

An Identification Key to Selected Delaware Estuarine and Freshwater Fishes

- 1 body snakelike, with one long, continuous fin extending around body **American Eel**
body and fins not as above go to 2
- 2 body asymmetrical (left-eyed) and flattened, with a continuous fin on left side **Summer Flounder**
body and fins not as above go to 3
- 3 having barbels (sensory whiskers) in or around mouth go to 4
not having barbels (sensory whiskers) in or around mouth go to 7
- 4 tail fin asymmetrical (top part longer); body covered with bony plates **Sturgeon**
tail fin symmetrical; body not covered with bony plates go to 5
- 5 body covered with large scales; dorsal fin over twice as long as it is high **Common Carp**
body scaleless; dorsal fin not noticeably longer than it is high go to 6
- 6 tail fin deeply forked **Channel Catfish**
tail fin rounded **Brown Bullhead**
- 7 body and mouth long and slender, body over five times as long as it is deep go to 8
body and mouth not so long and slender go to 9
- 8 mouth needle-like and twice as long as head; tail fin rounded and spotted **Longnose Gar**
mouth duck-like; tail forked; body with pattern of chain-like markings **Chain Pickerel**
- 9 having only one dorsal fin; pelvic fins set farther back on body than pectorals go to 10
having two distinct dorsal fins; pelvic fins set directly below pectorals go to 12
dorsal fin appearing as one, but actually in two fused parts, the front part spiny go to 18
- 10 small in size, with narrow, minnow-shaped body; dorsal and tail fins rounded **Killifish**
varying in size, but deeper bodied; dorsal fin pointed and tail fin forked go to 11
- 11 gills modified into series of mesh-like rakers to filter food; jaws otherwise unmodified **Menhaden**
gills not so modified; lower jaw fits into notch of upper jaw **American Shad**

- 12 rear dorsal fin much broader (in length) than front, extending nearly back to tail go to 13
 rear dorsal fin not appreciably broader (in length) than front go to 15
- 13 anal fin similar in size and shape to rear dorsal fin; tail fin deeply forked **Bluefish**
 anal fin not nearly as large as rear dorsal fin, tail fin not deeply forked go to 14
- 14 tail asymmetrical (pointed at tip); mouth small, downturned, appearing toothless .. **Atlantic Croaker**
 tail fin symmetrical; mouth large and toothed; with two large teeth on roof of mouth **Weakfish**
- 15 rear part of dorsal fin similar in height to, and clearly separated from, front part go to 16
 rear part of dorsal fin noticeably higher than, and fused with or close to, front part go to 18
- 16 body yellowish with several dark vertical bands; two dorsal fins differing in shape **Yellow Perch**
 body not as above; front and rear dorsal fins similar in size and shape go to 17
- 17 body with pattern of several dark, horizontal stripes **Striped Bass**
 body lacking stripes; having a deeper, more-humped back appearance **White Perch**
- 18 outer margin of tail fin convex to straight (not forked) go to 19
 outer margin of tail fin concave (slightly forked) go to 20
- 19 mouth with large blubbery lips; pectoral fin small and pointed, tail fin straight at margin **Tautog**
 mouth not as above; pectoral fins large and rounded; tail fin spiny at margins **Black Sea Bass**
- 20 body elongate (length 3x depth); notched between front and rear dorsal fins go to 21
 body deeper (length < 3x depth); rear part of dorsal continuous with front part go to 22
- 21 body with several vertical green stripes; upper jaw not extending beyond eye ... **Smallmouth Bass**
 body with one broad, dark, horizontal stripe; upper jaw extending beyond eye ... **Largemouth Bass**
- 22 anal fin similar in size and shape to dorsal; pectoral fins not sharply pointed **Black Crappie**
 anal fin noticeably smaller than dorsal; pectoral fins sharply pointed go to 23
- 23 body multi-colored and spotted; with orange spot on edge of gill flap **Pumpkinseed**
 body with pattern of dark vertical stripes; blue-black spot on gill flap **Bluegill**