



# Smallmouth Bass

## *Micropterus dolomieu*

### Physical Features

Distinguishing features include an upper jaw which extends to the middle of their red eyes. Their body is green and is covered with dark brown vertical bands, which are an adaptation to the dark river waters in which they live. Sharp spines are located directly in front of the dorsal and anal fins. This fish ranges in lengths of 1.5 inches to 24 inches. The weight of females can vary from 3 to 6 pounds, whereas, the smaller males only average 2 pounds.

### Habitat & Food

Smallmouth bass are most commonly found upstream in the Red and in some of its tributaries. They were placed there because of the excellent rock riffle habitat that exists in parts of this area of the river. Insects, fish, frogs, and crayfish constitute the majority of this fish's diet. Smallmouth Bass live near rocky shoreline in which appropriate shelter is available. They prefer clear, cooler water, and are intolerant to pollution found within their environment.

### Spawning

Smallmouth Bass spawn in late May to late June and begin nesting when temperatures reach 62° to 65°F. Nests are built by males near shore. During a period that lasts nearly 2 hours, multiple females will enter the nest and spawn with the male producing an egg every 45 seconds. For the entire period of incubation, the males will guard the eggs, until the eggs hatch in 1 to 2 weeks, as dictated by water temperature.



### Interesting Facts

The Smallmouth bass is intolerant to pollution and is therefore a great indicator of the water condition of the river. Some fish may have various levels of mercury contamination. Before eating any fish consult fish consumption advisories for the river or lake where they were caught.

### Angling Tips

Smallmouth Bass are excellent sport-fish and considered to be one of the strongest fish for their size. Pursue with minnow imitators, twister tail jigs and live bait. The area below the Orwell Dam on the Otter Tail River is an excellent catch and release Smallmouth fishery.

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### For More Information Contact:

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