

# PLAY



Spring  
2020

Pennsylvania • League • of • Angling • Youth

## The Perch Family

Did you know that the Perches and Darters family is one of the largest family of fishes in North America? In Pennsylvania, this family includes darters, Yellow Perch, Sauger, and Walleye.

Perch are elongated, so these fish have a long, narrow body shape. Perch have two separate dorsal fins or the dorsal fins are just barely joined. The first dorsal fin is spiny, while the second dorsal fin is soft. Most perch prefer cool, flowing water with a clean, unsilted bottom.

Visit the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's website at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) to learn more.



Yellow Perch, *Perca flavescens*

# Darters

You may be less familiar with darters, but there are 146 North American species of darters, and at least 21 species have been recorded in Pennsylvania. Several darters are endangered or threatened in Pennsylvania.

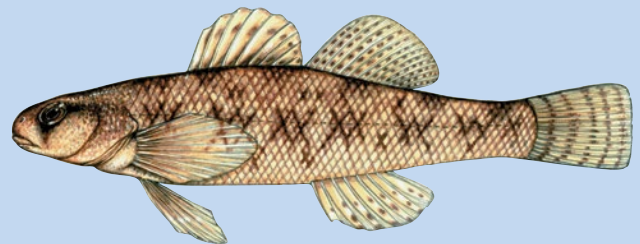
Some species of darters require such clean, clear water that these fish are indicators of water quality. There is high quality water when these species are present in a stream, and there is degraded (poor) quality water when these fish disappear from a stream.

The darter gets its name from its behavior of resting on the bottom of the stream and then quickly darting away under a rock or similar hiding space. Darters behave this way and lurk near

the bottom, because these fish have a small swim bladder or no swim bladder at all. As a result, darters cannot easily move up and down from the surface to the bottom.



Greenside Darter (*Etheostoma blennioides*)



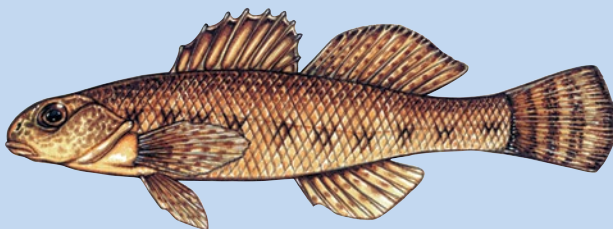
Tessellated Darter (*Etheostoma olmstedti*)



Rainbow Darter (*Etheostoma caeruleum*)



Banded Darter (*Etheostoma zonale*)



Johnny Darter (*Etheostoma nigrum*)



Logperch (*Percina caprodes*)

# Yellow Perch

Yellow Perch, a popular gamefish, are distributed across Pennsylvania, where perch can be found in warm or cool lakes, ponds, and even streams. Yellow Perch are considered shallow-

water fish that are usually not caught more than 30 feet deep. Perch feed on small fish, insects, and crustaceans, so live bait or imitation lures are great options for fishing for these fish.

Yellow Perch have a long-looking body. However, these fish are not as slim as some other perch family members. The heads, backs, and sides of Yellow Perch range from olive to golden brown with darker, vertical tiger stripes. The undersides of Yellow Perch are white.



Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*)



# Fishing for Yellow Perch

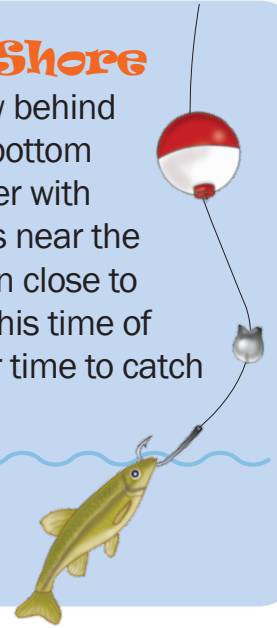
Yellow Perch forage during daylight hours. Perch are soft biters, so

light rods and sensitive line are an advantage.



## Fishing from Shore

Cast a worm or minnow behind splitshot to get near the bottom or fish bait under a bobber with enough line, so the bait is near the bottom. Perch will move in close to shore to spawn in April. This time of the year can be an easier time to catch perch from the bank.



