

Common Name

Scientific Name

Description:

- Distinguishable characteristics about the fish.

Habitat: Where fish prefers.

Range: How far is this fish known to go; if non-native, where is it native to?

Feeding: What does the fish eat regularly?

Edibility: Can you eat this fish?

Blue Crab

Callinectes Sapidus

Description:

- Mainly grayish, bluish green.
- Shell, or carapace, is actually a mottled brownish color.
- Females have red pinchers or, “painted fingernails” while the males have blue pinchers.

Habitat: The blue crab requires both inshore brackish waters and high salinity ocean waters to complete its life cycle.

Range: They are common from Massachusetts to Texas and a few have been reported as far north as Nova Scotia and as far south as Uruguay.

Feeding: Blue crabs eat a variety of foods, including fishes, oysters, clams, snails, shrimp, worms and other crabs.

Edibility: Good.

Blue Crab (*Callinectes Sapidus*)



Photo Credit: Nancy Kilmartin, Manatee Park

Bluegill

Lepomis macrochirus

Description:

- Small mouth, oval-shaped head.
- Lavender and bronze with about six dark bars on their sides.
- Females are lighter in color than males.

Habitat: Bluegills prefer the quiet, weedy waters where they can hide and feed; in slow-moving waters.

Range: Found across the United States.

Feeding: Vegetation, fish eggs, small fish, mollusks, and snails .

Edibility: Excellent. Many ranked Bluegill as the best tasting freshwater fish.

Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*)

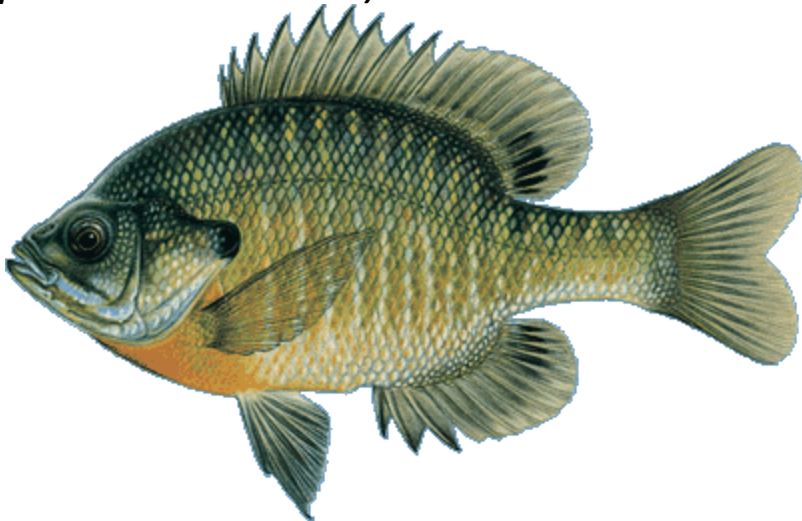


Illustration Credit: © Joseph R. Tomelleri

Brown Bullhead

Ameiurus nebulosus

Description:

- Distinct, irregular brownish mottling over a light background.
- They have square tails and 20 to 24 anal ray fins.

Habitat: Browns generally inhabit still or slowly-flowing warm waters in ponds, lakes, reservoirs, large rivers and sluggish streams.

Range: Throughout Florida, except in the extreme southern part of the state.

Feeding: They are primarily bottom feeders, feeding mostly at night. Highly sensitive barbels enable them to smell a wide variety of food such as insects, plant material, carrion, small fish, snails, crayfish, worms and leeches.

Edibility: Good.

Brown Bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosus*)

