

Nonnative Fish Species That Are Focus of Research:



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Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*)

Northern pike are locally common in reaches of the Yampa and Middle Green rivers. The northern pike is a long-bodied fish with a duckbill snout and mouth filled with sharp teeth. This species is an aggressive predator subsisting primarily on fish. Larger northern pike are known to include waterfowl in their diet. Individuals generally reach 28 inches in length and can live up to 24 years. Researchers have captured northern pike up to 44 inches in the Yampa River. Northern pike spawn as soon as the ice breaks up in the spring.



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Channel Catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

Channel catfish is the second largest member of the catfish family in North America. They are common to abundant throughout much of the Upper Colorado River Basin where they are known to live up to 22 years. This species is easily identified by its barbels (whiskers), deeply forked tail and sporadic black spotting. Its sizeable body is sleek and a broad, flat head dwarfs its lower jaw. In the Upper Basin, channel catfish are generally 20 inches or less; however, researchers have captured individuals up to 35 inches in the Yampa River. Channel catfish spawn between early spring and summer. They use taste buds in their sensitive barbels to locate prey. Major foods are aquatic insects, crayfish, algae and fish.

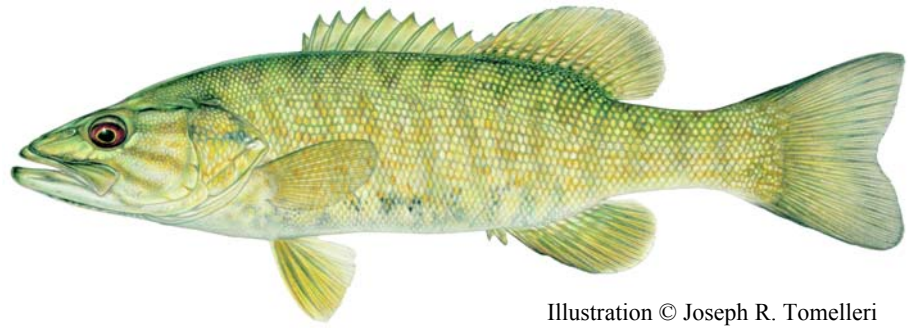


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Smallmouth Bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*)

Smallmouth bass belong to the sunfish family. They are locally common in reaches of the Yampa and Middle Green rivers. Smallmouth bass are distinguished by three or four dark “tiger stripes” that extend from the eye toward the tail. The eye is usually red or orange. Unlike its cousin, the largemouth bass, its upper jawbone does not extend beyond the eye. Smallmouth bass may reach 22 inches in length and live 10 years. They spawn in the spring. Smallmouth bass eat a variety of aquatic insects, crayfish and fish.