

Getting Started with Sunfish



There are **17** sunfish species in Pennsylvania:

- Banded Sunfish (endangered)
- Blackbanded Sunfish (considered extirpated*)
- Black Crappie
- Bluegill
- Bluespotted Sunfish
- Green Sunfish
- Largemouth Bass
- Longear Sunfish (endangered)
- Mud Sunfish (considered extirpated*)
- Pumpkinseed
- Redbreast Sunfish
- Redear Sunfish
- Rock Bass
- Smallmouth Bass
- Spotted Bass
- Warmouth (endangered)
- White Crappie

A great way to get someone “hooked” on fishing is to show the new angler how to catch panfish at a local pond or small lake. You don’t need much equipment to enjoy a day in the sun reeling in sunfish.

Here are some items to consider when taking someone fishing for their first time.

★ **Fishing rod** – Ultralight fishing rods will make sunfish feel like you are reeling in a river monster. These rods are sensitive to strikes from small fish. If your friend can’t afford to buy a rod right away, take advantage of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission’s Fishing Tackle Loaner Program. One of our partner sites can loan you a rod for the day. Check it out at www.fishandboat.com/loaner.htm.



★ **Forceps/narrow pliers** – Many anglers let sunfish swallow the hook on their first fishing trip. Make sure you have pliers or forceps to remove the hook from the tiny mouths of these fish.



★ **Hooks** – What size should we use? Sunfish have small mouths. If you use a hook size that is too small, they can quickly swallow an entire hook. Try fishing with hooks in sizes 12 (smaller) to 8 (larger). Take a variety of sizes, so you can adjust to larger sizes to stop fish from swallowing the hook.

★ **Bobbers** – Bobber fishing is a great way to get a friend interested in fishing. You can keep an eye on the bobber to look for fish bites.

*Extirpated - no longer occurs in Pennsylvania.