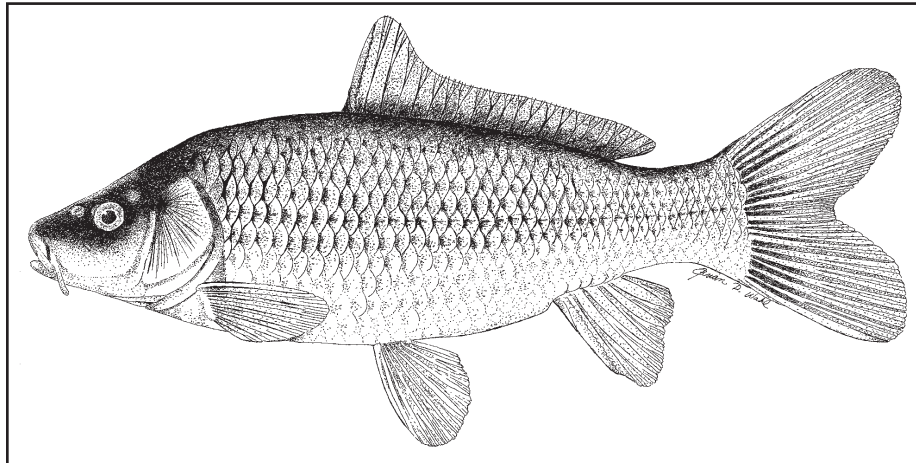


Life History Notes

Common Carp

Common Names: German, Mirror, or Leather carp

Scientific Name: *Cyprinus carpio*



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Identification

The common carp can be easily identified by several features. First, there are two barbels on each side of the mouth. No other species that closely resembles the carp has these barbels. Second, the first dorsal and anal fin spines are serrated. Most carp are bronze-gold to golden yellow on the sides and yellowish white on the belly. Partly scaled or scaleless individuals are frequently caught by fishermen: these are known as "half-scaled," "mirror" or "leather" carp.

Range and Habitat

The common carp is native to Europe, but were first stocked into Ohio waters in 1879 as a food fish. This species thrives in a wide variety of conditions and has spread to every county in the state. Carp prefer warm lakes, streams, ponds and sloughs with a lot of organic matter. They do not multiply readily in clear, cold water.

Life History

Common carp begin spawning in late April and continue into June. Large females lay between 100,000 and 500,000 eggs in vegetation with water depths between 1 and 4 feet.

Young carp remain in these vegetated areas until they are 3 to 4 inches in length and eat primarily small crustaceans. Adults are omnivorous and eat insect larvae, crustaceans, mollusks, and fish. Carp usually live between 9 and 15 years.

Adult Size

Most carp caught by anglers range from 1 to 10 pounds, but they can weigh up to 60 pounds. The state record carp taken by hook and line weighed 50 pounds and measured 40 inches in length. The state bowfishing record is 39 pounds and measured 40 inches in length.

Fishing Methods

Carp can be caught with many different angling methods. Conventional equipment such as cane pole, throw line, or bait casting rods baited with dough balls, worms, crayfish tails, and similar baits are all effective. In addition, many anglers like to use bow and arrow to catch carp. Carp may also be taken with clubs, spears, and by snagging in overpopulated areas.