



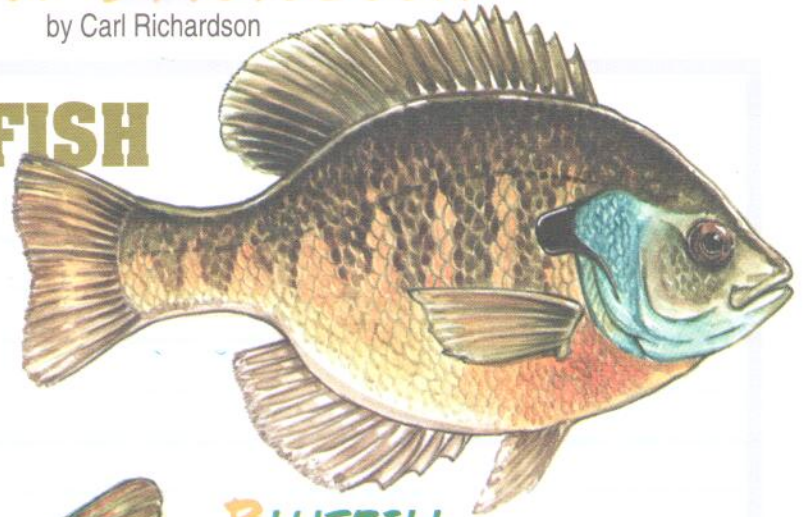
SMART

Angler's Notebook

by Carl Richardson

Know Your SUNFISH

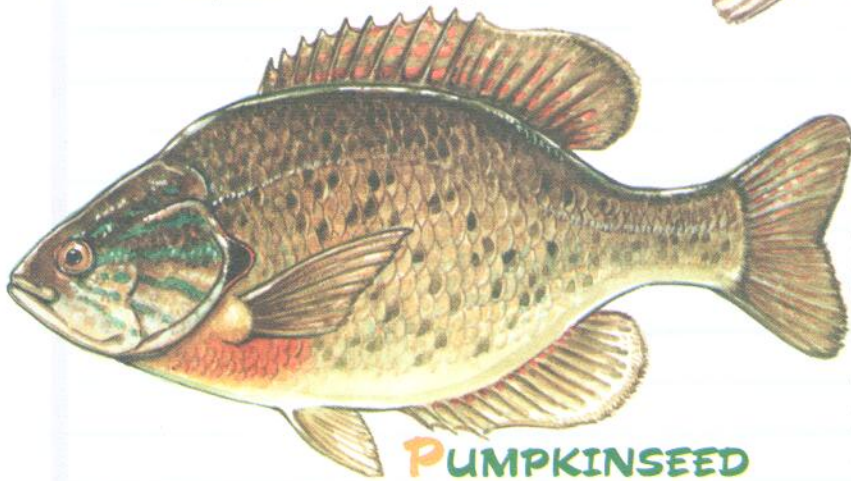
In Pennsylvania there are several different kinds of fish that anglers call "sunnies." They are all members of the Sunfish Family. Each fish has its own special habitat requirements and preferences. Many of them live in the same waters, but are usually found in different spots. All are important food for larger gamefish.



BLUEGILL

Habitat: Found in the warmest Pennsylvania lakes and ponds and the slowest-moving sections of large rivers. Likes shallows with muddy bottoms with some vegetation. Eats insects and often eats plants.

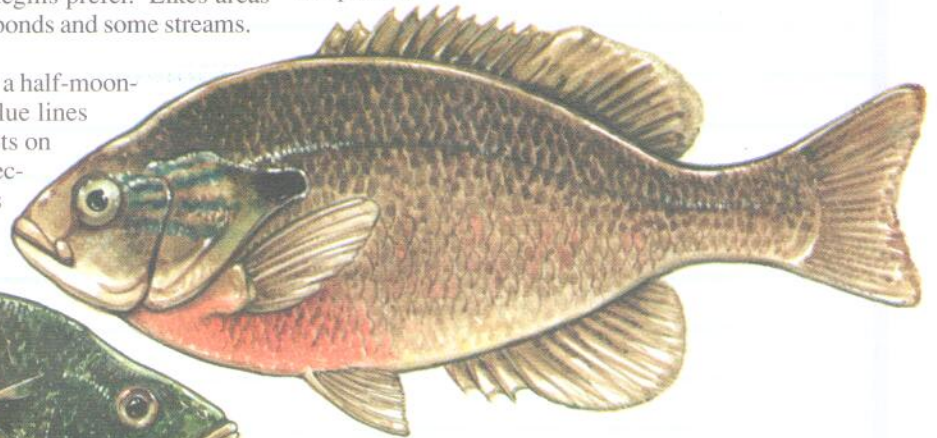
Description: Color varies from dark olive-green to brown. Head and cheek are dark blue with a solid black or dark-blue spot on the gill cover. Almost always has a dark spot on its dorsal fin. Usually has dark vertical bands on body. Pectoral fin is pointed. The largest of the sunnies, bluegills can reach 12 inches and weigh two pounds.



PUMPKINSEED

Habitat: Doesn't like the warm water bluegills prefer. Likes areas with lots of thick vegetation. Found in lakes, ponds and some streams. Eats insects and other invertebrates.

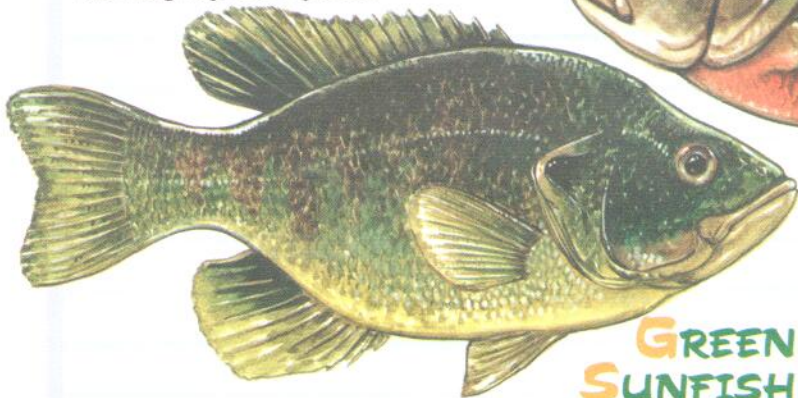
Description: Spot on gill flap is black, with a half-moon-shaped spot of red and light border. Wavy blue lines on cheek and head. Wavy lines or orange spots on dorsal, anal and tail fins, and the lower body. Pectoral fin is long and pointed. May reach 10 inches and weigh up to one pound.



REDBREAST SUNFISH

Habitat: Found mostly in warm streams and the upper reaches of some rivers. Likes rocky cover and avoids fast water. Found in a few clear, cold lakes. Eats insects, crayfish and small fish. Can eat clams, mussels and snails.

Description: Body color is brown to olive. Chest is bright yellow to orange-red. Gill flap is long and soft and colored black with no border. Blue streaks on cheek. Often 10 to 12 inches long and can reach weights close to two pounds.



GREEN SUNFISH

Habitat: Clear lakes with rocky bottoms. Eats aquatic insects and sometimes fish. It also eats clams and snails.

Description: Gill flap is wide and has a black spot with a red, pink or yellow border. Has a large mouth. The corner of the jaw is below the eye. Has wavy blue-green bars on cheek. The pectoral fin is rounded. The smaller of the sunnies, an 8-inch green sunfish is a real trophy.