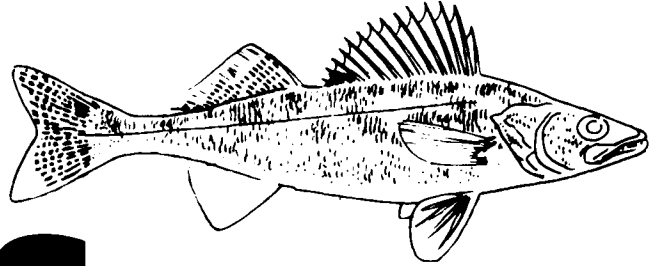
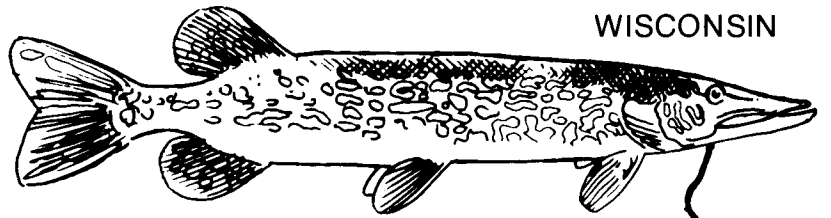
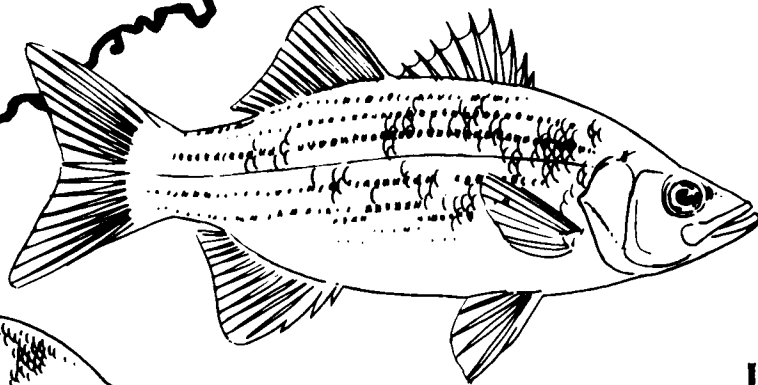
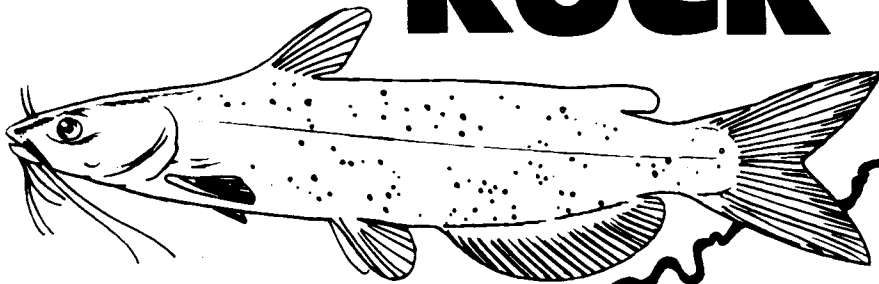


