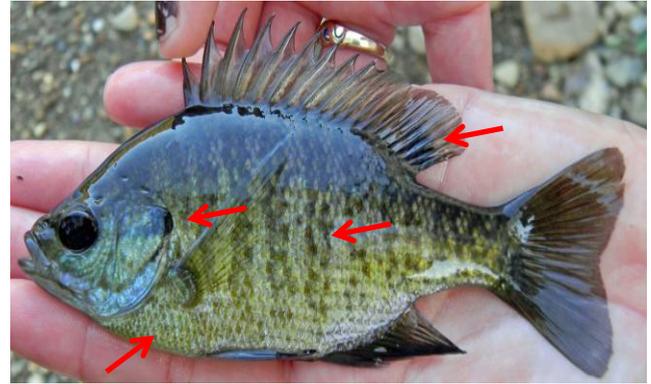
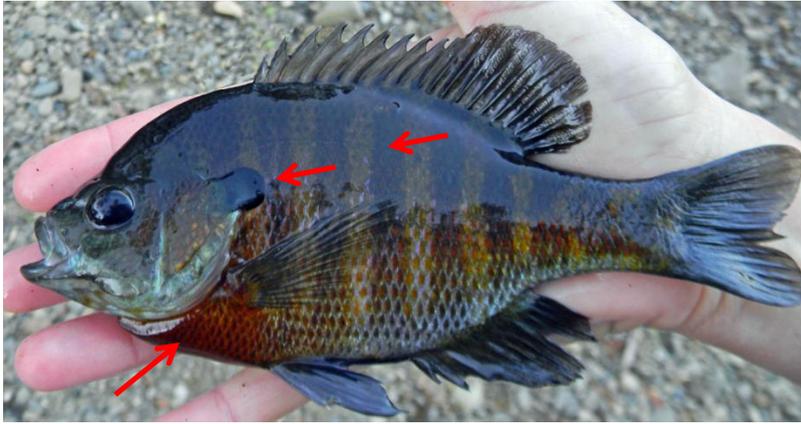


The Sunfish



Bluegill

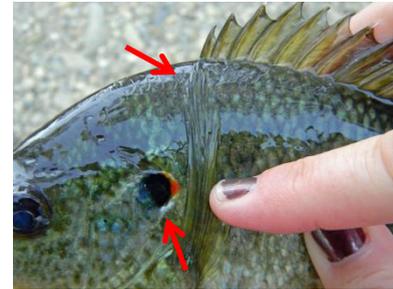


- Bluegill can exhibit a wide range of colors, but are easily identified by the dark gill flap and the black spot at the base of the dorsal fin.
- They typically have vertical bars on the side of their bodies.
- Males and females can look quite different, but males are generally darker bodied with red or orange chests and an elongated, dark gill flap.
- Females and immature males are generally light-colored with a plain or yellow chest.



Fish Fact: Bluegill are bold fish, often having little fear of humans. As a result, they will readily bite. Often, the bigger bluegill in a school can be caught by fishing slightly deeper.

Redear Sunfish

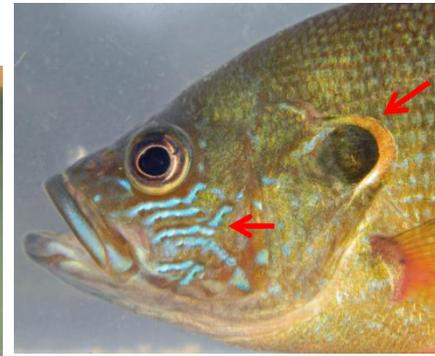


- Redear sunfish are stocky sunfish easily identified by the red border of its short gill flap and long, pointed pectoral fins. If the pectoral fin is rotated upward, it is surprisingly long and will extend almost to the dorsal fin. The mouth and cheeks are not barred.
- Sunfish from clear water may be darker in color and have a checkered appearance, otherwise pale or greenish, often with visible vertical bars.



Fish Fact: Redears love to eat snails and hang out in woody structure. Because of this, they're sometimes called "shellcrackers" or "stumpknockers."

Green Sunfish



- Green sunfish are thick bodied sunfish easily identified by their large bass-like mouth and orange flanked gill flap. Colors vary from pale to black or yellow depending on water conditions. Their cheeks have blue squiggles.
- Males have orange tinted fins with white margins. They are quite aggressive sunfish, so they are often caught by bass fishermen. They will attack lures that are larger than themselves.
- They are also called “goggle eyes” or “bream.”

