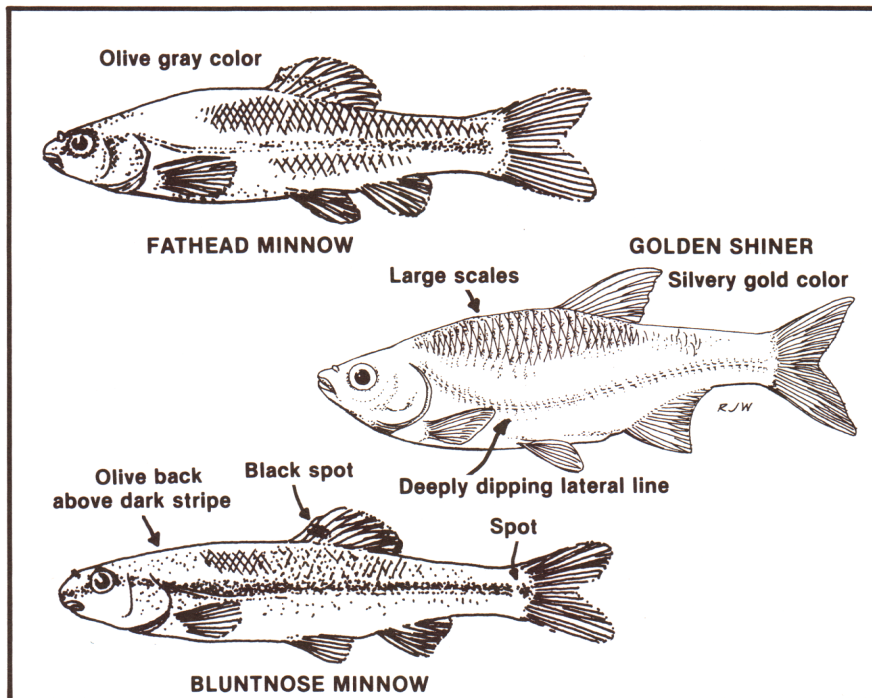


Channel catfish and bullheads.



The most suitable bass forage fishes in Michigan are the fathead minnow (*Pimephales promelas*) and the bluntnose minnow (*P. notatus*). The golden shiner (*Notemigonus crysoleucas*) can often also be used with success. These all feed on plankton and insects and will reproduce in Michigan ponds if there is suitable spawning habitat.

Bluntnose minnows seldom exceed 4 inches (10 cm), and fathead 3 inches (7.5 cm). Golden shiners attain a maximum length of about 10 inches, and if many in the pond reach 6 inches (15 cm) or larger, they may create competition for the food of young bass. This is a disadvantage of golden shiners, and for this reason, fathead minnows are usually preferable as bass forage.

All 3 species will spawn when 2-3 inches long and normally several times throughout spring and summer. Spawning starts when the water warms to 65°F (18.5°C) in areas which are 1-2 feet (30-60 cm) deep. Golden shiners deposit their eggs on aquatic plants. Fathead and bluntnose minnows lay eggs on the underside of rocks, tile, boards or logs. Adult fatheads usually die shortly after spawning.

Fishes Not Recommended for Pond Management

Some fish are undesirable for stocking in Michigan ponds if many years of quality fishing is the goal. Bluegills may be put in this category (see page 25 and also chapter 7 for more detailed discussion). These and others may enter ponds during floods or through pond outlets from nearby waters.

Trespassers, such as well-meaning neighborhood kids, are notoriously fond of stocking fish from nearby ditches, streams and lakes. Pond owners should learn to readily identify

Forage fishes for bass or catfish in Michigan ponds. NEVER stock minnows or other forage fishes in trout ponds!