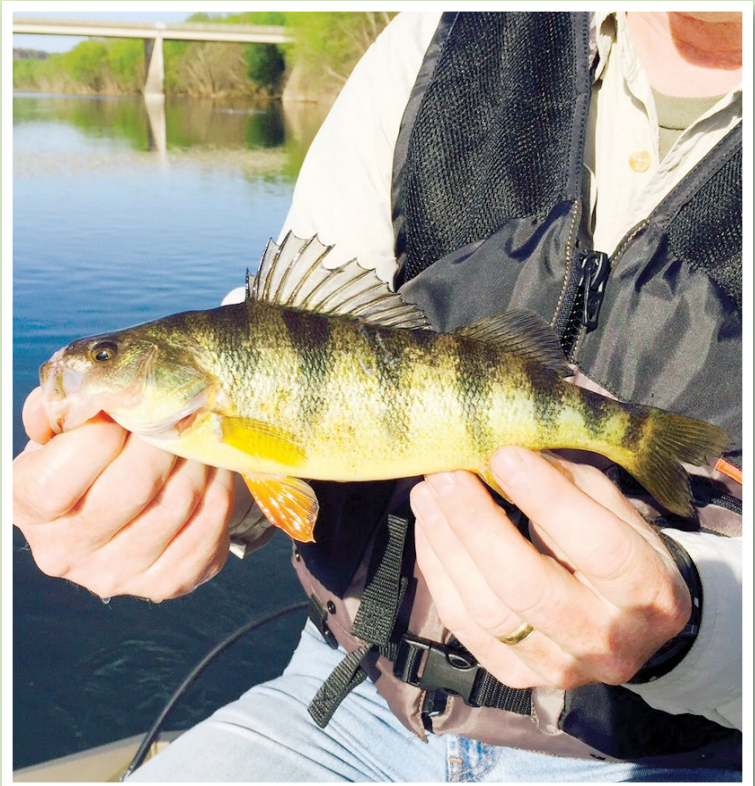
## Trolling from a Boat

Trolling jigs or small spinners baited with worms can help locate schools of perch in the summer. Troll along shorelines with rocky structure and weed beds. Try different depths with each pass to locate a school.



## Jigging from a Boat

After locating a school of fish while trolling, you can switch to jigging or bobber fishing and drift over the school to pick up fish.



# Sauger and Walleye

Walleyes and Saugers are the largest members of the Perches and Darters family. They both have long bodies, forked tails, visible sharp teeth, and large, glassy eyes.

A light-reflective coating behind the retina gives the eyes a glassy look. This adaptation helps fish see at night.

## Walleye

Walleyes have a dark spot at the rear edge of the spiny section of its

dorsal fin and a white marking on the bottom of the tail fin as well as the bottom of the ventral fin. Walleyes live in large lakes, big streams, and rivers in water that is cool and where the summer water temperatures do not exceed 85 degrees F.



Walleye (*Sander vitreus*)

## Sauger

The Sauger is closely related to the Walleye and looks similar. The big difference between these two fish is their habitat preference. Saugers prefer large, muddy rivers and big, silty lakes.



Sauger (*Sander canadensis*)

# Fishing for Sauger or Walleye

## Jigging from a Boat or Shore

Both Walleyes and Saugers may be caught using a vertical jigging method. Heavy jigs are recommended to get into deeper water where fish tend to school. Flashy jigs often help draw attention in hot pink, chartreuse, green, and yellow colors. Jigs tipped with minnows or nightcrawlers are especially enticing.

## Trolling from a Boat

Trolling nightcrawler harnesses with willow leaf spinning blades are great ways to catch Walleyes in open water. Deep diving crankbaits may also be trolled behind boats if you make sure crankbaits have the depth range to get down to where schools of Walleyes are holding.



# The Perch Family WORD SEARCH

L A Z Q D R V W S U I Q U R Z  
 S A I D V N D E T A G N O L E  
 C G S Z Z D R Y H V W Y C C C  
 R U M R T S F E E Q V C I S G  
 H C K X O B J L D H W Y W B C  
 L N T K B D Q L X L K X Q S U  
 P V S V S U Z O L K Y A R E Z  
 T V X F L C A W M K V M A S Z  
 Q R N V G Q A P R E G U A S M  
 S T F M J L A E D P J C U E M  
 E A Q Q L G K R A E H B D R I  
 Q T F E I F Z C R N P K F O T  
 U E Y U V M K H T P Q F I H J  
 C E W Q Y Y U H E C N L W S O  
 D S J S R V W W R F J V T I D

## Word List

YELLOW PERCH  
 SAUGER  
 WALLEYE  
 DARTER  
 ELONGATED  
 DORSAL  
 SHORE  
 ICE

(Hint: Some words may appear backwards.)

D I T L V C F R M W M V S R S D  
 O S T W T N C E H U Y Y D M C  
 C H I F D T H K W A U Y U P  
 T O K K P F C R Z I F Z I D O  
 R I A E H B D R I A G K L O D I  
 W R I A E D P J C U E M S T F M J  
 M S T F M J L A E D P J C U E M  
 Z S W A V A T Z S W A V A T Z S  
 T V X F L C A W M K V M A S Z  
 P V S V S U Z O L K Y A R E Z  
 L N T K B D Q L X L K X Q S U  
 H C K X O B J L D H W Y W B C  
 C B C H C K X O B J L D H W Y W  
 R U M R T S F E E Q V C I S G  
 C G S Z Z D R Y H V W Y C C C  
 S A I D V N D E T A G N O L E  
 L A Z Q D R V W S U I Q U R Z

Answer Key

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