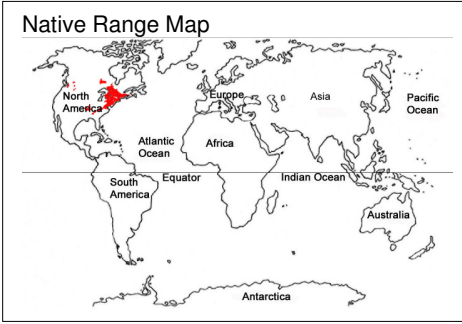


Native Range Map



Smallmouth Bass

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Subphylum: Vertebrata
Class: Actinopterygii
Order: Perciformes
Family: Centrarchidae
Genus: *Micropterus*
Species: *dolomieu*



Photo courtesy of Janet Wisneski

Habitat

- **In the Wild:** The smallmouth bass is a freshwater fish native to lakes and rivers of eastern central North America. They prefer cool, clear streams as well as large, clear lakes with a moderate current. Their habitat has a gravel or rubble substrate (base layer), boulders, some shade and cover, along with deep pools of a stream environment. Originally found only in the Lake Ontario and Ohio River drainage systems, smallmouth bass have been largely introduced to many of the areas in which they are now found.
- **Exhibit Location:** USS Antiquities

Characteristics

- Length: 8-15 inches; Weight: 1-5 pounds
- A member of the sunfish family, the smallmouth bass has a robust and laterally compressed body. The smallmouth is typically brown, bronze, or tan in color with a creamy colored underside.
- The bass has a long, blunt snout with a longer lower jaw. Its head is large and long with dark lines radiating back from the eyes. Their eyes are red or orange, and the upper jawbone does not extend behind the eyes. This gives the fish a small mouth when compared to the largemouth bass.
- This fish has 2 joined dorsal (top) fins that appear as one.
- **Lifespan: In the Wild:** 5-7 years, very few will live 10-20 years; **In Captivity:** about 10 years

Behaviors

- Smallmouth bass rarely roam far from their home territory.
- They feed at the water surface, in the water mass, and off the bottom.
- Smallmouth bass feed during the spring, summer and fall when the water temperature is near or above 50°F. Almost no feeding occurs during the winter.
- Male bass will keep watch over the young as they learn to find food.
- **Enrichments at the Zoo:** food items, moving exhibit furniture

Reproduction

- Good water quality is imperative during spawning, which occurs from April through June, when water temperatures range from 58°F - 70°F.
- Smallmouth bass are nest builders. The males build saucer-shaped nests twice their body length in diameter in 2-20 feet of water. The nests are built in sand, gravel or rubble with the protection of a boulder, overhead limb, log, stump or bank nearby.
- The male attracts one or more females to the nest to lay eggs. Once the eggs are fertilized, the male guards the nest and also the resulting fry (young). He also fans the nest to prevent silt from building up, to remove waste products, and to insure good oxygen levels.
- The eggs hatch after only 4-10 days with the young approximately 0.2 inches in length.
- The male guards the young for a few days after hatching until they leave the nest to find their own living space and food.

Diet

- **In the Wild:** young: zooplankton
adults: insects, crayfish, fish
- **At the Zoo:** smelt, squid, fish gel

Conservation Status

- **IUCN status:** not listed; **CITES Appendix:** not listed
- Humans harassing bedding fish during spawning may affect smallmouth bass populations.
- Predators: fishes, turtles, humans

Did You Know?/Fun Facts

- Female bass will lay up to 21,000 eggs at one time.
- Smallmouth bass are an important commercial, recreational and sport fish. In Canada, the bass is the most important fish in the sport fishery and associated tourist industries. The smallmouth bass is an excellent food fish and provides much angler excitement and enjoyment.
- The smallmouth bass hybridizes in nature with the spotted bass.
- The smallmouth bass is also known as the smallie, smallmouth black bass, black bass, brown bass, and green bass.

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