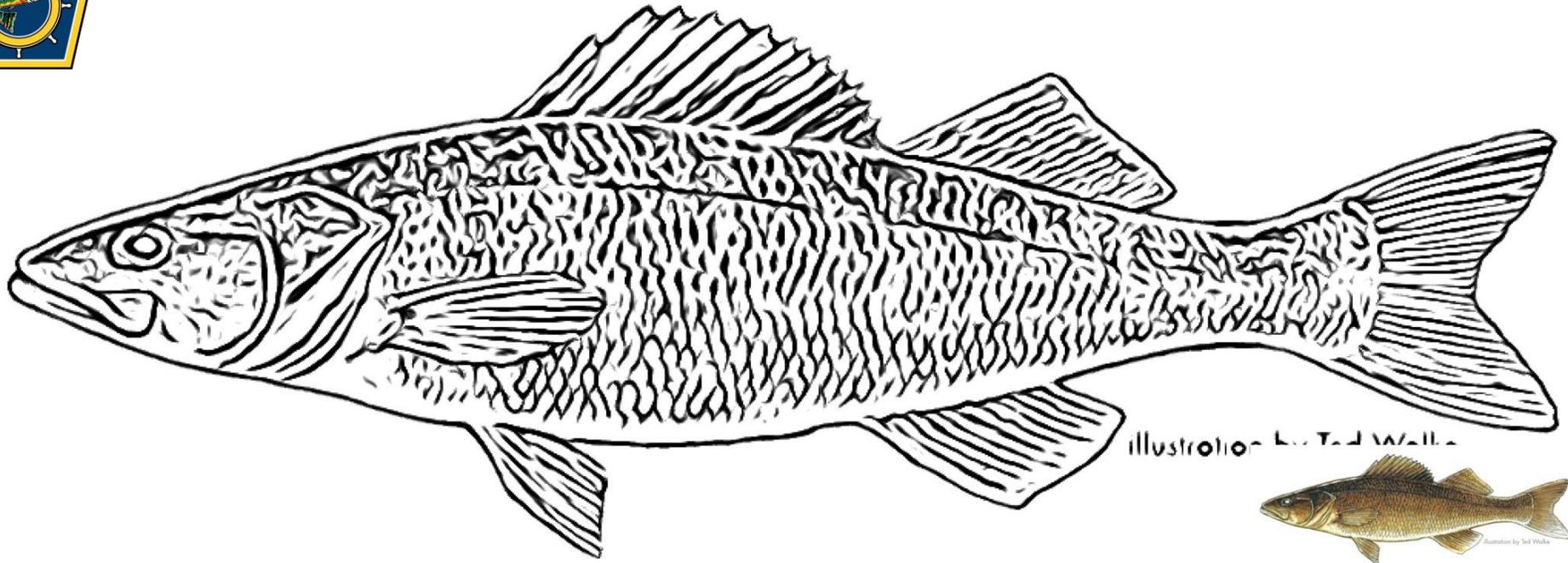




# Walleye

*Sander vitreus*



Walleyes are native to central North America and Canada, including the Ohio River and Great Lakes watersheds. Popular sport fish, they have been extensively stocked. In Pennsylvania they are now found throughout the state, including the Susquehanna and Delaware River watersheds, as well as their original Allegheny River and Lake Erie watershed homes. One of the Walleye's nicknames is "Susquehanna salmon." It has also been called "yellow pike" and even "pickerel." All these nicknames put it in the wrong fish family—it's neither a pike cousin nor a salmon. It's the biggest, toothiest member of the perch family. The name "Walleye" refers to the fish's large, milky eye that looks luminous when light is shined on it. The eye has a reflecting membrane behind the retina, which causes this effect. The species name "*vitreum*" means "glassy," and refers to the luminous eye.

Identification: Walleyes have a long, roundish body, a forked tail and sharp canine teeth in their jaws. The large eye is glassy and reflects light at night. The dorsal fin is separated into two parts, the front portion with 12 to 16 spines, the rear portion with one or two short spines and the rest, soft rays. The anal fin has one or two spines. Walleyes vary in color, ranging from a bluish gray to olive-brown to golden-yellow, with dark-on-light mottling. Side scales may be flecked with gold. Irregular spots on the sides can join to make a vague barred pattern. The belly is light-colored or white.

One way to distinguish a Walleye from its cousin, the Sauger, is to look for the Walleye's dark spot at the rear edge of the front (spiny) section of its dorsal fin. Also, on the Walleye, the lower portion of the tail fin is whitish, and so is the bottom margin of its anal fin.