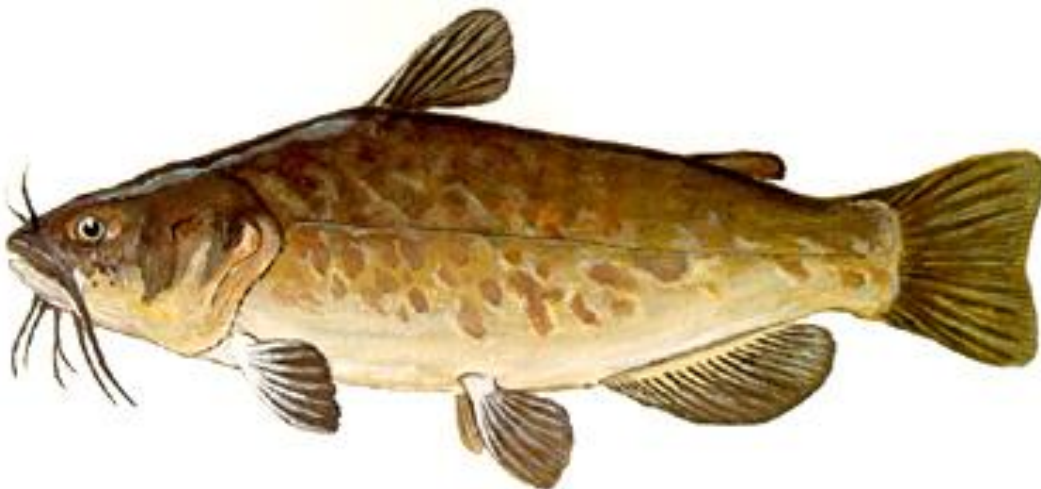


Illustration Credit: Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Channel Catfish

Ictalurus punctatus

Description:

- Small, narrow head.
- The back is blue-gray with light blue to silvery-gray sides and a white belly.
- Channels have a rounded anal fin with 24-29 rays and scattered black spots along their back and sides.

Habitat: Most common in big rivers and streams. Prefers some current, and deep water with sand, gravel or rubble bottoms.

Range: Found throughout the state; not in the Keys.

Feeding: Carrion is the most common food eaten by Channels.

Edibility: Considered one of the best-eating freshwater fish. The meat is white, tender and sweet when taken from clean water.



Illustration Credit: Ohio Department of Natural Resources,
Division of Wildlife

Crevalle Jack, Jack Crevalle

Caranx Hippos

Description:

- Color bluish-green to greenish-gold back and silvery or yellowish belly.
- Soft dorsal and anal fins almost identical in size.
- Black spot at the base of each pectoral fin.
- No scales on throat.

Habitat: Saltwater preferred; found inshore.

Range: The crevalle jack's range consists mainly of the coastal areas of the western Atlantic Ocean from Nova Scotia to Uruguay.

Feeding: Crevalle Jack eat small fish and crustaceans.

Edibility: Good.

Crevalle Jack (*Caranx Hippos*)



Illustration Credit: ©Diane Rome Peebles

Florida Largemouth Bass

Micropterus salmoides floridanus

Description:

- Generally has light greenish to brownish sides with a dark lateral line which tends to break into blotches towards the tail.
- Distinguishable because the upper jaw extends beyond the rear edge of the eye.
- No scales on the soft-rayed second dorsal fin or on the anal fin.

Habitat: Prefers clear, nonflowing waters with aquatic vegetation where food and cover are available. They occupy brackish to freshwater habitats, including upper estuaries, rivers, lakes, reservoirs and ponds.

Range: Inhabit the Florida peninsula, Texas, and California.

Feeding: Adult bass will eat whatever is available, including fish, crayfish, crabs, frogs, salamanders, snakes, mice, turtles and even birds.

Edibility: White, flaky and low oily flesh.

Florida Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides floridanus*)



Illustration Credit: © Joseph R.
Tomelleri

Florida Gar

Lepisosteus platyrhincus

Description:

- Irregular round, black spots on the top of the head and over the entire body and on all the fins.
- Broad snout with a single row of irregularly spaced sharp teeth on both upper and lower jaws and no bony scales on the throat.
- The coloration is olive-brown along the back and upper sides with a white-to-yellow belly.

Habitat: They inhabit medium-to-large lowland streams, canals and lakes with mud or sand bottoms near underwater vegetation. Like all gars, they use an air bladder to breathe air to survive in poorly oxygenated water.

Range: East and South of the Florida peninsula.

Feeding: Primarily feed on fish, shrimp and crayfish.

Edibility: The roe is toxic; don't eat it.

Florida Gar (*Lepisosteus platvrhincus*)



Illustration Credit: © Joseph R. Tomelleri

Mayan Cichlid (NN)

Cichlasoma urophthalmus

Description:

- Broken lateral line and turquoise ring on the tail are diagnostic.
- General coloration includes 6-8 bars that can be faint or dark
- Body color varies greatly in intensity sometimes with bright red on the chin, throat, and breast.

Habitat: Very adaptable and lives well in variety of habitats including canals, rivers, lakes and marshes; tolerates wide range of salinities.

Range: Abundant around Florida; Native to the Atlantic Slope of Central and South America.

Feeding: Grass shrimp, small fishes, and snails; incidentally some diatoms. MAYAN CICHLID EAT SNOOK EGGS!

