



Yellow Perch

Perca flavescens

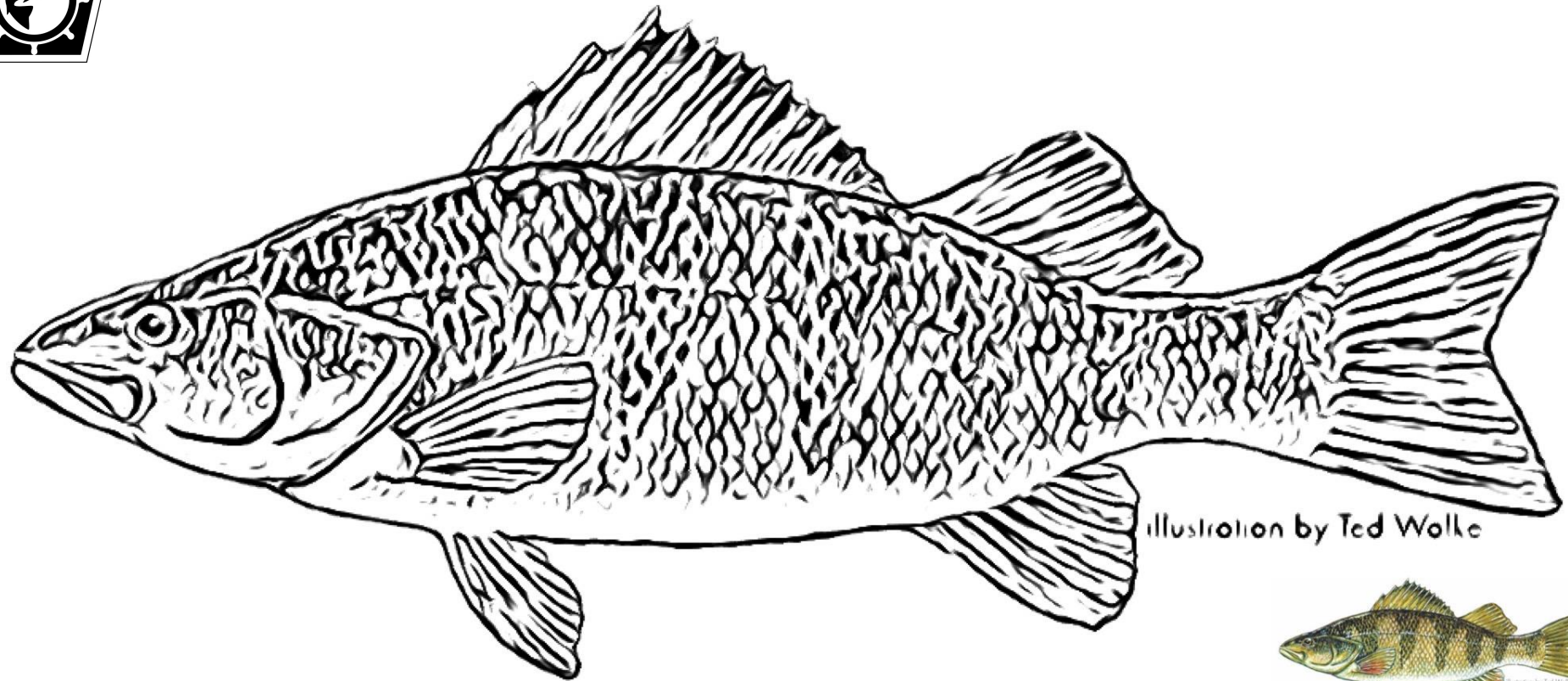
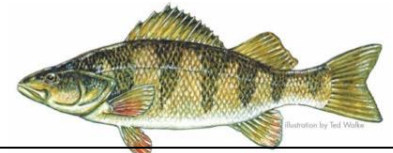


Illustration by Ted Wolke



Yellow Perch are native to the northern United States east of the Rocky Mountains and Atlantic Coast watersheds south to South Carolina. They have also been widely introduced throughout the country and are distributed across Pennsylvania in appropriate habitat. Yellow Perch are popular with open-water anglers and ice fishermen. Yellow Perch were netted commercially in Lake Erie. The genus name "*Perca*" means "perch," and the species name "*flavescens*" means "yellow."

Yellow Perch have a long-looking body, but they are not as slim in appearance as other perch family species. The upper part of the head, back and sides is olive-green to golden-brown, shading to lighter yellow-green or yellow on the sides. The underside is white or grayish. Some back and side scales are dark and form a pattern of six to nine vertical stripes that narrow as they approach the belly. These stripes are a perch's most distinctive feature. The pectoral, pelvic and anal fins are pale-yellow, becoming bright-orange on breeding-season males. The tail is slightly forked. The two dorsal fins are separated. The front dorsal fin has 13 to 15 sharp spines, and one or two spines can be found on the leading edge of the rear dorsal fin. The rest of the rear dorsal fin has soft rays. The anal fin has two spines, and there is a spine on the trailing edge of the gill cover, or opercle.