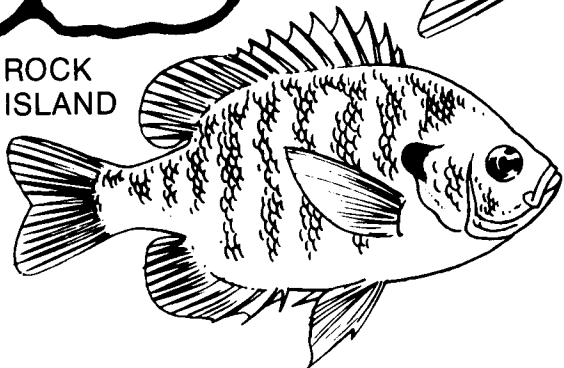
WISCONSIN



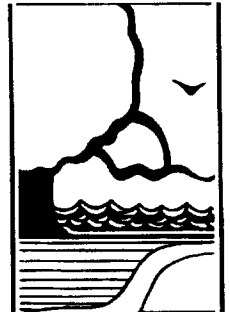
FISHING THE ROCK



ROCK
ISLAND



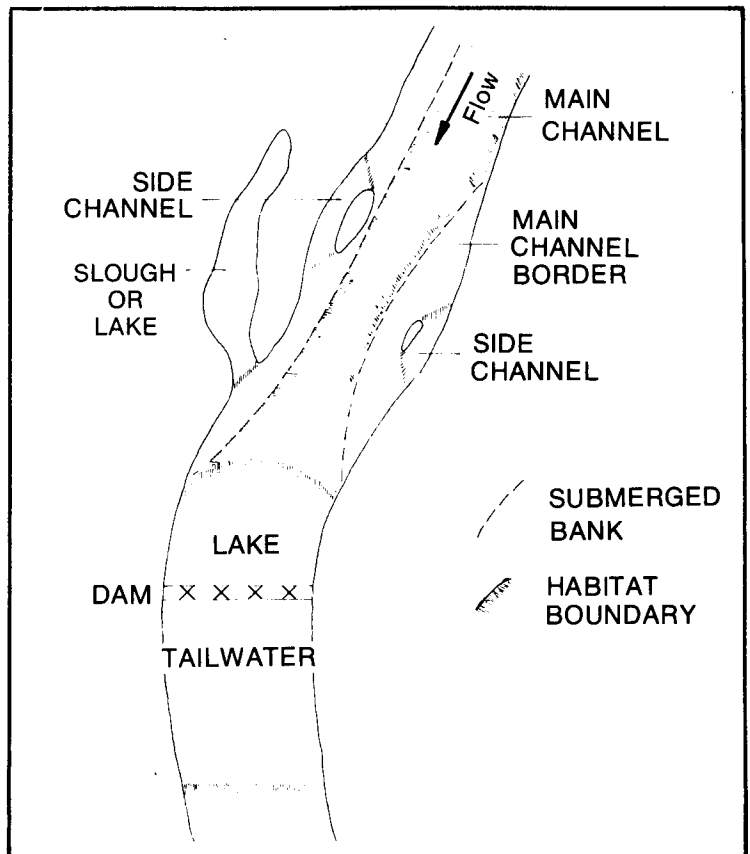
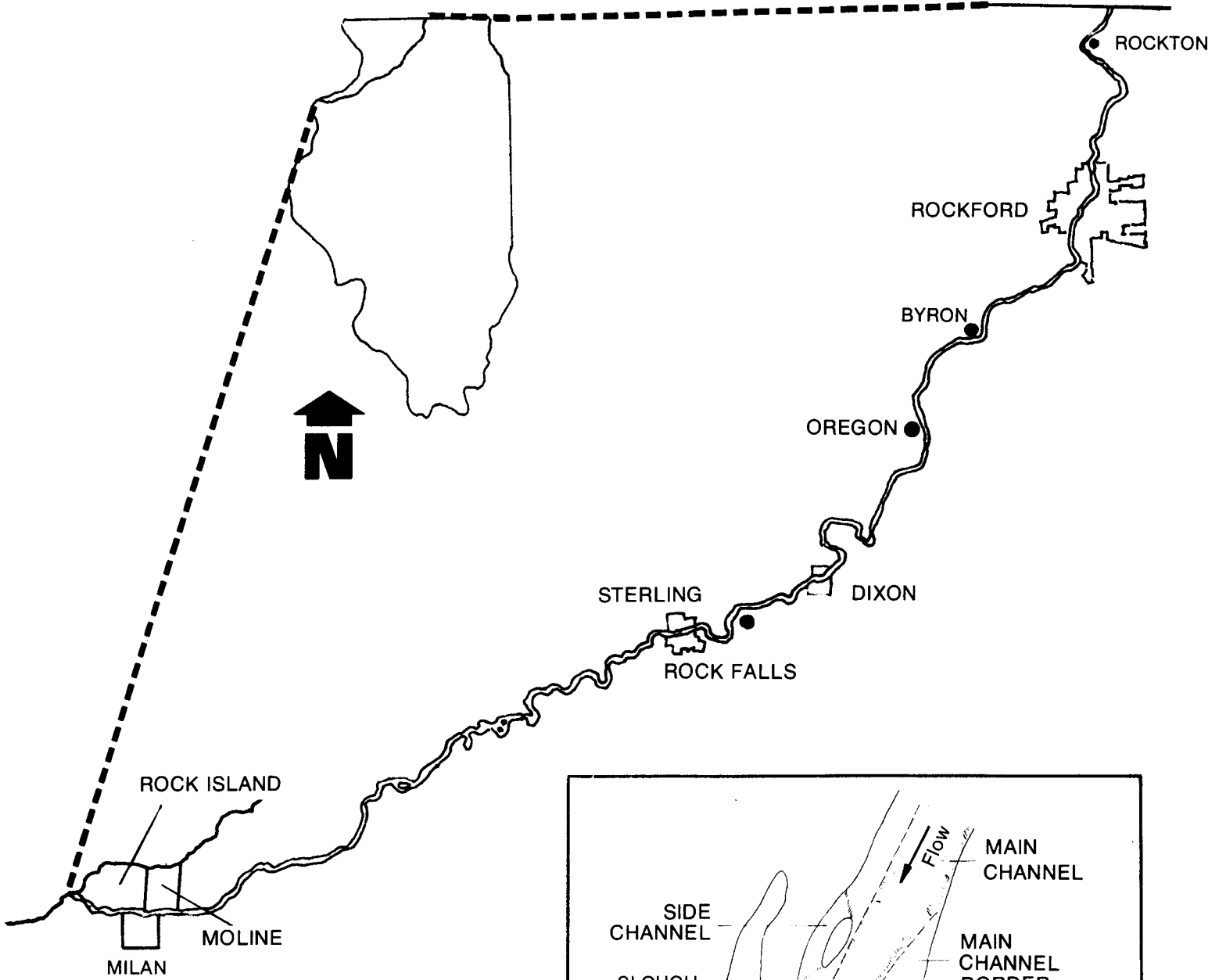
ILLINOIS



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL
RESOURCES

LOCATION OF ROCK RIVER IN ILLINOIS

WISCONSIN



ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FISHERIES

STREAMS PROGRAM

FISHING THE ROCK

Revised
June, 1995

INTRODUCTION

The Rock River is well situated to provide fishing opportunities for a sizable portion of northern Illinois' population. Fortunately the river is up to the task, with populations of channel catfish, walleye, northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass, sauger, white bass, bluegill, flathead catfish, drum and bullheads.

slough areas on the Rock, these species are not as abundant as other sport fish.

With its good sport fish populations and close accessibility to a large number of Illinoisans, the Rock River is one of our more valuable aquatic resources.

DESCRIPTION OF RIVER

The Rock River rises near West Bend, Wisconsin and flows south 130 miles into Illinois where it takes a southwest course for 155 miles past Rockford, Oregon, Dixon, Sterling and Rock Island to empty into the Mississippi. The river provides an aquatic resource of some 12,400 acres. Dams at Rock Island, Milan, Sterling, Dixon, Oregon, Rockford and Rockton cause tailwater and lake habitats in addition to the slough, side channel, main channel, and main channel border habitats naturally occurring.

Tailwater habitat, found below each dam, is fast turbulent water caused by the passage of water over the dams. Tailwaters receive heavy fishing pressure because fish congregate in these rough waters. Walleye, sauger and white bass are most frequently taken from tailwater areas.

Lake and slough habitats have little or no current and may have aquatic vegetation. Lakes have greater average depths than sloughs. Bluegill and other sunfishes, bullheads and largemouth bass like these habitats. Since there is a scarcity of lake and