Edibility: Good.

Mayan Cichlid (NN) (*Cichlasoma urophthalmus*)



Photo Credit: Samuel Borstein

Pleco (NN)

Hypostomus Plecostomus

Description:

- Rows of bony plates covering all but their belly area.
- Disc-like, protractible mouth is under the head, and used like a suction cup to attach and feed on algae.
- Females tend to be smaller than males.

Habitat: Not a lot is known about this species.

Range: Not a lot is known about this species.

Feeding: Algae and insect larvae; little is known about this species.

Edibility: Fair to good, but difficult to clean and best to cook 'in the shell,' after which the white flaky meat can be slid out.

Pleco (NN) *Hypostomus Plecostomus*



Photo Credit: Joey LaMountain

Redear Sunfish

Lepomis microlophus

Description:

- Similar in shape to bluegill.
- Red or orange border around the "ear" flap.
- Coloration is light olive-green to gold, with red or orange flecks on the breast.
- Five to 10 vertical bars are more or less evident on the sides, depending on the size of the fish.
- Males and females are similar in appearance, although the male is generally more colorful.

Habitat: Redear are found in almost every waterway in Florida. They prefer slow-moving waters and tend to stay by sandy areas.

Range: Found throughout Florida and is a dominant fish in Everglades fishing.

Feeding: Small fish and crustaceans and sometimes snails.

Edibility: Good; similar to bluegill.

Redear Sunfish (*Lepomis microlophus*)

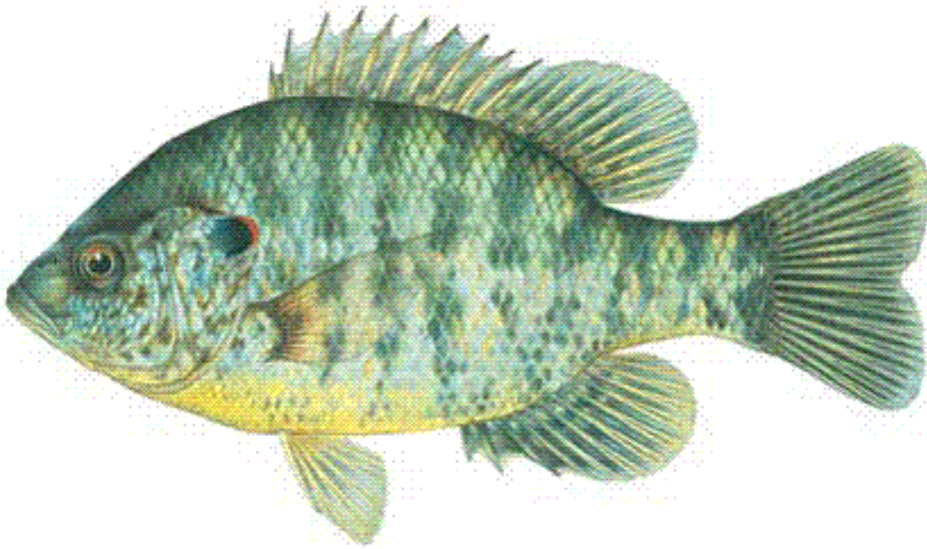


Illustration Credit: © Joseph R. Tomelleri

Sheepshead

Description: *Archosargus probatocephalus*

- Basic silver color.
- 5 or 6 distinct vertical black bands on sides, not always the same on both sides.
- Strong sharp spines.

Habitat: Inshore water near seawalls and in tidal creeks

Range: Sheepshead inhabit most of Florida.

Feeding: Sheepshead are known to eat mollusks and crustaceans.

Edibility: Good.

Sheepshead (*Archosargus probatocephalus*)



Illustration Credits: ©Diane Rome Peebles

Common Snook

Centropomus undecimalis

Description:

- Black distinct lateral line.
- High, divided dorsal fin.
- Sloping forehead.
- Large mouth, protruding lower jaw.
- Grows much larger than other snooks.
- Pelvic fin yellow.

Habitat: From central Florida south, usually INSHORE in coastal and brackish waters, along mangrove shorelines, seawalls, and bridges; also on reefs and pilings NEARSHORE.

Range: Snook are known to only inhabit Florida's coastal waters.

Feeding: mullet, shads, shiners, and dead mullet.

Edibility: Snook is wonderful. You cannot buy it –you need a snook stamp to catch snook- You must catch it and prepare it yourself.

