

Black Crappie

Black crappie are less widely distributed than the white crappie in Ohio, but are generally found throughout the state, including western Lake Erie. Generally, black crappie prefer clear water containing aquatic vegetation. They are less tolerant of silt and turbidity than white crappie. Black crappie closely resemble the white crappie but have deeper bodies with dusky or black blotches on their head, back, and sides. The most notable characteristic is that the black crappie has seven or eight dorsal spines.



Bluegill

Bluegills are not only important as food for largemouth bass, but are also very popular among anglers for sport and table. Bluegills are usually the pond fish most eager to bite and put up a good fight on light tackle despite their small size. Most bluegills can spawn by age two when they are about three inches long. Spawning begins two to four weeks later than for largemouth bass when the water temperature reaches 70°F. Even though the spawning period usually begins late May, it often continues through the summer. Young bluegills feed on zooplankton and tiny microscopic plants called phytoplankton. The diet of adults often includes insects, snails, small crayfish, fish eggs, and very small fishes. Bluegills can grow to six inches in two to four years when plenty of food and space is available. This is the size that most anglers desire for eating, although bluegills can grow to over 10 inches long.



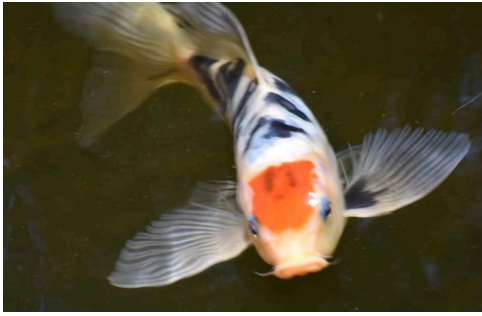
Channel Catfish

Channel catfish are native to Ohio and can be found in most large streams, lakes, and many farm ponds. Channel catfish prefer areas with deep water, clean gravel boulder substrates, and low to moderate current; however, they are tolerant of a wide range of conditions. The stocking rate on channel catfish is only 100 per surface acre of water. The reason for the low stocking rate is because the pond only produces so much food for these fish. The average size in Ohio is around 12-14 inches; however fish over 10 pounds are common. The state record weighed 37 pounds and 10.4 oz. Channel catfish begin spawning when water temperature reaches 70°F. They use natural cavities, undercut banks, and muskrat burrows as nests. Adult channel catfish are bottom feeders that use smell and taste to locate food. They eat insect larvae, crayfish, mollusks, small fish, and dead fish.



Fathead Minnow

Fathead minnows have short bodies with a triangular shaped head. The upper jaw overhangs the snout, and the lateral line is incomplete. Coloration ranges from olive to olive-yellow on its back tinged with copper or purple in larger fish. Historically, the fathead minnow was widely populated only in the western part of Ohio. They prefer muddy brooks and creeks, as well as ponds and small lakes; however, they can tolerate a wide range of water conditions.



Koi

Koi fish are a colorful, ornamental versions of the common carp. Though carp domestication is believed to have begun in China as far back as the 4th century, modern Japanese koi are believed to date back to early 19th-century Japan where wild, colorful carp were caught, kept, and bred by rice farmers. There are now dozens of different color varieties of koi. Koi are omnivorous feeders who will eat food found at all depths of water. Please beware of stocking koi where there is outlet to natural waterways as they are considered invasive and shouldn't escape into streams, creeks, and other waterbodies.



Hybrid Bluegill

Hybrids are a cross between a male bluegill and female green sunfish. This cross produces a fish with a large mouth, the aggressiveness of the green sunfish, and the size of a bluegill. Because they are hybrids, almost all of these fish are sterile, which means you will have to restock periodically.



Largemouth bass

The largemouth bass or "Black Bass" are native to Ohio and can be found in every county in the state. They prefer ponds, lakes, and slow, sluggish streams. They are moderately compressed with a deep body. The back of the mouth, when closed, extends past the eye. This characteristic distinguishes it from the smallmouth bass. The largemouth also has a black band that extends down the side of the body. The average largemouth bass runs from one to two pounds. The state record weighed 13 pounds and 2 oz. and measured over 25 inches long. The adults eat crayfish, frogs, large insects, and other fish. It is considered one of the best sport fishes in Ohio.



Redear Shellcracker

Redears are deep, slab-sided fish similar to the bluegill; except the ear flap is black with a red or orange margin and the black blotch at the base of the dorsal fin is absent. Redears are not native to Ohio, but have been stocked in state waters since 1931. Their native range was limited to southern states below the mouth of the Wabash River on the Ohio River. This species thrives in clear, warm impoundments with rooted vegetation. Following spawning, redear tend to move offshore to deeper water. Snails are a major food item in adults, which they will crush with pharyngeal teeth, giving rise to the vernacular name "shellcracker." One should not stock more than approximately 20-25% to ensure enough food is present. In well managed waters with good habitat, redears will reach 9-11 inches in length. The state record weighed three pounds and 1 oz. and was 13.25 inches in length.



Triploid White Amur

The triploid (sterile) white amur is an exotic fish species that has been specifically authorized for use in Ohio while the Diploid (fertile) white amur remains illegal in Ohio. You can only purchase the triploid white amur from a dealer with a valid permit. This fish is also call a grass carp and is one of the largest members of the minnow family. They often reach weights in excess of 25 pounds. They are native to larger East Asian rivers with Pacific drainages, including their namesake, the Amur River on the Chinese-Siberian border. The white amur is related to both the common carp and goldfish. They have a soft dorsal and anal fin rays rather than the spiny rays of common carp or goldfish. The color varies from gray to golden brown or bronze on the back, shading to white on the belly. The triploid white amur are created by subjecting the fertilized eggs to high pressures or temperature shock, which result in the retention of an extra chromosome set rendering the fish incapable of producing viable young. Stocking rates for these fish need to be carefully assessed for each body of water. They have voracious appetites and overstocking can result in the removal of too much aquatic vegetation which other species depend on.

Photos courtesy of USFWS

