

SMALLMOUTH BASS

Micropterus dolomieu



NYS DEC



Juvenile Smallmouth Bass

JasperWV, Wikipedia Commons



Northern Smallmouth Bass

Lance Merry



Smallmouth Bass

Paul Skawinski UW-Stevens Point Extension Lakes

CHARACTERISTICS

SIZE:

Typically 8-22 inches in length, but can reach up to 24 inches.

COLOR:

Pale green to olive green with a white-yellow belly and small, brown blotches and vertical bars along body.

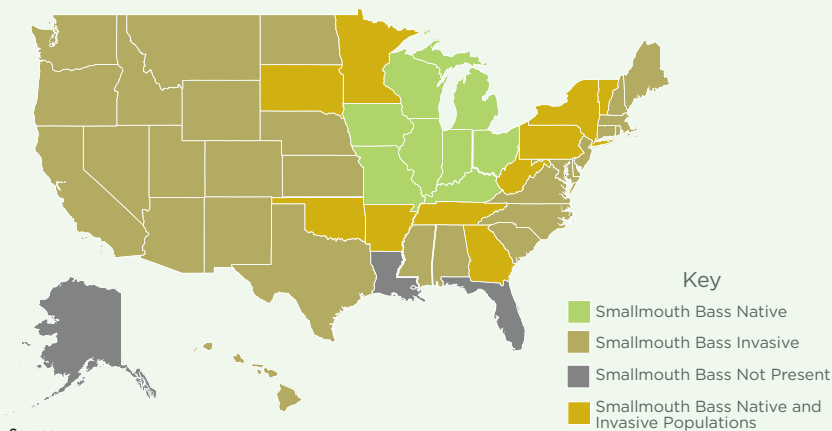
SHAPE:

Elongated body with 13-15 soft rays in the dorsal fin. The upper jaw never extends past the eye. Length of longest dorsal spine is less than twice the length of the longest dorsal spine.

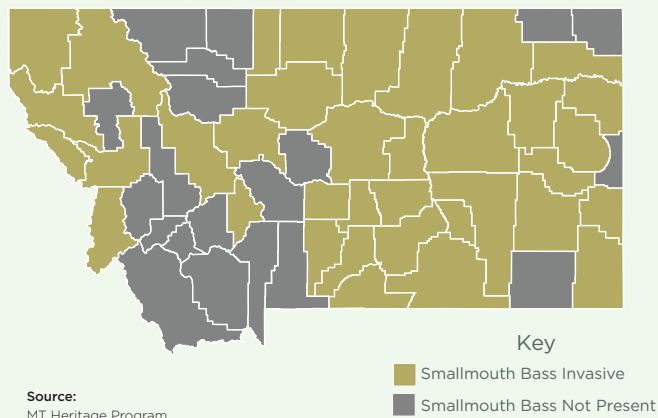
For more detailed information on Protecting Montana Waters from Aquatic Invasive Species visit

<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species>

DISTRIBUTION



Source:
USGS NAS; May 2023



Source:
MT Heritage Program,
observation data; May 2023

HABITAT:

Warmer river sections and larger clearwater lakes that are more than 30 ft deep.

NATIVE TO:

St. Lawrence and Great Lakes, Hudson Bay (Red River), and Mississippi River basins from southern Quebec to North Dakota and south to northern Alabama and eastern Oklahoma; Atlantic and Gulf slope drainages from Virginia to central Texas.

PREVENTION AND SPREAD:

Smallmouth bass were introduced outside of their native range as a sport fish. To reduce the spread, never transfer live fish or introduce them into fish to new waterbodies. All recently established populations in Western MT were illegally introduced.

IMPACTS:

Where introduced, the smallmouth bass predate on native fish and other aquatic species, and competes with them for resources. The introduction of smallmouth bass has been documented to significantly decrease fish diversity.

IN MONTANA:

Montana wildlife officials have implemented a mandatory catch, kill and report regulation for smallmouth bass along the entire Bitterroot River.

Anglers reported catching two of the fish in the Bitterroot this summer. Smallmouth bass are warmwater fish that can negatively affect populations of native coldwater fish, like cutthroat trout, if they gain a foothold.

Anglers who catch a smallmouth bass on the Bitterroot River are now required to report the catch to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks within 24 hours by calling 406-542-5500. Fish must also be turned in whole to the agency within 10 days of catch. The agency says frozen fish are acceptable.

Sources:
Montana Field Guide, Texas Invasive Species Institute, MT FWP

If you see or suspect a new infestation of an invasive plant or animal, please save a specimen, and record the location.

Report observations to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at
<https://fwp.mt.gov/conservation/aquatic-invasive-species/report-an-ais>
Or call the MT FWP front desk at 406-444-2440