Common Snook (*Centropomus undecimalis*)



Illustration credit: ©Diane Rome
Peebles

Small toothed sawfish

Pristis Pectinada

Description:

- This fish is easily recognized by its flattened body and wing-like pectoral fins.
- The mouth is located ventrally, the eyes are positioned dorsally.
- The rostral saw of *Sawfish* is approximately 25% of the body's total length.
- The saw is widest at the base, with teeth more broad than long, and spaced apart.

Habitat: This sawfish primarily occurs in estuarine and coastal habitats such as bays, lagoons, and rivers. It does at times occur in deeper waters, however, and may make crossings to offshore islands. It can tolerate freshwater.

Range: Smalltooth sawfish are found in the tropical and subtropical Atlantic Ocean. In the western Atlantic they have historically ranged from New York to Brazil, including the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea.

Feeding: The smalltooth sawfish swings its saw from side to side, impaling prey fishes on the rostral teeth. The sawfish then scrapes the captured prey off against the bottom substrate and consumes it. The saw is also used to disturb muddy bottoms in search of small prey items, including benthic invertebrates such as crustaceans.

Edibility: Never eaten; unknown.

- SMALL TOOTHED SAWFISH ARE PROTECTED UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT
- If you spot ANY sawfish, I encourage you to call the hotline: 941-613-0948

Small Toothed Sawfish (*Pristis Pectinada*)

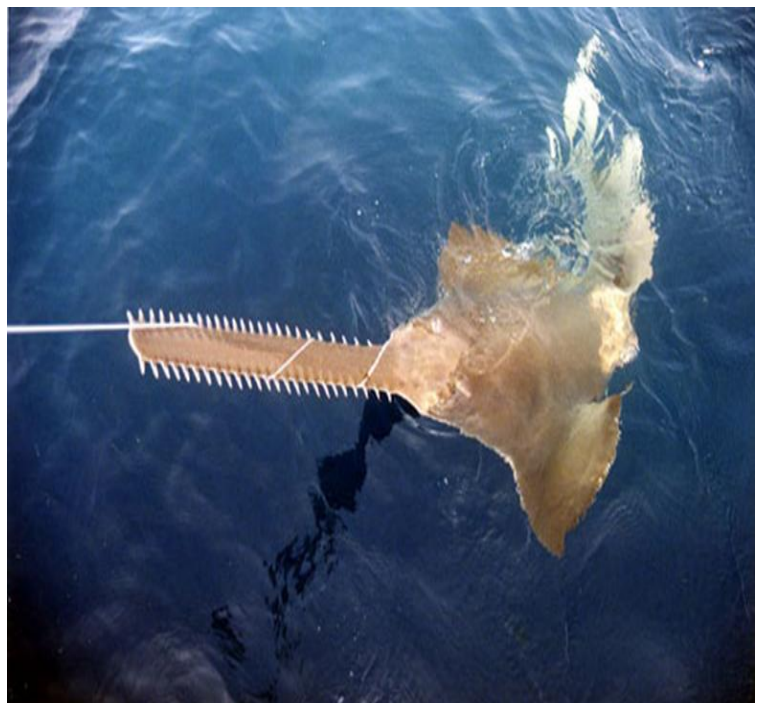


Photo Credit: FL Program for Shark Research, FL Mus. Nat. Hist.

Spotted Tilapia (NN)

Tilapia Mariae

Description:

- Light yellow bars or spots along side.
- Small fish have bars; as they grow, the bars become spots
- Reddish markings on the chin and throat area, especially during spawning.

Habitat: Spotted Tilapia prefer slow moving canals, ponds, and lakes; Well known around South Florida.

Range: Spotted Tilapia are well known in Lake Okeechobee. Native to West Africa.

Feeding: Spotted Tilapia are omnivorous. Tilapia's stomachs contain algae, detritus, diatoms, and sand indicating that tilapia feed low on the food chain.

Edibility: Good

Spotted Tilapia (NN) (*Tilapia Mariae*)



Photo Credit: Samuel Borstein

Striped (Black) Mullet

Mugil cephalus

Description:

- Color bluish-gray or green above, shading to silver on sides with distinct horizontal black barring, white below.
- Blunt nose and small mouth.

Habitat: Inshore in salt or brackish water.

Range: In Atlantic from Cape Cod to Brazil, including Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, and West Indies. In Pacific from San Francisco Bay, California, to Chile.

Feeding: Because mullets are a common snack for bigger fish, they eat small things like: detritus, algae, and small fish.

Edibility: Good.

