

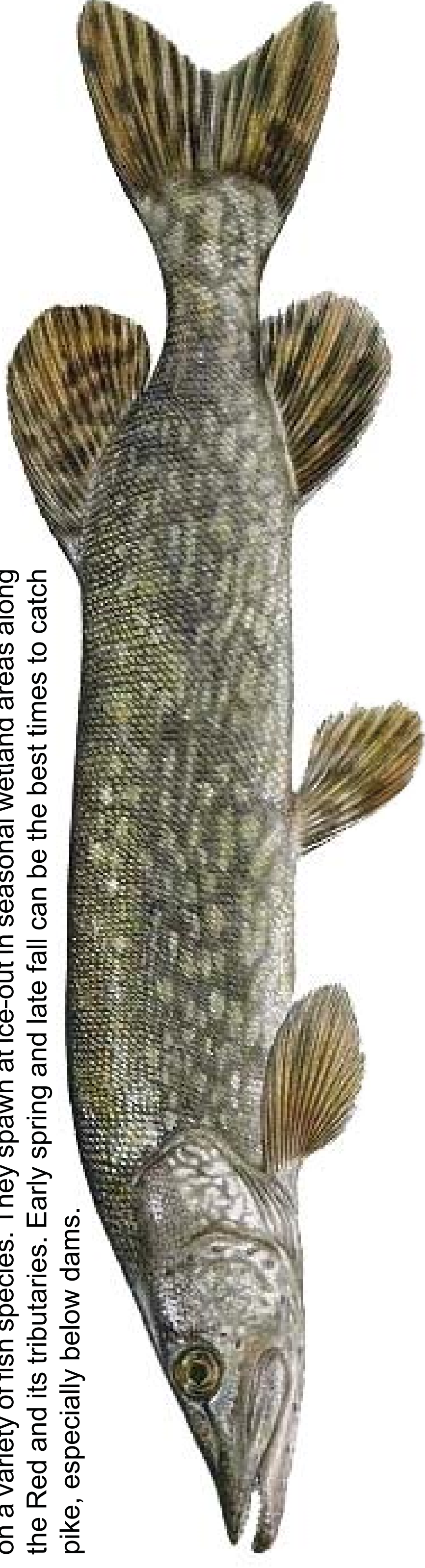
# What lives in the Red?

## Common fish species in Fargo Moorhead

The Red is a "turbid" or muddy river and because of that many people think the Red has poor water quality and therefore is a poor place to fish. But the water quality is cleaner than about three-fourths of the rivers in the continental United States. However, there is room for improvement, as with many of the lakes and rivers in Minnesota and North Dakota.

### Northern pike - *Esox lucius*

Northern pike as large as 45 inches call the Red River home. Netting surveys show a good northern pike population with a variety of sizes. Northern pike often live 10 to 12 years and can exceed 20 pounds. Pike are voracious eaters, feeding on a variety of fish species. They spawn at ice-out in seasonal wetland areas along the Red and its tributaries. Early spring and late fall can be the best times to catch pike, especially below dams.



### Walleye - *Sander vitreus*

Early spring and late fall will find many anglers on the Red's banks or in boats trying to catch the River's walleyes. In the upper reaches of the River (the southern end), anglers seek confluences and dams. Not infrequently, anglers catch walleye while catfishing. Walleye fishing pressure is most heavy before the Minnesota season officially opens in May since the Red is a border water, with a year-round open season.



### Channel Catfish - *Ictalurus punctatus*

Channel catfish grow slow, live long (24 years or older have been found) and can reach weights in excess of 30 pounds and up to 40". Catfish eat a variety of bottom dwelling insects and crustaceans and forage small fish. Catfish spawn in early summer, preferably in root wads and beneath woody debris. Generally the size of "cats" increase as they move downstream.



### Can you eat the fish?

The principal contaminant in the Red River fish is mercury. Mercury in the River comes from both natural and industrial sources. Fish caught in the Red River may be eaten safely, but be sure to check current fish consumption advisories posted by the Minnesota and North Dakota Departments of Health.

### Common carp - *Cyprinus carpio*

Common carp were intentionally introduced in the 1880s as a sport fish and are now one of the most damaging aquatic invasive species due to its wide distribution and severe impacts in shallow lakes and wetlands. Their feeding disrupts shallowly rooted plants muddying the water. They release phosphorus that increases algae abundance. Carp are established in 48 states. They can be found throughout the Red River basin.



### Goldeye - *Hiodon alosoides*

Goldeyes are recognizable by their silver compressed body form and their large gold eyes. Their body appears to be a blue-green silver from above and a more white silver from below. They have two abdominal and pelvic fins as well as a dorsal on their back and an anal fin on their underside. The dorsal fin is positioned opposite or behind the origin of the anal fin.



### Sturgeon - *Acipenser fulvescens*

Until the early 1900s, lake sturgeon were common in the Red River and several of its tributaries. As the area was settled and developed, rivers were dammed and polluted, and sturgeon numbers declined. By 1995, it appeared that only a few remnant sturgeon were left in the entire Red River system.



### Freshwater drum - *Aplodinotus grunniens*

The freshwater drum prefers clear water, but it is tolerant of turbid and murky water. They prefer the bottom to be clean sand and gravel substrates. There has been some research on the freshwater drum's impact on the invasive zebra mussel in northern lakes and rivers. Zebra mussels are consumed by freshwater drum once they reach a length of 10".



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Downed trees in the river, also called snags, slow down water flow and provide habitat for fish, aquatic insects, birds and reptiles.