



ANGLER'S GUIDE 2017



"Close to Home" Fishing Program

By Skylar St.Yves, Information and Education Specialist



SKYLAR STYLES/ODWC

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation joined 13 other state fish and wildlife agencies in 2002 to create an urban and community fishing program. The driving force behind the program was the need to create more fishing opportunities for urban residents. Fisheries staff created the Close to Home Fishing Program (CTHP) at Dolese Lake, a 19-acre pond in northwest Oklahoma City. A cooperative agreement between ODWC and the City of Oklahoma City listed responsibilities for both parties and the CTHP was underway. The program quickly grew to eight sites by 2007. Benefits to municipalities that sign up for the program include patrols by ODWC game wardens, preference for boating and fishing access funds, access to aquatic education materials and equipment, technical assistance and preference for stocking fish, when needed.

Most of the cooperating municipalities are in the Oklahoma City area, including Edmond, Guthrie, Moore and Norman. The Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department contributes a great deal of support toward the program. The H.B. Parsons Oklahoma City Fish Hatchery staff manages 10 CTHP ponds and raises fish for stocking. In addition, the parks and recreation department conducts a minimum of 12 aquatic education events each year at many of the ponds.

The program has expanded in recent years to include waters in the northwestern, northeastern and southwestern parts of the state. In total, there are 44 CTHP waters statewide. Each CTHP area is required to have adequate facilities that can accommodate families, including restrooms, picnic areas, parking and fishing piers, before being selected by ODWC to participate in the program.

While the primary fishes stocked in CTHP waters over the years have been channel catfish and hybrid sunfish, many species can be found in each body of water, including black bass, crappie, flathead catfish, trout (at seasonal CTHP waters) and carp.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

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Edwards Park in Oklahoma City provides excellent bank and fishing pier access for anglers. The 5-acre lake is a great place to catch catfish and sunfish.

Fisheries management activities for all CTHP waters involve creating put-grow-take fisheries by stocking low to moderate numbers of juvenile fish that will grow to a more desirable size that will please anglers. This approach has been moderately successful at ponds with low angling pressure. Ponds with fish feeders tend to show better growth.

CTHP COMPONENTS

The five main components of the CTHP are opportunity, fishing access, boating access, education and outreach:

Opportunity - Development of a larger network of Close to Home fishing locations through the use of existing and construction of city-owned and leased ponds, privately owned ponds (homeowners associations or businesses) and existing water-supply reservoirs. There are 18 partnerships with municipalities statewide that include 44 sites totaling 306 acres of water. At least 10 cities have expressed interest in joining the program.

Fishing Access - Construction of fishing docks, piers, shoreline access areas, and amenities associated with angler access, such as sidewalks, parking lots, lighting and restrooms. Access projects installed to date include five fishing piers, one boat ramp, three handicapped accessible pads and four aeration systems.

Boating Access - Construction of new and renovation of existing boat ramps, courtesy docks, parking lots, lighting,



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

restrooms and access roads. Only one boat ramp and dock have been installed under the program because the majority of the ponds do not allow boating due to their size.

Education - Increased numbers and locations for youth and adult fishing clinics with the assistance of trained volunteer instructors. Hundreds of Aquatic Education Resource Program (AREP) events have been held at CTH sites since the program started. More than 300 certified volunteer instructors are available statewide under the program.

