

# Fishes of Idaho

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Vertebrate Zoology

# (*Clupeidae*)

## Herrings Family

### American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*)

- Most popular species in Idaho:
  - American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*)
- Location: They were stocked in the Bear River, **Idaho**
- Unique Characteristic : Shads and herrings are soft-rayed fishes with large, silvery scales and unusually a saw-toothed belly. Used as food fishes for fisheries.



American shad - *Alosa sapidissima*  
averages 14-29 inches

# Family Salmonidae

## Trouts, salmon, whitefishes, and graylings

### 18 Species in Idaho:

- Most popular species:
  - Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
  - Cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii*)
  - Brown Trout (*Salmo trutta*)
  - Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
  - Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)



# Other Salmonids

## Whitefish and Graylings

- **Location:** They are found throughout Idaho.
- **Unique Characteristic:** the presence of an adipose fin and a pelvic appendage. Three upturned caudal vertebrae form the base of the caudal fin.



# (*Cichlidae*) Tilapia

## 3 Species in Idaho

- Popular species:
  - Convict cichlid (*Archocentrus nigrofasciatus*)
  - Mozambique tilapia (*Tilapia mossambica*)
  - Redbelly tilapia (*Tilapia zilli*)
- Location: Little Lost Creek, Barney Hot Springs, Idaho
- Unique Characteristic: a single nostril opening on each side of the head (vs. two openings in centrarchids) and the presence of a discontinuous or two-part lateral line.



# (*Poecilliidae*)

## Guppies and Mosquitofish

### 4 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Eastern Mosquitofish (*Gambusia holbrooki*)
  - Guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*)
- Locations: Snake River below Shoshone Falls
- Unique Characteristics: a small, live-bearing fish, is dull grey or brown in color with no bars or bands on the sides, and has a rounded tail.



# (*Ictaluridae*)

## Catfishes

### 6 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)
  - Black bullhead (*Ameiurus melas*)
- Location: American Falls Reservoir, Brownlee Reservoir, C J Strike Reservoir, Cascade Reservoir, Coeur D'Alene Lake, Crane Creek Reservoir, Hayden Lake, Hells Canyon Reservoir, Lake Lowell, Lake Pend Oreille, Mann Lake, Mud Lake, Paddock Valley Reservoir, Priest Lake, Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir and Spirit Lake.
- Unique Characteristics: Whisker-like barbels on their heads.



# (*Gadidae*) Codfishes

## 1 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Ling Burbot (*Lota lota*)
- Location: In Idaho, burbot are native only to the Kootenai River, where the population has declined since the construction of Libby Dam.
- Unique Characteristics: eel-like appearance, round tail, and a single barbel (whisker) protruding from their lower jaw.





# (*Petromyzonidae*) Lampreys

## 1 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species: Pacific Lamprey (*Lampetra tridentata*)
- Location: Streams and Rivers that return to the Pacific Ocean.
- Unique Characteristic: a predacious parasite that feeds off of live fish. Lampreys have a circular suction-cup mouth that is lined with hook-like teeth.



# (*Cyprinidae*) Minnows

## 17 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Common Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)
  - Utah Chub (*Gila atraria*)
- Locations: Located in lakes and streams throughout the state.
- Unique Characteristics: cycloid scales and soft fin rays. The pelvic fins are situated behind the pectorals. Have pharyngeal teeth.



# (*Perchidae*) Perches

## 2 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Walleye (*Sander vitreus*)
  - Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*)
- Locations: Reservoirs throughout the state.
- Unique Characteristics: Spiny rayed fish having ctenoid scales. Pelvic fins forward on the body.



# (*Esocidae*) Pikes

## 3 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*)
  - Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*)
- Locations: Coeur D'Alene Lake, Lake Pend Oreille, Dworshak Reservoir, Crooked River, Cascade Reservoir, C J Strike Reservoir, American Falls Reservoir, Bear Lake, Lake Walcott and Priest Lake
- Unique Characteristics: Elongate snout (Like a duck). Elongated body and dorsal fin situated far back on the body.



# (*Cottidae*) Sculpins

## 8 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*)
  - Bear Lake sculpin (*Cottus extensus*)
- Locations: it is found in the Snake River and tributaries above Shoshone Falls, the Bear River basin, and the Clearwater and Salmon Rivers and some of their tributaries.
- Unique Characteristic: Spiny rayed fishes with a suborbital “Stay” in the skull, a posterior extension of the third suborbital bone. Cold water riffle dwellers!



# (*Acipenseridae*)

## Sturgeons

### 1 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - White sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*)
- Location: in the Snake and Kootenai rivers.
- Unique Characteristics: Sturgeons have cartilaginous skeletons with a persistent notochord, a protractile tube-like mouth, and sensory barbels on the underside of the snout. White sturgeons are large fishes with 11 to 14 dorsal, 36 to 48 lateral, and 9 to 12 ventral scutes (bony plates).



# (*Catostomidae*)

## Suckers

### 6 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Utah sucker (*Catostomous ardens*)
  - Bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus*)
- Locations: Statewide locations
- Unique Characteristics: bottom-dwelling fish with an inferior mouth which enables them to feed from the substrate.



# (*Centrarchids*) Sunfishes

## 7 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*)
  - Bluegill (*Lepomis macrochirus*)
  - Black Crappie (*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*)
- Locations: State wide in reservoirs.
- Unique Characteristics: Spiny rayed fishes with a dorsal fin made of a spiny and soft portion.





# (*Percopsidae*) Troutperches

## 1 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Sand roller (*Percopsis transmontana*)
- Location: the Clearwater River
- Unique Characteristics: They are the Idaho species of fish with a adipose fin like a trout and rough scales like a perch.



# (*Cobitidae*) Weatherfish

## 1 Species in Idaho

- Popular Species:
  - Oriental weatherfish (*Misgurnus anguillicaudatus*)
- Location: the lower Boise and Payette rivers and associated irrigation ditches.
- Unique Characteristics: These fish can survive over the winter in de-watered ditches by burying into the mud, and emerging again the following spring after the water is turned back on. The origin of the name weatherfish is due to their habit of responding to changes in barometric pressure by becoming very active and swimming in rapid circles just before major weather changes.

