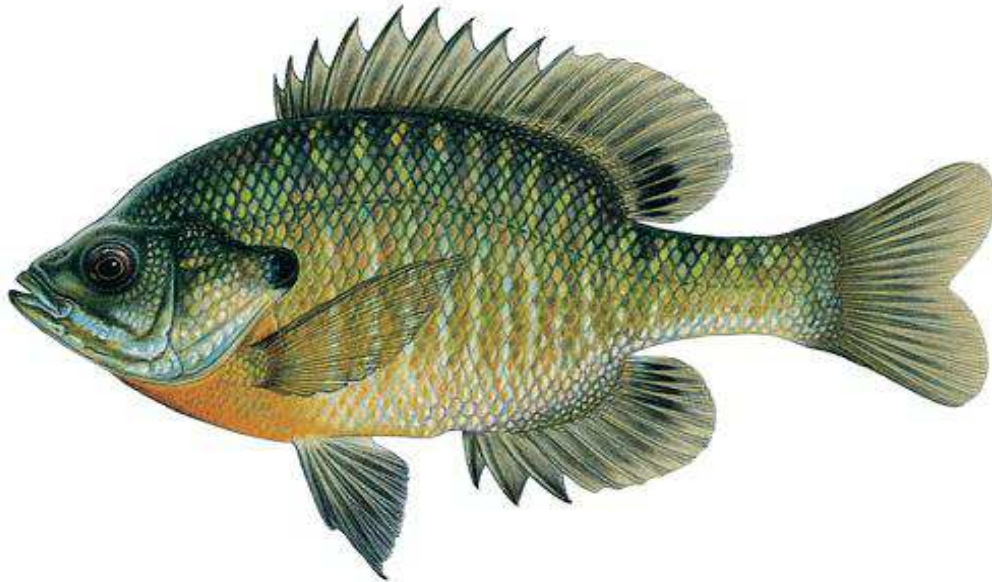


BLUEGILL:



Features: Bluegills are distinguished from other pan fish by the black ear flap and black spot at the rear base of the dorsal fin. Five to eight greenish vertical bars are faintly visible on the side. The body is olive green in color, bluish above and silvery below. Breeding males develop a bright orange to red flush on the throat area. Adults in most waters measure 5 to 8 inches, but the state record bluegill exceeded 12 inches.

Habitat: Bluegills prosper in clear, clean ponds, lakes and backwaters of slow streams having abundant vegetation. They feed on both plant and animal life, but primarily on small crustaceans, insects, snails and other invertebrates.

Technique: Bluegill are found in many of the lower elevation ponds, lakes, reservoirs and river backwaters throughout the state. Like other sunfish, they generally prefer shallow, warm water areas with abundant aquatic vegetation and cover. Bluegill are not tough to catch, but you may have to spend time looking for schools of them. Bluegill are best targeted during the late spring when they are spawning and can be found in shallow water where they are highly visible. Look for them in ½ to 6 feet of water in wind-protected areas such as the back ends of coves. Bluegill will often be over sand or gravel bottoms where these are available. Spawning begins when the temperature approaches 68oF. At other times of the year find them near weed beds, along drop-offs or around submerged woody debris. Use a bobber rig and size 10, 12, or 14 hook baited with worms, meal worm, crickets, piece of night crawler or other natural bait. Bluegill will also readily take small artificial lures such as a jig or tiny spinner, and small wet or dry flies. Bluegills are fun to catch and excellent eating when of sufficient size. They are an important source of food for other sport fish, although they multiply fast and can rapidly exceed the available food supply, resulting in a large population of stunted fish.