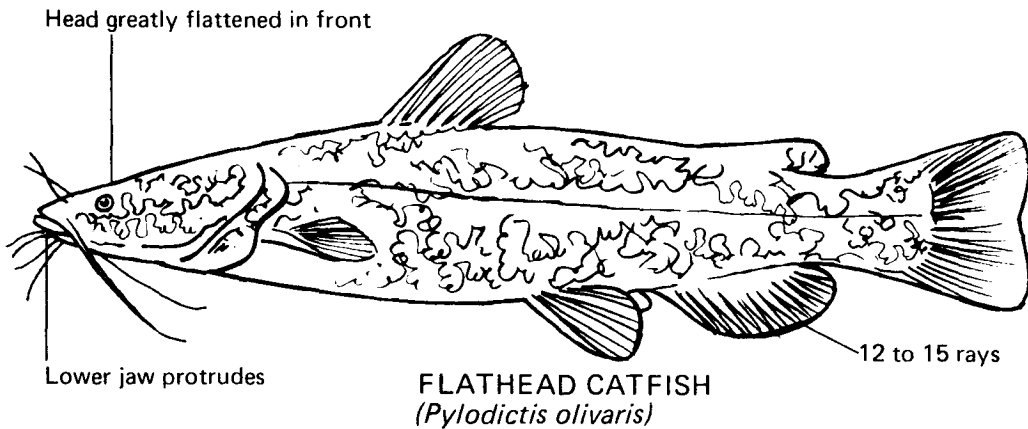
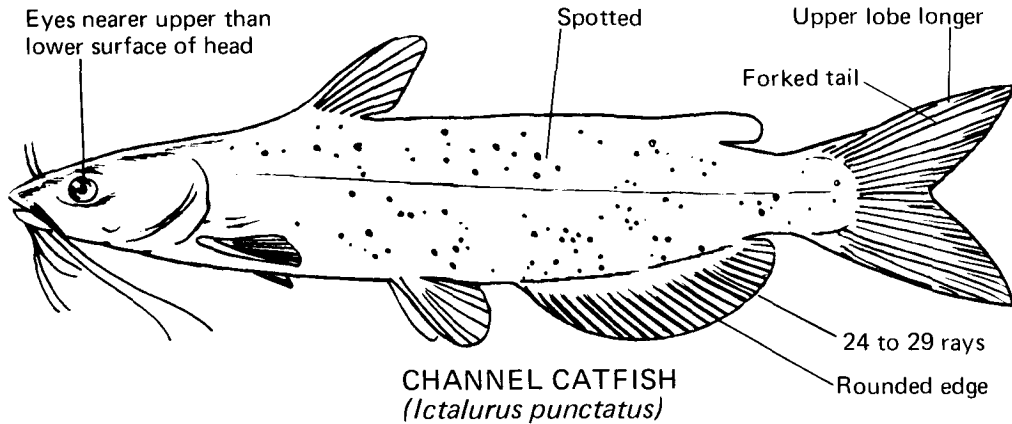
Side channels are departures from the main channel and may be as wide and deep as the main channel or so shallow that they resemble sloughs. All side channels have current in them during normal water stages. Most of the side channels on the Rock are short passages around small islands and differ little from main channel border habitat.

Main channel border habitat is that area adjoining the shoreline and extending outward to include brush, logs, stumps and other debris or structures associated with the shoreline. This area is often shallower with slower current than main channel habitat.

The main channel is that portion of the river between main channel border habitats. It is usually the deepest, swiftest, part of the river with no brush or debris to provide fish cover and is favored by catfish. A relatively large portion of the Rock is main channel habitat which helps explain the high catfish population. Catfish are more abundant than other sport fish and are found virtually everywhere on the Rock.

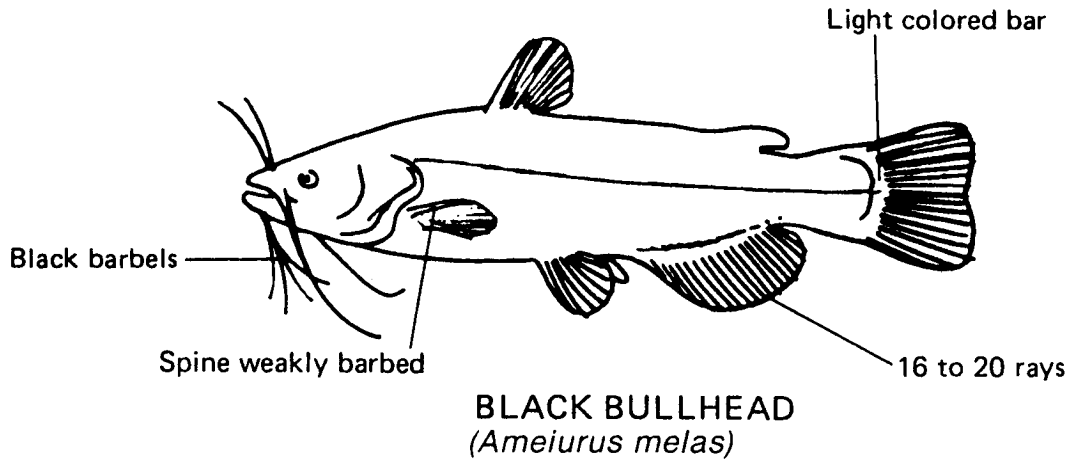
The boundaries between habitats are usually not clear distinct lines, but are zones of gradual change from one habitat to another.

FISHING



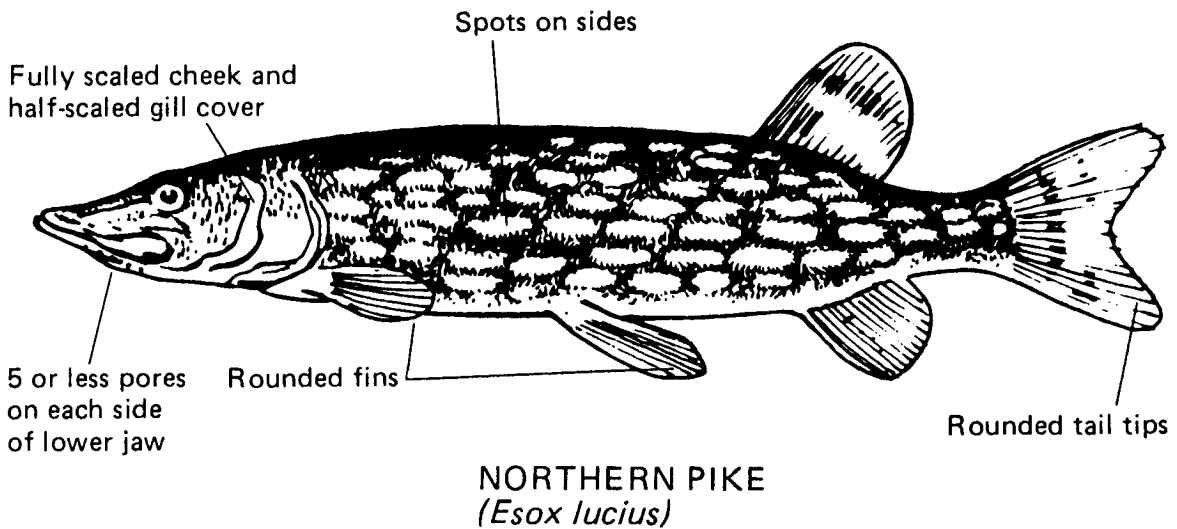
The Rock is a catfish stream — more so than any other large stream in the state. Channels can be taken almost anywhere along its course and are the primary sport fish. Huge flatheads lurk in the deeper holes. “Cats” often hole up underneath old stumps, downstream of fallen trees, around log jams and in washout holes along banks. They can frequently be found on the edge of the main channel border habitat where the bottom drops sharply to deeper water in the main channel. Since these fish rely primarily on their olfactory sense to detect food, prepared baits with a strong odor are most effective. These include blood baits, cheese baits, and various homemade concoctions of an odor most foul. Worms, liver, shrimp and an almost endless variety

