

WALLEYE

Scientific Name:

Sander vitreus

Other Names:

pike perch, jackfish



Illustration by Duane Raver

Identification:

The Walleye is a torpedo-shaped fish ranging from dark olive-brown to yellowish gold, with brassy-flecked sides and a dark splotch at the rear of a spiny dorsal fin. It has two separate dorsal fins and the lower lobe of the tail is tipped with white. Its large, glassy eyes reflect light at night

Habitats and Habits:

Native to Canada and the northern United States, Walleye have been stocked in most states except a few in the far west and south. In North Carolina, the Commission has stocked Walleye in mountain and Piedmont reservoirs. Walleye prefer clear, cool water and usually stay in deep water during the day, moving to shallow waters at night.

Young Walleye prefer to feed on fish but will eat crayfish, leeches, mollusks, worms and insects. Adult Walleye are large, visual predators and their main diet is Threadfin Shad, although they will eat small bass, trout, perch and sunfishes as well. They usually feed at night on or near the bottom.

Fishing Techniques:

Anglers often fish with jigs to catch Walleye. One technique that works well is to cast the jig parallel to boat and let it sink. Start a hopping motion using only the wrist, not the arm. Make the jig hop 6 to 12 inches from the bottom while retrieving jig between hops. Slack the line after each hop. Jigs come in many sizes, colors and styles, although experts swear on a round head, yellow chartreuse jig. Green, white, red and orange jigs work well, too. Other popular baits include minnows, nightcrawlers and minnow-shaped crankbaits.

Other Information:

NCARP Minimum Requirements: 5 pounds or 23 inches.

State Record: 13 lbs., 8 oz., from Shooting Creek, Lake Chatuge, Aug. 16, 1986