



Bluegill are deep slab-sided fish with a small mouth and a long pectoral fin. Colors vary, but the ear flap is always black and bluegills often have a black blotch near the back of the soft dorsal fin. Bluegill are nest spawners and typically build nests in large groups, or beds, sometime between May and August. Peak spawning, in Ohio, usually occurs in June. Males select an area in one to four feet of water and sweep out a saucer shaped nest with their tails. The females then lay between 10,000 to 60,000 eggs in the nest which is guarded by the male. The eggs usually hatch in about five days.



The largemouth bass is a popular sport fish. It is native to Ohio and can be found in every county in the state. Largemouth bass are moderately compressed with a deep body. The back of the mouth, when closed, extends past the eye. This characteristic distinguishes it from the smallmouth bass where the back of the mouth does not extend past the eye. The largemouth also has a black band that extends down the side of the body. They prefer ponds, lakes and slow, sluggish streams. Largemouth bass usually spawn between mid-April and mid-June. Nests are constructed by the male in one to six feet of water. The female lays between 2,000 and 20,000 eggs in several different nests; one nest can contain eggs from several females. The male guards the eggs until they have hatched.



The yellow perch is native to Ohio and is found in lakes, impoundments, ponds, and slow moving rivers. Sides are golden yellow to brassy green with six to eight dark vertical saddles with a white to yellow belly. Yellow perch have many small teeth, but no large canines. It prefers clear water with moderate vegetation and lots of sand or gravel bottoms.

Yellow perch spawn from mid-April to early May by depositing their eggs over vegetation or the water bottom, with no care given. The eggs are laid in large gelatinous adhesive masses.



The channel catfish is a popular sport and food fish. It is active during the night, moving around and finding food after dusk. During the day it will most likely be found in deep water with little activity. The channel catfish has a slender body with a deeply forked tail. The upper jaw is longer than the lower jaw and there are barbels around the mouth. The dorsal and pectoral spines are sharp and deeply serrated, and the anal fin is curved and has between 24 and 30 rays. The body is bluish silver on the sides and generally has dark spots. Some anglers mistakenly call channel catfish with few or no spots blue catfish, but the blue catfish is found only in the Ohio River. Channel catfish are native to Ohio and can be found in most large streams, lakes, and many farm ponds. Channel catfish prefer areas with deep water, clean gravel boulder substrates and low to moderate current. However, they are tolerant of a wide range of conditions. Channel catfish begin spawning when water temperatures reach 70 °F. They use natural cavities, undercut banks and muskrat burrows as nests. The female lays a gelatinous mass containing between 8,000 to 15,000 eggs. The parents remain over the nest to fan the eggs and guard the young after hatching.



The fathead minnow is commonly sold as bait for fishing. Fathead minnows have short bodies with a triangular shaped head. The upper jaw overhangs the snout and the lateral line is incomplete. Coloration ranges from olive to olive-yellow on the back tinged with copper or purple in larger fish. Historically the fathead minnow widely populated only in the western part of Ohio. They prefer muddy brooks and creeks, as well as ponds and small lakes. However, fatheads can tolerate a wide range of water conditions. Fathead minnows spawn in the spring and may continue into August. Males select the spawning site, usually under logs, branches or rocks in shallow water. Females lay adhesive eggs which the males guard.



The grass carp is not native to Ohio, but was introduced from China as a biological way to control aquatic vegetation. The grass carp is a long slender member of the minnow family. It resembles the common carp because of its large size and scales. Grass carp differ from the common carp with the lack of a sucker-like mouth, and the absence of barbels on the mouth. Furthermore, grass carp are usually silvery-white, rather than the brownish-yellow of the common carp. They prefer rivers, but have adapted well to reservoirs. Grass carp spawn in flowing water and do not reproduce in lakes and ponds. The grass carp grows very rapidly, and young fish stocked in the spring at 8 inches will reach over 18 inches by fall, and adults often attain nearly 4 feet in length and over 70-90 pounds in weight. They grow 10 pounds a year at least. They eat up to 3 times their own body weight daily.

\*\*Information by Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife. Visit [www.ohiodnr.com](http://www.ohiodnr.com) for more information.