of goodies are successful at one time or another for catfish. The more solid prepared baits can be balled around a treble hook and fished on the bottom with a tight line weighted by a sliding sinker. Pieces of sponge rubber are dipped in baits having a thinner consistency and placed on or before a hook. Around trees and log jams a bobber may be necessary to prevent loss of gear. Many catfish are taken on trotlines baited with crayfish or fish. If you’re seeking flatheads, use large hooks and big bait such as 6” carp on your trotline. Fishing is best for catfish when it’s slacking off for many species during the hot months of summer. Since light for vision is not necessary for feeding catfish, often the best fishing occurs at night.



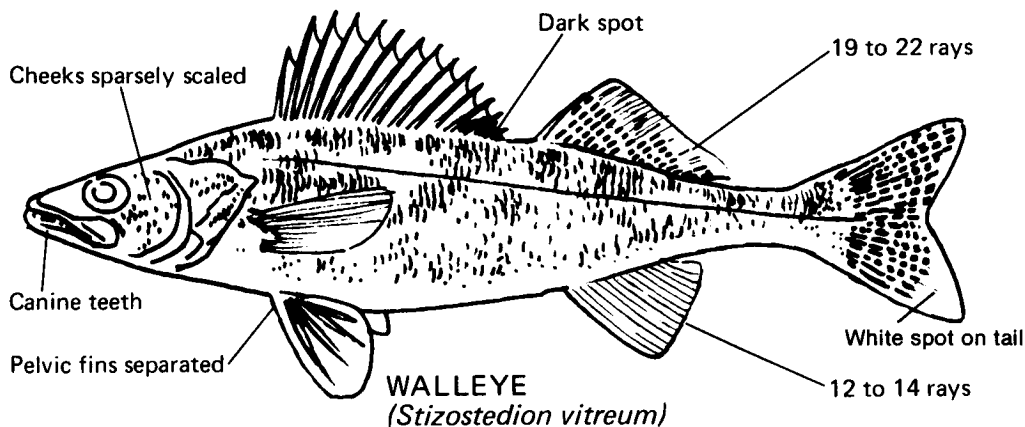
Bullheads may be caught during the warmer months in quiet shallow areas. Most bullheads are

taken by bank fishermen using worms below a bobber or fished on the bottom 10-30' from shore.



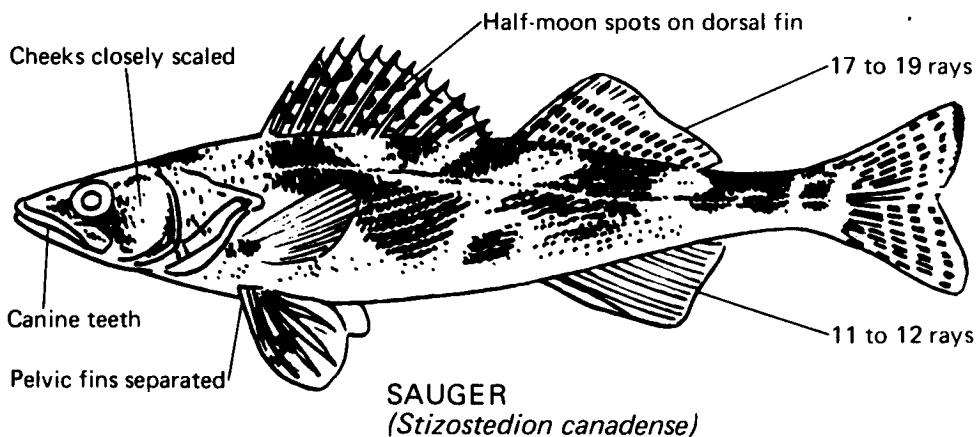
Northern pike are not abundant in any stream of this state, but apparently the largest population is in the Rock River. The best time to fish for them is early spring (March) when they move to spawn. They spawn in shallow slough areas and this type of situation is presented when the Rock floods each spring, spreading out over fields and marshy areas presenting northerns with just what they are seeking. During this spawning activity northerns can be taken

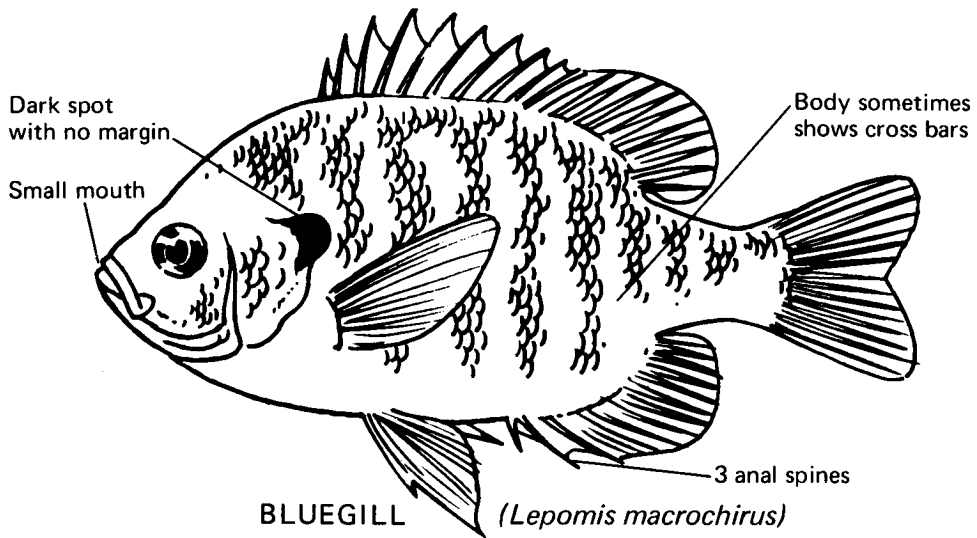
from the flooded lowlands and later during the year out of deep holes where they seek the cold water they prefer. They are not particular what they strike at so long as it's presented close to them and many of the artificial lures are successful. Large minnows are also well received. Once hooked he is a terrific fighter which makes him such a popular sport fish. In addition he's a tasty beast.



