

## GREEN SUNFISH

### Scientific Name:

*Lepomis cyanellus*

### Other Names:

green perch



*Illustration by Duane Raver*

### Identification:

The Green Sunfish has a moderately compressed body but is not as round as other sunfish. It is bluish green with emerald and yellow iridescent flecks and streaks. Its mouth is far larger than other sunfish with an upper jaw that extends back to the middle of the eye. Its pectoral fin is short and rounded, and its ear flap is black with a white to yellow margin. It frequently has a black spot near the end of its dorsal and anal fins.

### Habitats and Habits:

Green Sunfish are native to the extreme western mountains in North Carolina. They have been widely introduced throughout the Piedmont but are absent or rare in the Coastal Plain. In North Carolina, Green Sunfish prefer small creeks and streams with hard, rocky bottoms. However, they tolerate greater levels of turbidity than other sunfish and are often found in polluted or degraded streams with heavy silt loads. Green Sunfish eat aquatic and terrestrial insects and insect larvae, small crayfish and small fish.

### Fishing Techniques:

Green Sunfish will strike small crankbaits, spinners, wet or dry flies, and an assortment of natural baits. Anglers should fish close against the shore, and under overhanging banks or small dugout areas in shallow water. Green Sunfish are often found near rock piles, dense vegetation, and other types of thick cover. Although they are aggressive fighters, Green Sunfish rarely reach large sizes and are not highly regarded gamefish.

### Good Places to Fish:

In North Carolina, they are predominantly found in the Piedmont and Foothill regions and are absent or rare in the lower Coastal Plain due to their inability to tolerate acidic or saline waters.

### Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 1 pound or 9 inches

State Record: 1 pound, 15 ounces from a private pond in Creston on July 12, 2014