

# Watery Nest-Builders

You may think of birds as the nest-builders in the animal kingdom, but many fish also build nests. Like all sunfish, largemouth bass are nest-builders. Male fish fan the bottom with their tails to form a circular "nest." Nests are 2 to 3 feet across, 6 inches deep, and in water 1 to 4 feet deep. They are about 20 feet apart and within 8 feet from shore.

Largemouth bass **spawn** (lay their eggs) in the spring and early summer. Several females

may spawn on more than one nest and each may lay as many as 20,000 eggs! The males defend the nests—the eggs, and then the fry—from predators. The eggs hatch in about 10 days. Not all these **fry** (baby fish) survive. Fish and other aquatic animals feed on the young.

So look for sunfish nests in the lakes and ponds where you live in spring and summer!

