

Warmouth

Scientific Name: *Lepomis gulosus*

Class: Actinopterygii

Order: Perciformes

Family: Centrarchidae



Warmouth are freshwater fish of the sunfish family that are found in the eastern United States. They have other names such as molly, redeye, googleeye or strawberry perch. The adult is dark with mottled brown coloration. The belly is gold and the male has a bright orange spot at the base of the dorsal fin. It has three spines on the anal fin and ten on the dorsal fin. There are small teeth on the tongue. It can grow up to twelve inches and weigh two pounds.

Range

Eastern United States in the south of the Mississippi River Drainage up to the Great Lakes basin area.

Habitat

They live in ponds, lakes, rivers, and backwater streams and can often survive in streams with low oxygen levels where other fish cannot. They can survive in polluted waters. They prefer areas with ample vegetation and slow moving water with dense entanglements so they can ambush prey.

Gestation

Five days.

Litter

After the female lays the eggs, the male fertilizes them and then defends them until after the newborn fish, also known as fry, have hatched. Sexual maturity is at one year of age.

Behavior

Warmouth are highly aggressive and hardy fish. Their predators include larger fish, snakes, turtles, alligators, and birds.

Reproduction

Spawning starts in May and lasts until July. Nests are constructed on rock or gravel substrates with a water column nearby. When in breeding condition, the males' eyes turn red.

Wild Diet

Primary insects, crayfish, and other fish. They are sight feeders, responding most to prey that moves and looks real, rarely tempted by lumps of bait.