Striped (Black) Mullet (*Mugil cephalus*)



Tarpon

Megalops atlanticus

Description:

- Last ray of dorsal fin extended into long filament; one dorsal fin.
- Back dark blue to green or greenish black, shading into bright silver on the sides.
- May be brownish gold in estuarine waters; huge scales; mouth large and points upward.

Habitat: Primarily INSHORE fish, although adult fish spawn OFFSHORE where the ribbon-like larval stage of the fish can be found.

Range: They are common to the tropical waters between North and South America, including the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. Florida contains some of the very best water.

Feeding: Tarpon eat large fish and crustaceans, carrion, mullet, and Threadfin Herring.

Edibility: Tarpon are considered, “bonefish” which means they are slender. You can eat them but it isn’t known to be good.

Tarpon (*Megalops atlanticus*)

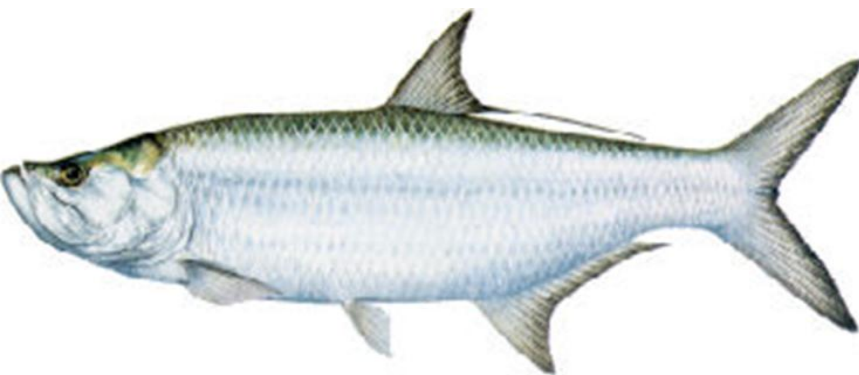


Illustration Credit: ©Diane Rome Peebles



Photo Credit: <http://patfordphotos.com>

White Catfish *Ameiurus catus*

Description:

- The sides are blue-gray to blue-black and may be mottled.
- The tail is moderately forked, and the anal fin is short and round.
- Whites have only 19-22 anal fin rays. The chin barbells are white or yellow.
- They have a blunt, more-rounded head, and they lack black spots on their body.

Habitat: Usually found in slow-moving waters and can tolerate wide ranges of salinity.

Range: In Florida, they are found statewide in rivers and streams and in slightly brackish coastal waters.

Feeding: Although fish are their major food, whites also eat larval aquatic insects, small crustaceans, fish eggs and aquatic plants.

Edibility: An excellent food fish, whites are prized for their firm, white flesh.

White Catfish (Ameiurus catus)

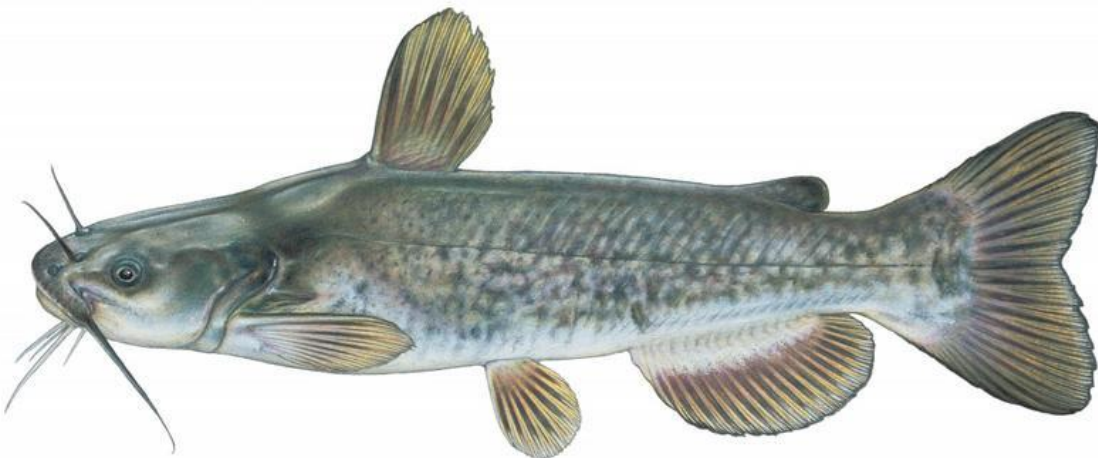


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