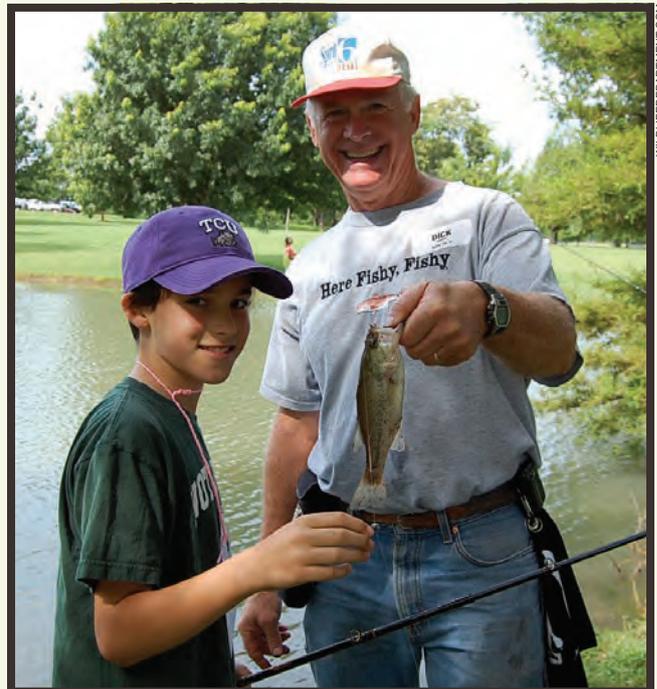
Outreach - Development and distribution of brochures, magazine articles, news releases, radio and television commercials, and programs regarding the conservation of our aquatic resources and their use in recreational fishing. Some brochures, maps and news articles have been released since 2000.

ODWC will continue to provide residents of Oklahoma municipalities with quality fishing in neighborhood-based waters by focusing on anglers' desires, uses and benefits and by implementing sound fishery management techniques on urban ponds and lakes.

In the next several pages, we'll highlight some of our favorite areas from each region along with the CTHP fishing regulations, a story about hybrid sunfish production at our Byron fish hatchery as well as fish identification of common sport fish found in Oklahoma. Happy fishing and tight lines!



Channel catfish like these are stocked statewide in CTHP waters.



Aquatic Education Resource Program volunteers from across the state help young anglers catch their first fish at CTHP fishing areas.



CENTRAL REGION



Kitchen Lake

- Oklahoma City
- 28 acres



Like several Close to Home fishing areas in Oklahoma City, Kitchen Lake has received some major renovations recently, including a new Americans with Disability Act compliant fishing pier, family picnic area and paved parking lot with ample spaces.

Easy bank access is limited to the southwestern and southeastern corners of the lake as well as the dam on the

southern end. However, for the more adventurous bank anglers, access can be found along the entire shoreline. That is if you're willing to take a trek.

Kitchen Lake is the second-largest Close to Home fishing area at 28 acres. With that much water, there's no telling what you might reel in!

Try a night crawler and a bobber off the fishing pier or along the riprap on the dam during the spring months and you're bound to have success. Make sure you've got adequate line on that reel because you never know when the big one might strike!

Amenities

- Picnic Area
- Paved Walking Path
- Fishing Pier
- Dam Parking Access
- New Paved Parking Area





CENTRAL REGION



Griffin Community Park

- Norman
- 5 acres



Situated just down the road from Kitchen Lake, Griffin Park in Norman is a great place to spend a day. Highlighted by an extensive wilderness trail, soccer and baseball complex, dog park, disc golf course and 5-acre lake, Griffin Park has something for almost everyone.

The lake has excellent bank access along the entire shoreline with several fish attractors scattered throughout. Finding

fish here is usually as simple as putting a line in the water.

Each spring, the George Hulseby Trout Derby is held at Griffin Park Pond. The event is for youths ages 5 to 15. Hulseby served for many years as The Norman Transcript's outdoor editor, writing columns about the world of hunting and fishing. Hulseby was instrumental in establishing the Sutton Wilderness Area just north of the park.

A large sheltered picnic area that sits along the north shoreline is great for large families and groups.

Bring a flying disc for disc golf, a ball for the dog or a rod and reel for fishing. It's bound to be a grand day at Griffin Park!

Amenities

- Sheltered Picnic Area
- Dog Park and Walking Trail
- George M. Sutton Wilderness Area
- Disc Golf Course
- Ballfields





CENTRAL REGION



Crystal Lake

- Oklahoma City
- 48 acres



Crystal Lake has come a long way since its days as a dumping ground for tires and trash. In partnership between City Care and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the western Oklahoma City lake has been transformed into an ideal recreational area for urban youths.

Amenities

- Floating Fishing Pier
- Boat Ramp
- 3-D Archery Range
- Covered Picnic Area
- Easy Bank Access

The lake supports a healthy abundance of several fish species. A large floating fishing pier and easy-access shorelines provide bank fisherman with a great opportunity to catch fish. The lake also has a boat ramp for those who prefer fishing from a watercraft.

