

FISH INFORMATION FOR THE FISH PRINTING LESSON PLAN

- Bluegill Sunfish—Bluegills can be found in lakes, slower moving warmwater streams and rivers, and farm ponds. The bluegill has many markings making it easy to identify. It has an olive or brownish brown back, and sides that are brownish, orange and sometimes pink. The belly of the bluegill is white to yellow to coppery-orange. The sides of the head are greenish to blue-green with lighter looking blue on the lower edge of the gill flap and under the lower jaw. It has a long and pointed pectoral fin. Bluegills have a dark spot on the lower part of the back section of the dorsal fin. Bluegills like to hide and feed where their habitat has aquatic weeds. They also like to stay near logs, stumps, and rocks that are submerged. The small bluegills can be found close to the shore during the daytime, while the larger bluegills stay in the deeper water close by. The larger bluegills go to the shallows to feed during the early morning and evening. The bluegills spawn starting in May when the water temperature reaches sixty-seven degrees, and continue until August. The male bluegill make small, saucerlike depressions in sand and gravel as nests for the females to deposit their eggs. The male then guards the eggs and young that hatch in two to five days. A female may lay as many as 38,000 eggs in one nest. Bluegills eat a diet of aquatic plants, insects, crustaceans, and minnows. They only eat during the day. The average bluegill is about nine inches long and weighs between one and two pounds.
- Carp—The common carp is the largest member of the minnow family. It came to the United States in the 1870's from Europe. It is found in lakes and slow moving streams as well as ponds and reservoirs. They can live in habitats that most other fish cannot survive in. They can also be found in clean water streams as well as trout streams. The carp prefer shallow areas where there is a lot of underwater weed growth. The back of the carp is olive-brown to reddish brown and the sides are silvery bronze, brassy, or olive-gold. The belly of the carp is yellow to yellowish-white. There is tinge of red on the caudal fins and anal fins. The carp spawn during late spring and early summer over aquatic vegetation. The carp parents then leave the eggs which hatch in four to five days and then reach maturity in three to four years. They like to eat aquatic plants, algae, insect larvae, and other invertebrates and even small fish.
- Yellow Perch—The yellow perch can be found throughout Pennsylvania waters. They prefer to live in warm or cool lakes, ponds, and sluggish streams. The best habitat is a lake with clear, cool water and a sandy and gravelly bottom that has vegetation rooted throughout it. They are shallow water dwellers. The yellow perch has a long body and the upper part of the head, back and sides is olive-green to golden brown. The belly is white or grayish. The yellow perch spawns during the spring in April and May when the water temperature is in the mid-forties to mid-fifties. They spawn in water that is five to ten feet deep over aquatic vegetation and in the brush along a gravelly shore. The perch parents do not stay near the eggs and wait for them to hatch which can take from eight to twenty-five days or longer depending on the water temperature. The young perch feed on zooplankton and aquatic insects and they are food for larger fish predators. They look for food during

the daylight hours and eat little or nothing at night. The adult perch eat aquatic insects, crustaceans, and small perch.

- Rainbow Trout—The rainbow trout like to live in clean, cold water with lots of oxygen. They are a freshwater fish who like to live in swift moving water and the riffle areas of streams. They can also be found in small creeks, some areas of large rivers, dam tailwaters, lakes and reservoirs. Most rainbow trout are raised in a hatchery culture and then stocked in streams and lakes. The back and sides of the rainbow trout are silvery-gray to dark green. There is pinkish or reddish lateral stripe starting at the gill cover and running the length of the fish to the tail. The caudal fin, head, sides, dorsal fin, and adipose fins have small dark spots. The belly is whitish. The lower fins are pale pink and have no spots. Rainbow trout spawn in the spring over gravel beds with good water flow when the temperature is about fifty degrees. The eggs hatch in four to seven weeks and the parents are not there. Rainbow trout eat aquatic and terrestrial insects, crayfish, and other crustaceans. They will also feed on fish, plankton, snails, leeches, and fish eggs. The average rainbow trout weighs between two and five pounds.
- Largemouth Bass—The largemouth bass is Pennsylvania's largest sunfish. They live throughout Pennsylvania in warmwater ponds and small weedy lakes. They like aquatic weeds. Largemouth bass have a head and back that is bright green to olive green. The sides are lighter green. Its belly is whitish or pale yellow. The largemouth's upper jaw goes beyond the back edge of its eye. The largemouth bass spawns in spring and early summer when water temperatures are at sixty degrees for about three days. The male makes the nest in gravel, sand, and soft mud. It is two to three feet in diameter and about six inches deep. The male guards the nest, eggs, and the young which hatch in about ten days. The young feed on zooplankton, insects, and small fishes. The largemouth bass feed day and night.