

Ohio Department of Natural Resources

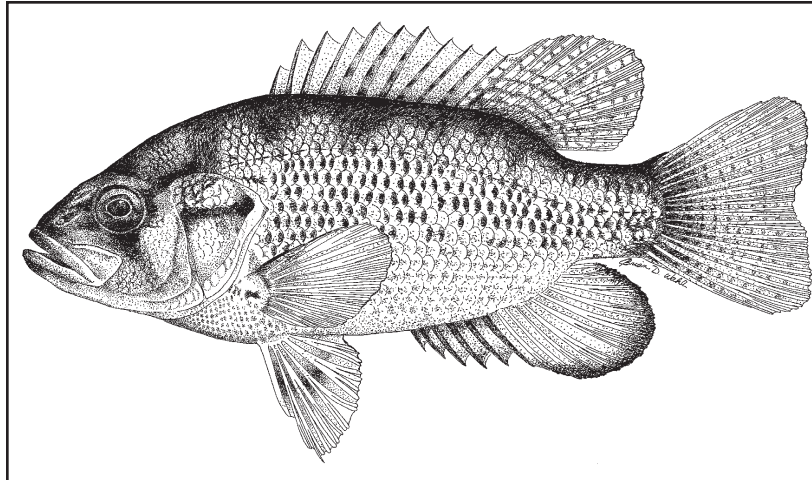
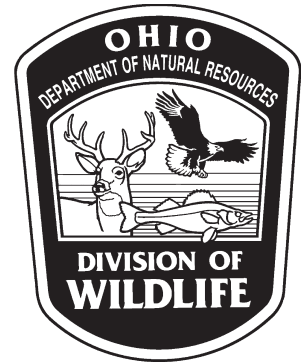
Division of Wildlife

Life History Notes

Rock Bass

Common Names: Goggle-eye, Red-eye

Scientific Name: *Ambloplites rupestris*



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Identification:

Rock bass are thick, heavy bodied fish with a dark slate or olive green color and also a bronze and coppery iridescence. The mouth is large and extends beyond the front edge of the eye. The eyes are sometimes various shades of red. Furthermore, rock bass have six anal fin spines which help distinguishes them from the warmouth which has three.

Range and Habitat:

Rock bass are native to Ohio and are widespread. They can be found from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. They prefer clear streams of moderate size with medium levels of flow. Bottom substrates with large boulders and coarse gravel are favored, or bed rock with drop-offs. In Lake Erie they are frequently located on submerged reefs and large boulders around the islands area and docks.

Life History:

Rock bass are colonial spawners. Male rock bass build nests over gravel substrate in a slight current. Females then deposit up to 10,000 eggs in a nest, often with more than one fe-

male using the same nest. Males remain over the nest to fan the eggs and maintain water flow over the eggs until they hatch in three to four days. Rock bass eat primarily aquatic insects, but larger fish will prey on crayfish and minnows when the opportunity arises. They can grow to 7.5 inches in three years.

Adult Size:

Most adult rock bass range from 7 to 10 inches; however, the state record fish of this species was 14.75 inches in length.

Fishing Methods:

Rock bass will bite on a number of natural and artificial lures. Small spinners and crank-baits work well as do worms, hellgrammites, and crayfish. Anglers should concentrate their effort around large boulders, stumps, and vegetation or docks.