A 3-D archery range in the southwest corner of the property allows visitors the opportunity to shoot from both the ground and elevated shooting stands.

The goal at Crystal Lake is to provide a safe place for people in Oklahoma City to come out and enjoy the outdoors!





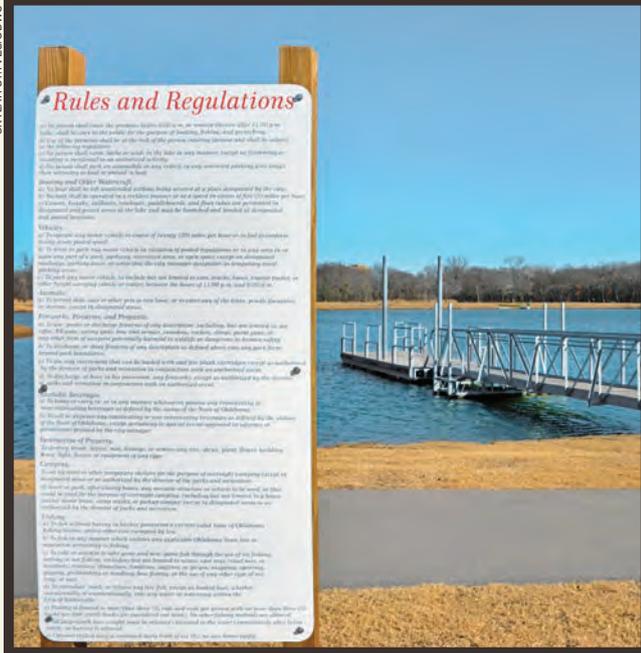
NORTHEAST REGION



Lee Lake

- Bartlesville
- 20 acres

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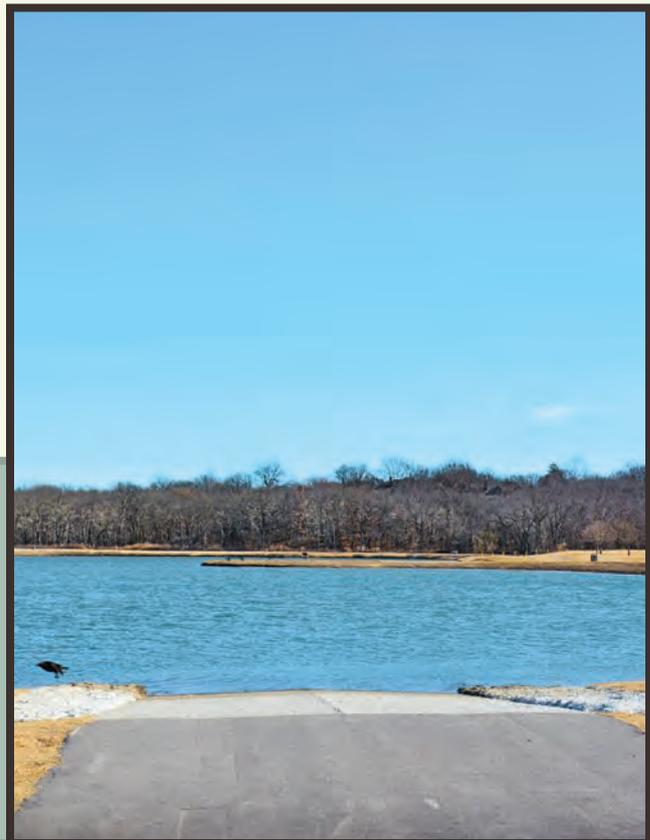
and fishing piers. It is among the few Close to Home areas where anglers can put a motorized watercraft on the water.

About an hour north of Tulsa in Bartlesville, Lee Lake is a great place to spend a day fishing. With ballfields, walking trail and a dog park, there is something for nearly everyone in the family to enjoy!

