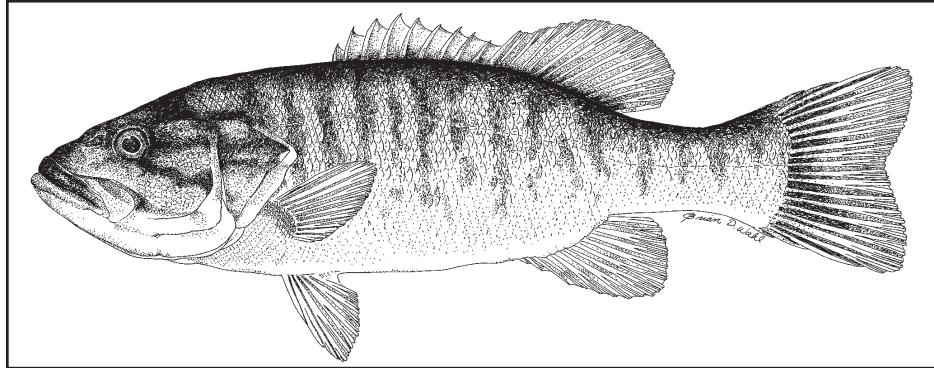
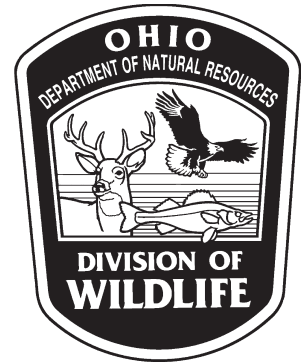


Life History Notes

Smallmouth Bass

Common Names: Brown bass, Brownie, Smallie

Scientific Name: *Micropterus dolomieu dolomieu*



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Identification

Smallmouth bass look very similar to largemouth bass and spotted bass. The distinguishing characteristic is the mouth. When closed, the mouth does not extend beyond the rear border of the eye. Color varies from yellow-green to olive-green with a bronze reflection. The sides are faintly barred.

Range and Habitat

Smallmouth bass are native to Ohio and are found in every county of the state. This species thrives in streams with gravel or rock bottoms, a visible current, and good water quality. Smallmouth also do well in the reef areas and rocky shorelines of Lake Erie, especially in the islands area near Sandusky Bay.

Life History

Smallmouth bass spawn in May and early June when water temperatures range from 55 to 65° F. Nests are built in gravel or hard bottom substrates in 2 to 20 feet of water. The female lays between 2,000 to 15,000 eggs. The male guards the nest and the fry for a short time. Young smallmouth feed on zooplankton and midge larvae. Adults feed on aquatic insects, crayfish, and suitable sized fish.

Adult Size

Average smallmouth bass are between 1 to 2 pounds, and range from 12 to 15 inches in length. The state record smallmouth bass weighed 9 pounds and 8 ounces.

Fishing Methods

Fly fishing, baitcasting, and spincasting are popular means of catching smallmouth bass. Live-bait anglers have good success in streams using hellgrammites, soft craws and minnows. During May, many smallmouth bass are caught in small tributary streams. The Bass Islands area of Lake Erie is one of the best smallmouth bass fishing spots in the Midwest. The best time to fish there is late spring and late summer. Emerald shiners, small crayfish, and a variety of artificial lures produce good results when fished over reefs, sandbars or gravel bars in 2 to 10 feet of water.