

FIGURE 3.8. Bluegill.

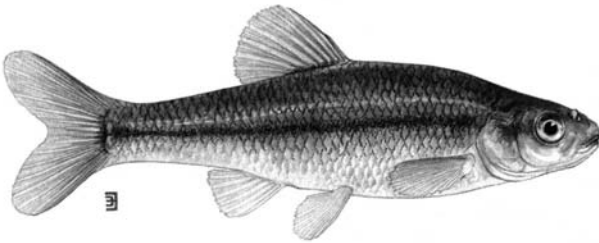


FIGURE 3.9. Fathead minnow.



FIGURE 3.10. Golden shiner.



FIGURE 3.11. Yellow perch.

to add gravel to a pond shoreline area in order to assist smallmouth bass reproduction, and supplemental stocking of smallmouth bass might also be needed in situations where the spawning habitat is limited.

Channel catfish are commonly stocked and do well in many warm water ponds (figure 3.13). These fish are bottom feeders that do not compete with bass, so they can supplement fish production in a pond with bass and bluegill (or bass and minnows). Channel catfish seldom reproduce in ponds, so they have to be restocked every few years at a density of one hundred fingerlings per acre. Pond owners should recognize that channel catfish often stir up bottom sediments while they are feeding, producing murky water conditions.

Black crappies have also received attention as a potential pond fish, but they are very prone to stunting (figure 3.14). Good growth rates of black crappie can only be maintained in ponds with relatively small numbers of these fish; therefore they do best in ponds with high densities of large predatory bass. Crappie should generally be considered for stocking on an experimental basis because standard stocking recommendations have not been widely evaluated under a variety of pond conditions. Black crappies are usually available as fall fingerlings and should be initially stocked at a density of fifty to one hundred per acre.

Several types of large predatory fish that are actively sought by anglers in public waters are not generally suitable for ponds. These include walleye and northern pike, both of which fail to grow very large—or fail to survive at all—in small ponds (figures 3.15 and 3.16). Walleye are frequently raised in ponds to a size suitable for stocking in public water (i.e., three to four inches in length). At this size they become cannibalistic and cannot be maintained easily within a typical pond.

Note that many fish commonly stocked in ponds are not native in various regions. Although many of these species are now so common in waters throughout North America that we have become accustomed to having them around, their proliferation often contributes to the decline of native fish species. For example, the widespread introduction of brown trout has displaced the colorful, native brook trout from many waters throughout the northeastern United States. For that reason, pond owners should consider raising native fish. In many cases this will be challenging, but it can be rewarding to learn more about the fauna that once