Lee Lake recently received a Federal Boating Access Grant makeover. Renovations included the installation of a paved boat ramp, walking trail around the lake, sheltered restrooms, lake reshaping

Amenities

- Picnic Area
- Dog Park
- Ballfields
- Two Fishing Piers
- Walking Trail



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NORTHEAST REGION

Veterans Park Pond

- Jenks
- 3 acres



Nestled near downtown Jenks, Veterans Park Pond offers a wonderful fishing opportunity for families in the Tulsa area. Two covered fishing piers provide anglers with protection of the elements while they enjoy a day on the water.

In addition to numerous warm-water species, Veterans Park Pond also offers a seasonal trout fishery from Dec. 1 through Feb. 28 annually. These feisty cold-water fish offer anglers an

opportunity to get out during the colder months and put a line in the water.

Veterans Park is just a few blocks down the road from the Oklahoma Aquarium, so families could easily make a day by viewing the aquarium's freshwater and saltwater species from around the world, then head over to the park for a chance to catch a few fish.

The park has a playground for the little ones who may not be quite ready to fish. Sheltered picnic areas make the park a good place to bring a lunch enjoy a picnic.

Conveniently situated right off the Creek Turnpike, Veterans Park is a must for local families.

Amenities

- Two Sheltered Fishing Piers
- Sheltered Picnic Area
- Playground
- Easy Bank Access
- Seasonal Trout Fishery





NORTHWEST REGION

Meadowlake Park

- Enid
- 10 acres



Meadowlake Park is one of the larger parks in Enid. This park is on 110 acres. Meadowlake Park has 13 shelters scattered throughout the area. The park includes activities for nearly everyone in the family, including train rides, miniature golf, walking and biking trails, horseshoe courts, tennis courts, baseball field and playground.

Amenities

- Sheltered Picnic Area
- Dog Park and Walking Trail
- Playground
- Easy Bank Access
- Ample Parking

Centered in the park is a 10-acre lake full of fish. Great bank access offers anglers the opportunity to fish different depths around the lake. Don't be surprised if a big largemouth bass gulps down your swim bait in the early spring.

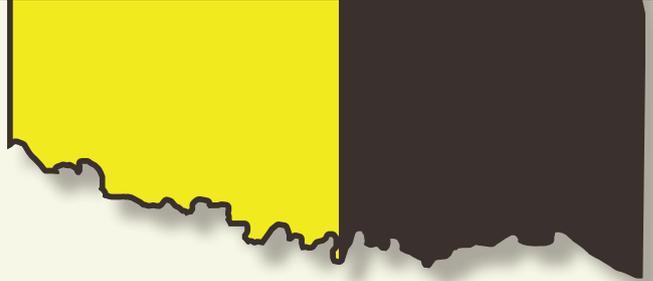
Meadowlake Park has an excellent dog park, so don't forget to bring Fido along for the fun.

Meadowlake Park Golf Course runs along both sides of the southern arm of the lake. Spring, summer and fall provide some great weekends for fishing and golf, so bring your pitching stick and your pitching wedge!





SOUTHWEST REGION



Elmer Thomas Park — Lake Helen

- Lawton
- 3 acres



With four fishing jetties, excellent bank access and a ton of near-shore fish structure, Lake Helen is a gem of a Close to Home fishing area. Within Elmer Thomas Park in northeastern Lawton, Lake Helen is an easily accessible area right off Exit 39B from Interstate 44.

An extensive walking trail offers anglers the opportunity to get in some extra exercise on a nice sunny day, and there's a great playground for the kids.

Amenities

- Four Fishing Jetties
- Walking Trail
- Sheltered Picnic Area
- Easy Bank Access
- Community Events

Elmer Thomas Park is the site of several large public events each year.

The park is named after John William Elmer Thomas, who was elected a member of the first Oklahoma Senate in 1907. He served as a senator until 1920. He also served as president pro tempore from 191-13, founded Medicine Park Resort, and oversaw the state's first fish hatchery about 12 miles north of Lawton in Medicine Park. The J. A. Manning State Fish Hatchery is now operated by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.





REGULATIONS

Looking for a nearby fishing lake or pond?