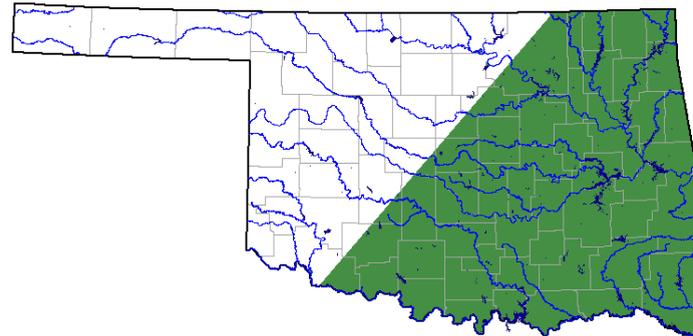


Fish Fact: Green sunfish are early inhabitants and will often be among the first species to colonize new waters. They eagerly leave pond spillways and can even be seen swimming in pastures and ditches after rains.

Warmouth



- Warmouths are stout, thick bodied sunfish similar to both rock bass and green sunfish. They can be identified by their large mouth, orange border of the gill flap, barring (war paint) on the cheeks and teeth on their tongue.
- Warmouth have three spines on their anal fin, while rock bass have six.
- Also called “goggle eyes,” “red eyes” and “weed bass.”



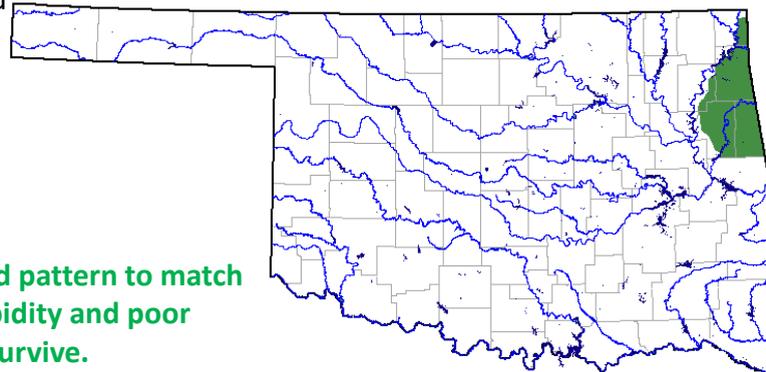
Fish Fact: During spawning season the eyes of male warmouths turn dark red.

Rock Bass



- Rock bass are an Ozark stream species with an appearance similar to other sunfish. However, they have a large bass-like mouth, cheeks with no visible barring and a black gill flap with no orange border.
- Rock bass are often found in dense cover and are fond of root wads and undercut banks.
- They readily strike artificial lures, but seldom venture far from cover. Rock bass are also called “goggle eyes” and “shadow bass.”

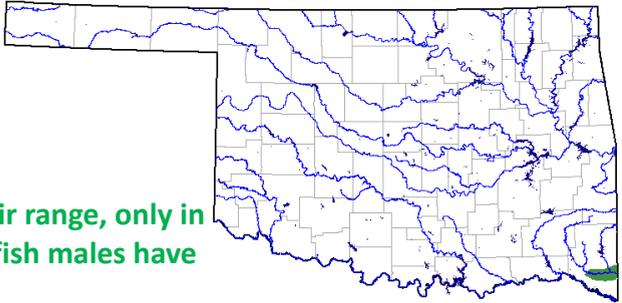
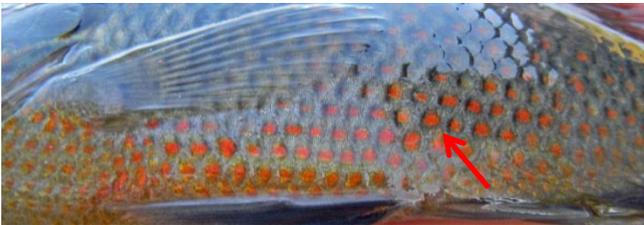
Fish Fact: Rock bass can readily change their color and pattern to match surrounding backgrounds. They are intolerant of turbidity and poor water quality, thus they require cool, clear water to survive.



