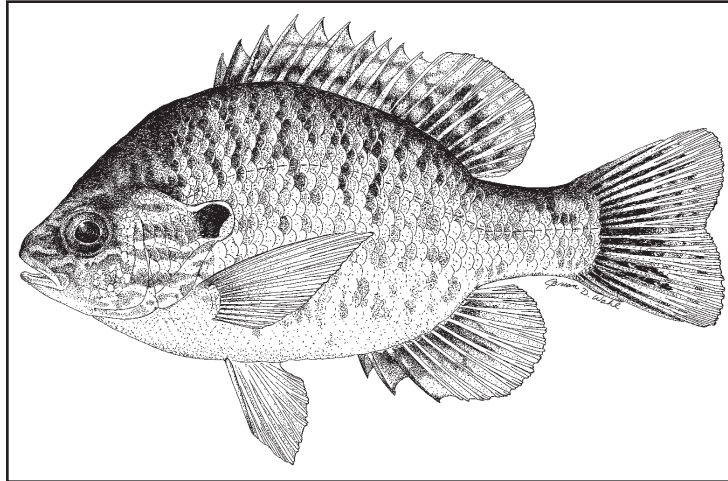


## Life History Notes

# Pumpkinseed Sunfish

Common Names: Punkys, Yellow sunfish

Scientific Name: *Lepomis gibbosus*



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### Identification:

Pumpkinseed are a very colorful, deep-bodied, slab-sided fish with a small mouth. Breast and belly are orange to yellow, with lighter colored sides in a variety of bright colors. The ear flap is black, but has an orange-red spot on the border.

### Range and Habitat:

Pumpkinseed are native to Ohio and are widespread in the Lake Erie drainage. They are also found in isolated areas of the Ohio River drainage. This species prefers clear, non-flowing water and substrates of organic debris and dense submerged aquatic vegetation.

### Life History:

Pumpkinseed sunfish are nest spawners with the male digging the nest in water as shallow as 6 to 12 inches. Spawning occurs in May or June and the males guard the nest until the eggs hatch. The female will lay between 1,600

to 2,900 eggs. Several females may lay eggs in a single nest. Adult pumpkinseed eat primarily larval insects, some adult insects, and occasionally larval fish. Pumpkinseed growth is similar to that of bluegills.

### Adult Size:

Pumpkinseed larger than 5 to 7 inches are uncommon; although 8- to 10-inch fish are occasionally caught at Lake La Su An Wildlife Area.

### Fishing Methods:

Fishing for pumpkinseed sunfish is similar to fishing for bluegill sunfish. The best method is to use natural baits, such as worms, with small hooks and light lines. In addition, small spinner baits and flies can also be used. Anglers should concentrate along the edges of dense vegetation or woody debris.