Through agreements between Oklahoma municipalities and the Wildlife Department, these areas offer convenient “Close to Home” fishing opportunities in metro areas.

Close-to-Home Fishing waters have the following restrictions:

- Fishing is limited to no more than three rods and reels per person, with no more than three hooks per line (treble hooks are considered one hook). No other fishing methods are allowed.
- All largemouth bass must be released (returned to the water) immediately after being caught; no harvest is allowed.
- Channel catfish and blue catfish have a combined daily limit of six; only one blue catfish over 30 inches is allowed to be kept.
- Netting of any kind (including castnetting) is not permitted.

Oklahoma City – (405) 297-1426:

- Crystal Lake (6625 SW 15th). Fishing pier may be reserved for youth-related aquatic programs. For more information, contact City Care at (405) 657-7947.
- Dolese Youth Park (5105 NW 50th)
- Edwards Park (1515 N Bryant Ave.)
- Kids Lake (3200 W Wilshire Blvd.)
- Kitchen Lake (5894 SE 119th)
- Route 66 Park (9901 NW 23rd)
- South Lakes Regional Park (4210 SW 119th)
- Zoo Lake (2101 NE 50th) — east shoreline only

Bartlesville – (918) 338-4226:

- Lee Lake (2200 SE Adams Blvd.)

Choctaw – (405) 390-8198:

- Choctaw Creek Park (2001 N Harper)
- Ten Acre Park (NE 10th Street and Choctaw Road)

Del City – (405) 670-7314:

- Eagle Lake (3405 E Reno)

Edmond – (405) 359-4630:

- Hafer Park (1034 S Bryant Ave.)
- Mitch Park (1501 W Covell Road)
- Bickham-Rudkin Park (450 E 33rd St.)

El Reno – (405) 262-4070:

- Legion Park (620 S Reno Ave.)

- Southern Hills North (2710 Faith Ave.)
- Southern Hills South (2810 Faith Ave.)

Enid – (580) 554-1536:

- Meadowlake Park (Corner of S Van Buren Street and W Rupe Ave.)
- Government Springs North Park (300 S 5th St.)
- Crosslin Park (1600 block W Purdue Ave.)
- City of Enid Water Works (1400 block W Chestnut Ave.)

Guthrie – (405) 282-8400:

- Mineral Wells Park (Division and Mineral Wells Circle)
- Highland Park (Warner Avenue and N Drexel Boulevard)

Harrah – (405) 454-2951:

- Heritage Park (1374 N Church Ave.)

Jenks – (918) 299-5883:

- Veterans Park Pond (E 101 and Elm)

Jones – (405) 399-5301:

- Battey-Mullhousen pond (N Henney Road and W Main Street)

Lawton – (580) 581-3400:

- Elmer Thomas Park - Lake Helen (Interstate 44 and NW Cache Road)
- Liberty Lake (1717 NW Kinyon)

- Skyline Pond (NE 27 and Dearborn Ave.)

- Park Lane Pond (SE Pinewood Drive)

Medicine Park – (580) 529-2825:

- Medicine Creek (From Gondola Dam to State Highway 49 bridge)

Moore – (405) 793-5090:

- Little River Park (700 SW 4th) (currently closed for renovations, call for updates)
- Buck Thomas Park Pond (1903 NE 12th St.)

Mustang – (405) 376-7739:

- Wildhorse Park (SW 59th and Mustang Road)

Norman – (405) 366-5472:

- George M. Sutton Urban Wilderness Area (12th Avenue NE and Rock Creek Road) (currently closed for renovations, call for updates)
- Norman Lions Northeast Park (1800 Northcliff Ave.)
- Griffin Community Park (1001 E Robinson)

Sapulpa – (918) 227-5151:

- Kelly Lane Park (1151 S Park St.)

Yukon – (405) 354-7208:

- City Park (2200 S Holly St.)
- Welch Park (615 Annawood Road)
- Robertson Activity Center (1200 Lakeshore Drive)



HYBRID SUNFISH BYRON HATCHERY

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's Byron Fish Hatchery is in northwestern Oklahoma. It is where ODWC produces all of its hybrid sunfish for state fish stocking purposes.