Walleye and the less common sauger are taken in the tailwater areas in March and April. These species are excellent sport and table fish and are avidly sought wherever they occur. Although the walleye and sauger differ in appearance and maximum size (state records of 14 lbs. for walleye and 5 lbs. 12 oz.

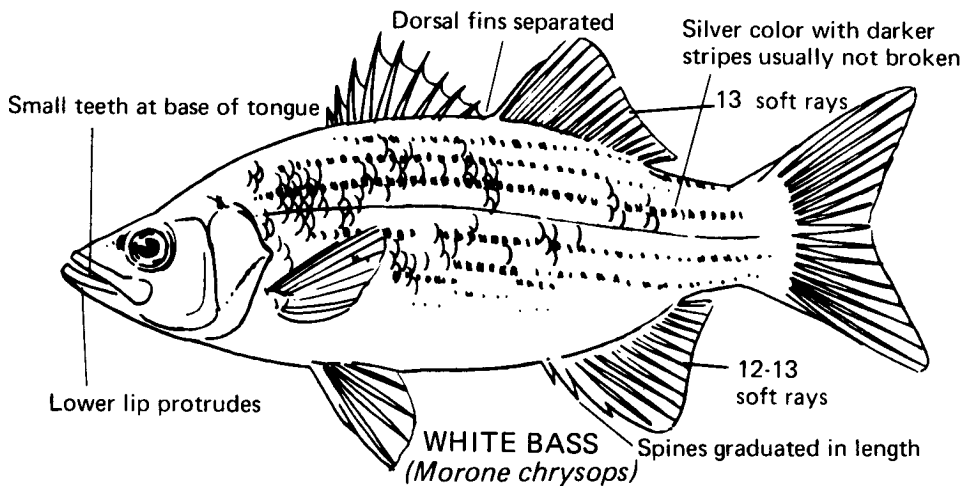
for sauger), they respond to the same bait or lure. A common lure is a jig-minnow combination with the minnow hooked through the head and a weight attached via a three way swivel to fish the jig a foot or so off the bottom. Lead head jigs or minnows by themselves are also popular.





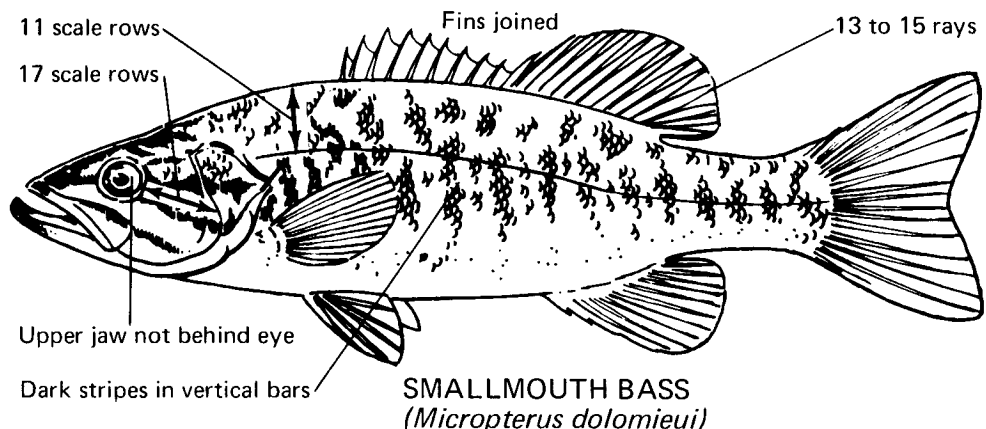
Bluegill can be taken during the summer months on a variety of baits. The most popular is the night-crawler on a small hook, but crickets and grasshoppers work well. Fish near cover such as brush

piles, stumps or weed beds and drop your bait as close as possible to the cover. Use a small bobber to keep the bait off the bottom. Bluegill fishing is best during the evening, June through September.



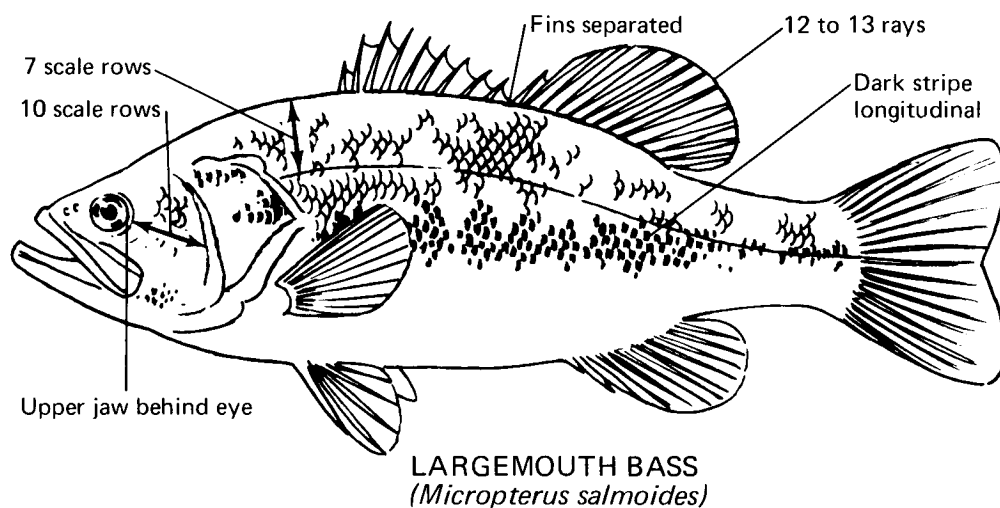
The white bass is often called "striper" which can cause some confusion since the true striper (striped bass) is occasionally taken in southern Illinois. The striped bass is a much larger salt water cousin of the white bass which is being stocked in various fresh water impoundments and has escaped into streams below these lakes. So if you hear of a 30 pound striper taken somewhere, don't believe that it was a white bass. White bass like current and turbulence which is why they favor tailwaters. They are often

taken on jigs by bank or boat fishermen casting into the rough water directly below a dam. Another place to try is the downstream side of a bridge abutment, concrete wall, or some other such obstruction where the water roils after passing around or over the obstruction. Spinners with minnows or artificial lures resembling minnows are effective. Best fishing seems to be in the morning or evening and May and August are usually the best months.



