

# American Shad— The PFBC's Founding Fish

American shad were a valuable source of food to the European settlers of the colonies. Because shad are **anadromous**, they migrated up the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers to spawn. Spawning shad were harvested in Pennsylvania and provided food to a growing nation. As the population grew, water pollution increased. Dams built on the Susquehanna River for power or for canals blocked shad migrations. Water quality was also poor on the Susquehanna River due to erosion and coal mining activities. Due to water pollution, shad were kept from migrating up the Delaware River. All of these factors led to decreased populations of American shad and other fish.



American Shad

After the Civil War, meetings were held to discuss pollution and the declining fish populations. In 1866, Governor Andrew G. Curtin appointed Colonel James Worrall as Pennsylvania's first Commissioner of Fisheries. Colonel Worrall's job was to investigate these problems and take steps to restore shad. Today, PFBC is still working to restore American shad and other migratory fish.



## Anadromous:

Fish that migrate from salt water into freshwater to spawn.

Susquehanna  
Flats, MD 1900

Visit [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) for more information on American shad restoration. John McPhee's book *Founding Fish* tells the story of shad in early American history.