A hybrid sunfish is a cross between a male bluegill and a female green sunfish. Unlike all of the other fish species that are produced at Byron, hybrid sunfish are the only ones that are produced through natural spawning.

Most hatchery-raised fish are produced in what is known as jar culture. This is the process of collecting milt and roe from brooder fish stock (breeding adults). Those are then combined in "test tubes" to simulate the reproductive process. After a short incubation period, the fry are either placed in what are known as rearing ponds, to allow them to grow to larger sizes before being stocked, or they are immediately put in bags and shipped to other hatcheries.

Byron produces several species of fish, including striped bass, hybrid striped bass, walleye, sauger, saugeye and hybrid sunfish. But since it is a natural forage fish for most reservoir predators, the hybrid sunfish requires a much longer process than all of the other species Byron produces.

Stocking predator species usually involves a quick turnaround. The fry are produced and stocked in bulk (in the thousands) to ensure a desirable number of that particular species makes it to adulthood, as most will not survive due to predation or other natural causes. Hybrid sunfish on the other hand are allowed to develop for three years prior to being stocked. This allows ODWC to stock



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fewer fish with a lower mortality rate in a body of water.

The production of hybrid sunfish involves three half acre ponds. The production pond is stocked with 10 to 20 breeding pairs of male bluegills and female green sunfish. These pairs then naturally reproduce in the pond, 50,000 to 100,000 offspring. After a year of growth, the fish are moved into a secondary pond to continue their growth. After a second year of growth, they are put in a third pond for a final year of growing. These 3-year-old fish are then ready to be removed from the hatchery and sent out for stocking. This process is repeated annually, serving as a conveyor belt of sorts for hybrid sunfish production.

Most of the 3-year-old fish will be sent to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in exchange for 5,000 adult brown trout that get stocked in ODWC's two year-round trout fisheries. 10,000 hybrid sunfish are sent to the Oklahoma City fish hatchery and are stocked in the Close to Home waters around the metro.



HYBRID SUNFISH BYRON HATCHERY

The remaining hybrids are sent to ODWC's other fish hatcheries to be stocked in Close to Home waters in those regions.

Hybrid sunfish may be a forage fish by most predators, but don't be fooled by the "bait fish" label, as these are a voracious species with an insatiable appetite, which is why they are the preferred stocked fish in Close to Home waters. It is not uncommon

to catch the same fish multiple times in the same day, especially in late May and June when sunfish begin their spawning period.

Most Oklahomans' introduction to fishing came by catching sunfish in a farm pond and the Close to Home fishing program aims to continue that legacy by providing a feisty fish for families to catch in their neighborhood waters.



This is the half-acre pond used for the brood stock of male bluegills and female green sunfish at the Byron Hatchery. The hatchery's hybrid sunfish (inset photo) are produce by 10 to 20 pairs naturally each year.