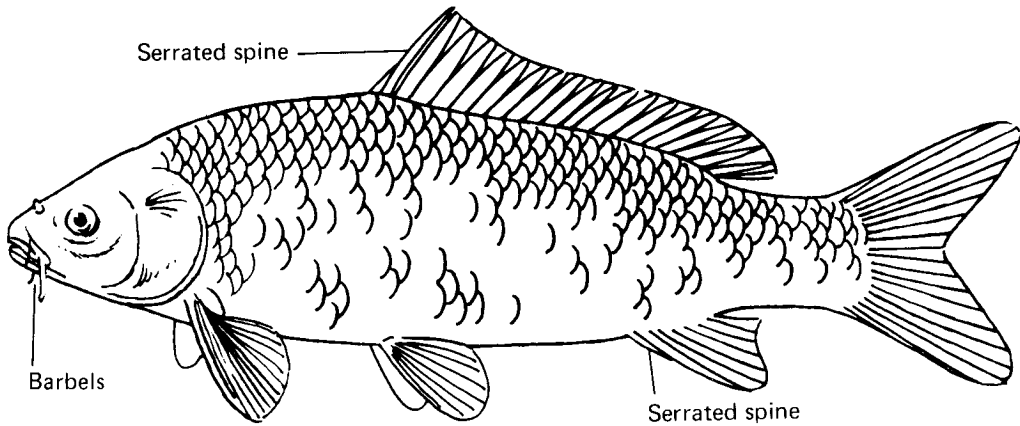
The smallmouth bass does not attain the size of largemouth bass, but it is more of a scrapper and pound-for-pound provides more heart-pounding action than any other stream species in Illinois. Artifi-

cial lures such as plastic worms, jigs, spinners, and spoons are most effective, but live frogs and crayfish are also successful. Fish in early morning or late evening.



Largemouth bass prefer the cover of weed beds, brush, stumps, willows, and fallen trees where they can play hide and seek with their prey. Largemouths are sight feeders attracted by action and not by smell of the bait or lure. They succumb to the temptations of a variety of lures, plugs, and jigs which must each be retrieved in the manner best suited to the lure.

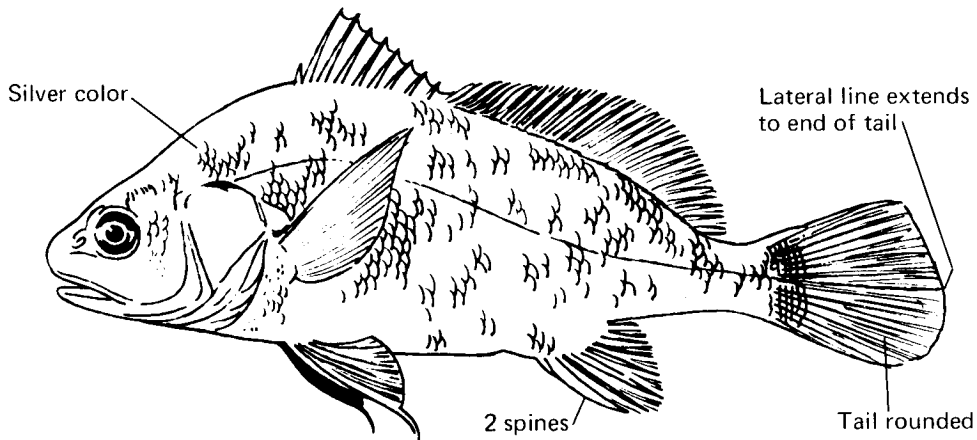
Mepps spinners are commonly used and plastic worms are popular. Minnows hooked below spinners may be more effective on rivers than on impoundments. Still fishing with minnows will seldom take a largemouth. The best fishing is in early morning or evening in May, June and September.



CARP
(*Cyprinus carpio*)

Carp are not considered in the maps section, because they are so common that they can be caught almost anywhere. Their size and fighting strength are increasing their popularity every year. Next to the flathead catfish, carp are the largest fish regularly taken by anglers. Properly prepared, carp are a

match for any fish in palatability. It is not surprising that more fishermen are actively fishing for carp with worms, corn and doughballs among other baits. Fish on the bottom or near the bottom with a bobber in shallow areas from May through October.



FRESHWATER DRUM
(*Aplodinotus grunniens*)

Drum are commonly called white or silver perch, although they are not a member of the perch family. On rivers they are most common in areas where there is good current — tailwater, main channel, and

main channel border habitat. They are commonly taken on worms fished with a tight line, on the bottom, and are occasionally caught on trot-lines.

SAFETY ON THE RIVER

A certain amount of respect for the river is only good judgment. Small boats are fine on quiet backwaters, but if a person intends to travel on the main river where he may encounter strong current, white-cap waves, or wakes from large pleasure craft, a stable boat is needed. A wise man would use nothing smaller than a 12' jon boat or V-bottom boat with a 5 or 6 horsepower motor to navigate the main river. Boats of this size and larger can still be easily swamped if overloaded or handled by an inexperienced or careless person. Here are some additional points to take note of:

1. pay full attention to navigation of your boat
2. stay well away from large pleasure craft
3. watch for riffles on the water surface indicating underwater obstructions
4. wear life vests, at least while travelling to and from the place you fish
5. avoid the areas immediately above or below dams

Before operating a boat on any water of this state, a person should obtain and read the pamphlet on the boat registration and safety act. These are available from the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Law Enforcement, Lincoln Tower Plaza, 524 South 2nd Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1787.