Redspotted Sunfish



- Redspotted sunfish are one of our most attractive sunfish. They are easily identified by the rows of dark red spots on their flanks and belly, and often have red tinted fins. Although they have a very small range in Oklahoma, they can be locally abundant in portions of the Lower Mountain Fork River and are easily caught on red worms.
- They often spawn shallower than other sunfish species and can sometimes be found nesting within feet of the shoreline and in a few inches of water.



Fish Fact: In Oklahoma, spotted sunfish are on the fringe of their range, only in McCurtain County. During spawning courtship, redspotted sunfish males have been known to grunt at females.

Orangespotted Sunfish



- Orangespots are small and colorful sunfish. Their most distinctive characteristic is their gill flaps, which have a fairly thick white border. In older males, the flap is often elongated. Males also have scattered orange spots on their flanks, while females and immature males have brown spots.
- Breeding males can be quite showy and often have red fins, orange bellies and a blue sheen along their bodies.



Biologist tip: Orangespots are often found in small streams and very turbid waters. In lakes, they are often found very close to shore.

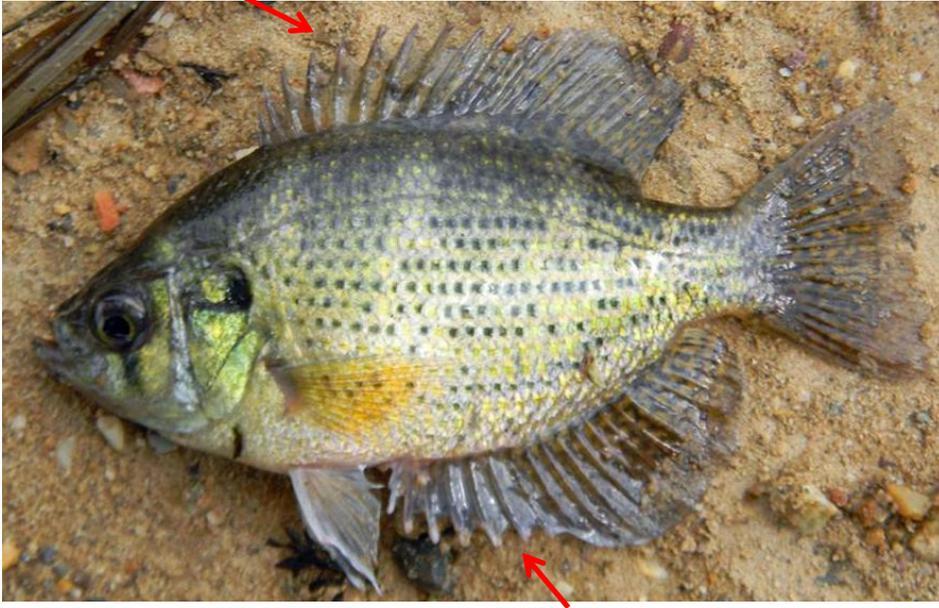
Longear Sunfish



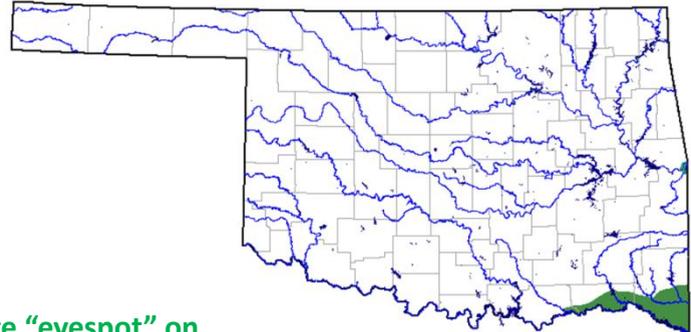
- Coloration of longears can vary widely among water bodies and various regions.
- They can be identified by their long, white-bordered gill flaps, small mouths and blue, squiggly lines on their cheeks.
- Females are smaller, less colorful and do not have elongated gill flaps.

Fish Fact: Male longear sunfish are tireless parents and spend almost their entire summer either building a nest or guarding eggs and fry.

Flier



- Fliers look like a cross between a crappie and a bluegill. They can be identified by their long dorsal (11 to 13 dorsal spines) and anal fins (7 to 8 spines).
- They also have rows of black spots along their flanks and a black bar through their eyes.



Biologist Tip: Young fliers typically have a black and orange “eyespot” on the back of the dorsal fin. It fades with age and is often absent in adults.