

Yellow Bass – *Morone mississippiensis*

Distribution - Native range the central Mississippi Valley. Introduced to reservoir throughout the United States. The meaning of the word *Morone* is unknown. The species epithet *mississippiensis* refers to the Mississippi River from which the species was first described. Although yellow bass are sometimes confused with white bass or young striped bass, there are several distinguishing characteristics. First, the belly may take on a yellow color, from which the species derives its common name. Second, unlike other temperate bass, the two lowermost stripes are distinctively broken just posterior to the middle. Also, the second and third anal spines are approximately equal in length.

Sporting Qualities - Yellow bass are often found in schools. Like white bass, they may be captured using spoons, spinners, or live minnows. Due to their small size, averaging only about half a pound, and slow growth rate they are not highly sought by most anglers (a trophy fish may weigh one pound or less).

Life History - Yellow bass, like other true basses, are spring spawners. They prefer gravel or rock substrate, but unlike other sea basses they do not appear to require flowing water, and they temporarily pair during spawning. Eggs are usually deposited in two to three feet of water. At water temperatures of 70°F eggs hatch in four to six days. These fish are slow growers, reaching four or five inches the first year and growing only one to two inches per year thereafter. They reach sexual maturity (six to seven inches) in two years. Young fish feed primarily on fish, crustaceans, and insects. Adults often eat large quantities of fish, and may even cannibalize their own young. Schools are most often found in midwater or near the surface.

Life Span – Maximum life span is about 6 years.

Sporting Qualities – Yellow bass is a great sport fish taking a variety of spinners, lures, plugs, top water baits as well as taking live bait.

Threats – Pollution and habitat loss.