FISHING REGULATIONS

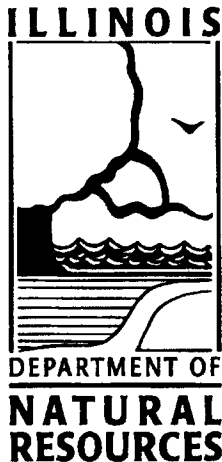
Copies of the current sport fishing regulations for the Rock River may be obtained at local sporting goods dealers or by writing to: Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fisheries, Lincoln Tower Plaza, 524 South 2nd Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1787.

ACCESS

In the following maps section some of the access areas available to the public are noted. Certain public areas and private areas open to the public are available only after paying a fee and such fees are usually posted. *Unless an area is known to be public or is posted as a public area, it should be assumed that it is private and permission from the owner is necessary to use that area.*

SPECIFIC AREAS TO FISH

On the following maps areas have been marked that are known to have good sport fish populations. For each area marked and *numbered*, the sport fish most likely to be taken are checked in the box on the same page. It is realized that the areas marked represent only a portion of those occurring on the river, and as more fishing spots are discovered this guide may be updated. Access sites are *lettered* and listed in a second box with the basic facilities found at each site checked. No attempt was made to list all access sites, but only those nearest fishing areas marked on the map.



Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion or other non-merit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; 217/785-0067; TTY 217/782-9175.

This information may be provided in an alternative format if required. Contact the DNR Clearinghouse at 217/782-7498 for assistance.

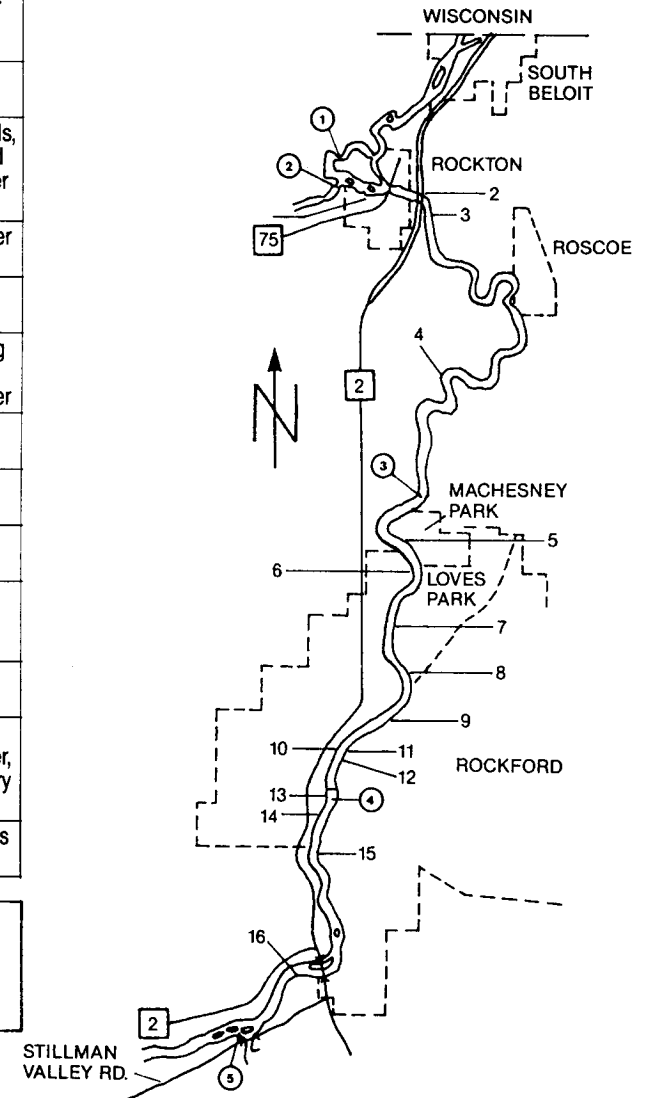
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ACCESS AREAS

ACCESS Area No.	Name of Area	Managing Agency	Location From Nearest Town	FACILITIES AVAILABLE							Other Services or Remarks
				Boat Ramp	Fee	Boat or Motor Rental	Bait	Camping	Picnic		
1	Macktown Forest Preserve	Winnebago Co. Forest Preserve District	1 mi. SW. of Rockton	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	60 tables	golf course, picnic shelter	
2	Rockton Boatramp	Village of Rockton	0.6 mi. E. of Rockton	2-concrete	No	No	No	No	No		
3	Hononegah Forest Preserve	Winnebago Co. Forest Preserve District	1.5 mi. E. of Rockton	1-concrete	No	No	No	62 sites	60 tables	picnic shelter	
4	Atwood Forest Preserve	Winnebago Co. Forest Preserve District	4 mi. S. of Rockton	2-concrete	No	No	No	No	50 tables	golf course	
5	Harlem Road Access	Winnebago Co.	In Machesney Park	1-gravel	No	No	No	No	No	limited parking	
6	Veterans Memorial Park/Sportscore	Rockford Park District	N. edge of Rockford	6-concrete	No	No	No	No	40 tables	ball diamonds, soccer field, lots of trailer parking	
7	Martin Park	Rockford Park District	In Loves Park	1-double concrete	No	No	No	No	30 tables	picnic shelter	
8	Shorewood Park	Rockford Park District	In Loves Park	No	No	No	No	No	20 tables		
9	Sinnissippi Park & Recreation Path	Rockford Park District	In Rockford	No	No	No	No	No	100 tables	bike/jogging path, picnic shelter	
10	Beattie Park	Rockford Park District	In Rockford	No	No	No	No	No	2 tables		
11	Municipal Ramp	City of Rockford	In Rockford	1-double concrete	No	No	No	No	No		
12	Rever's Marina	Private	In Rockford	No	No	No	No	No	No	fuel, repair, storage	
13	Fordham Dam Access	E. side private W. side Rockford	In Rockford	No	No	No	No	No	No	tailwater fishery	
14	Kent Creek	Private	In Rockford	No	No	No	No	No	No		
15	Blackhawk Park	Rockford Park District	S. edge of Rockford	1-blacktop	No	No	No	No	50 tables	ball field, picnic shelter, ramp has very little slope	
16	Ace of Diamonds Lounge	Private	S. edge of Rockford	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	No	food & drinks in lounge	