SPORT FISH OF OKLAHOMA

SALMON FAMILY — SALMONIDAE

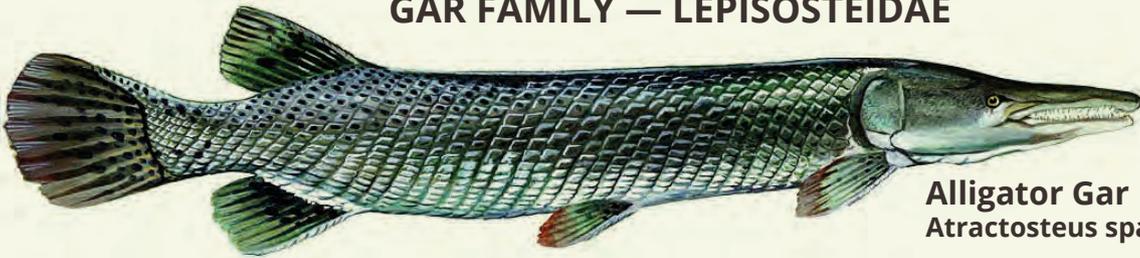


Brown Trout
Salmo trutta



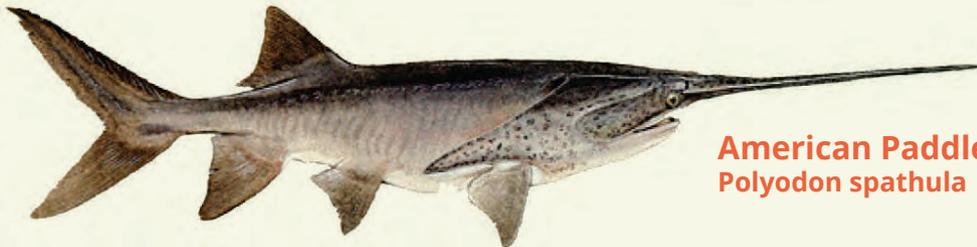
Rainbow Trout
Oncorhynchus mykiss

GAR FAMILY — LEPISOSTEIDAE

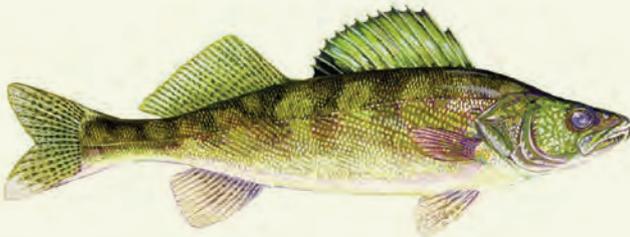


Alligator Gar
Atractosteus spatula

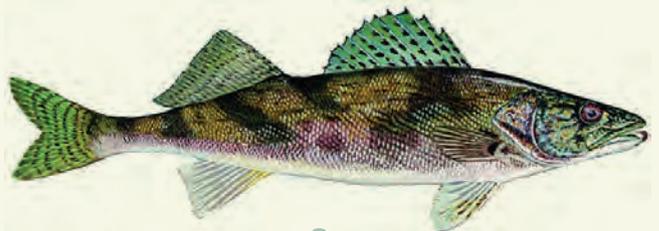
PADDLEFISH FAMILY — POLYDONTIDAE



American Paddlefish
Polyodon spathula

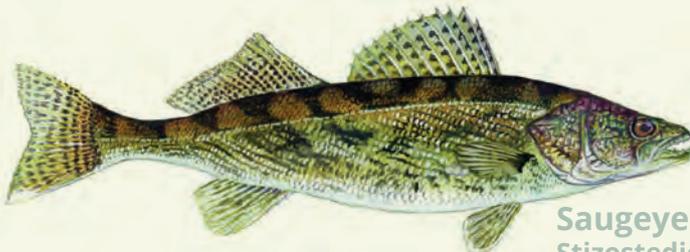


Walleye
Stizostedion vitreum



Sauger
Stizostedion canadense

PERCH FAMILY — PERCIDAE



Saugeye
Stizostedion canadense x Stizostedion vitreum



SPORT FISH OF OKLAHOMA

CATFISH FAMILY — ICTALURIDAE



Flathead Catfish
Pylodictis olivaris



Blue Catfish
Ictalurus furcatus



Channel Catfish
Ictalurus punctatus



Striped Bass Hybrid
Morone chrysops x *Morone saxatilis*



White Bass
Morone chrysops

TEMPERATE BASS FAMILY — MORONIDAE



Redear Sunfish
Lepomis microlophus



Striped Bass
Morone saxatilis



Black Crappie
Pomoxis nigromaculatus



Green Sunfish
Lepomis cyanellus

SUNFISH FAMILY — CENTRARCHIDAE



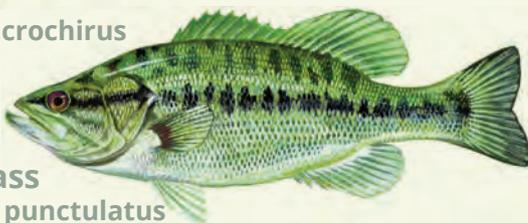
Bluegill
Lepomis macrochirus



Largemouth Bass
Micropterus salmoides



White Crappie
Pomoxis annularis



Spotted Bass
Micropterus punctulatus



Smallmouth Bass
Micropterus dolomieu