BEST FISHING AREAS

	Northern Pike	Walleye	Drum	Largemouth Bass	Bluegill	Smallmouth Bass	Catfish	Crappie
① Rockton Dam	X	X	X			X	X	
② Pecatonica	X	X	X			X	X	
③ Willow Creek				X	X	X		
④ Rockford Dam	X	X	X				X	X
⑤ Kishwaukee	X					X	X	X

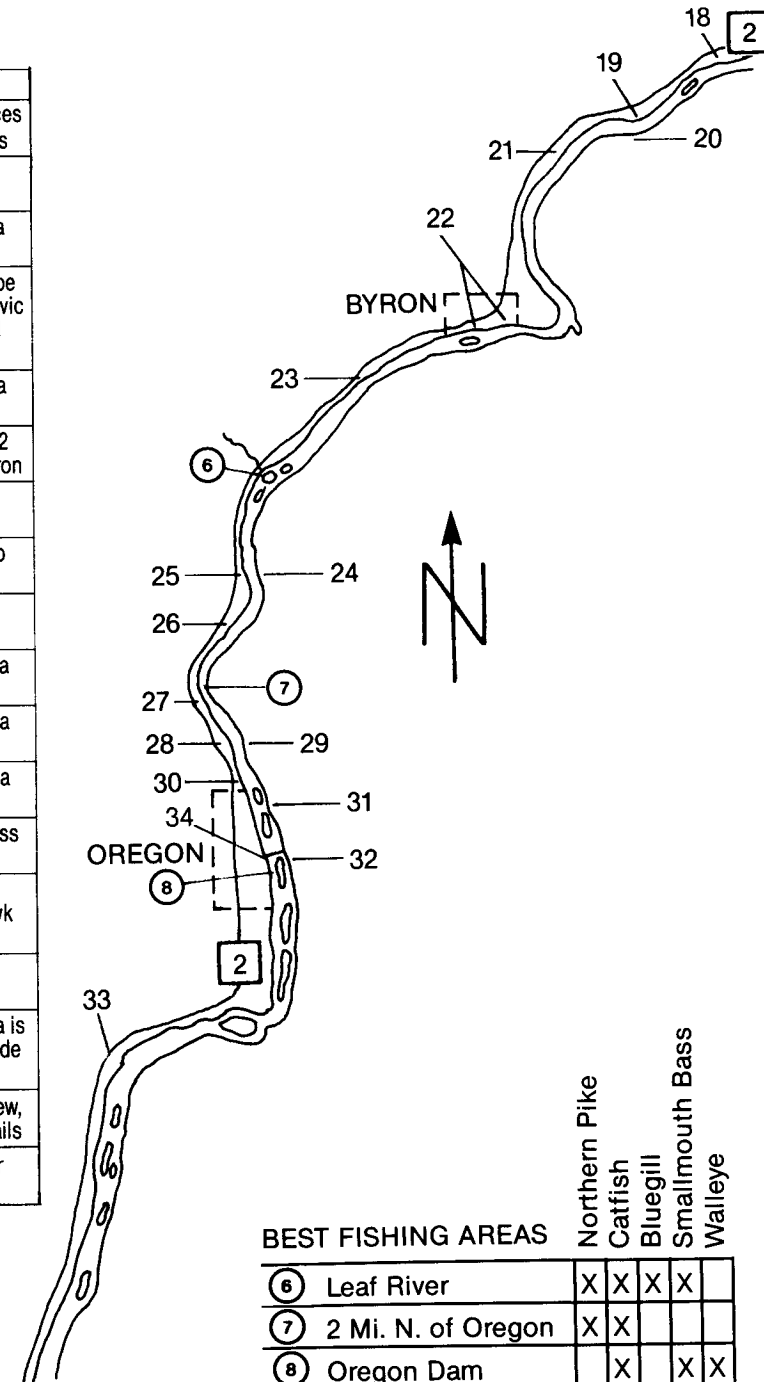


Highway Number	67
Access Area Number	6
Best Fishing Area Number	7

STILLMAN VALLEY RD.

ACCESS AREAS

ACCESS Area No.	Name of Area	Managing Agency	Location From Nearest Town	FACILITIES AVAILABLE							Other Services or Remarks
				Boat Ramp	Fee	Boat or Motor Rental	Bait	Camping	Picnic		
18	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	5.5 mi. N.E. of Byron	No	No	No	No	No	3 tables		
19	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	4.5 mi. N.E. of Byron	No	No	No	No	No	No	small area	
20	Camp McCormick	Rock River Valley Girl Scout Council	4.0 mi. N.E. of Byron	No	*	No	No	Yes*	Yes*	*area can be rented by civic or school groups	
21	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	3.0 mi. N.E. of Byron	No	No	No	No	No	No	small area	
22	Byron Boat Ramps	City of Byron	In Byron	3-concrete	No	No	No	No	No	ramps at 2 sites in Byron	
23	Indian Village	Private	2 mi. SW. of Byron	No	No	No	No	No	No	food	
24	River Road Camping & Marina	Private	5 mi. N. of Oregon	1-concrete	Yes	canoes & rowboats	Yes	250 sites	250 tables	R.V. dump station	
25	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	5 mi. N. of Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	2 tables		
26	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	3.5 mi. N. of Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	No	small area	
27	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	2.0 mi. N. of Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	No	small area	
28	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	1.0 mi. N. of Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	No	small area	
29	Lowden State Historical Site	State of Illinois	1.0 mi. N. of Oregon	No	No	No	No	137 sites	270 tables	poor access to river	
30	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	N. edge of Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	No	view of Blackhawk Statue	
31	Lowden Access Area	State of Illinois	N.E. edge of Oregon	2-concrete	No	No	No	No	No		
32	Oregon Dam Tailwater Access	Oregon Park District	In Oregon	No	No	No	No	No	7 tables	picnic area is on east side of river	
33	Castle Rock State Park	State of Illinois	2.5 mi. S. of Oregon	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	Yes	scenic view, nature trails	
34	Moe's Bait	Private	In Oregon	1-concrete	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Tailwater Access	



Highway Number **67**
 Access Area Number **6**
 Best Fishing Area Number **7**

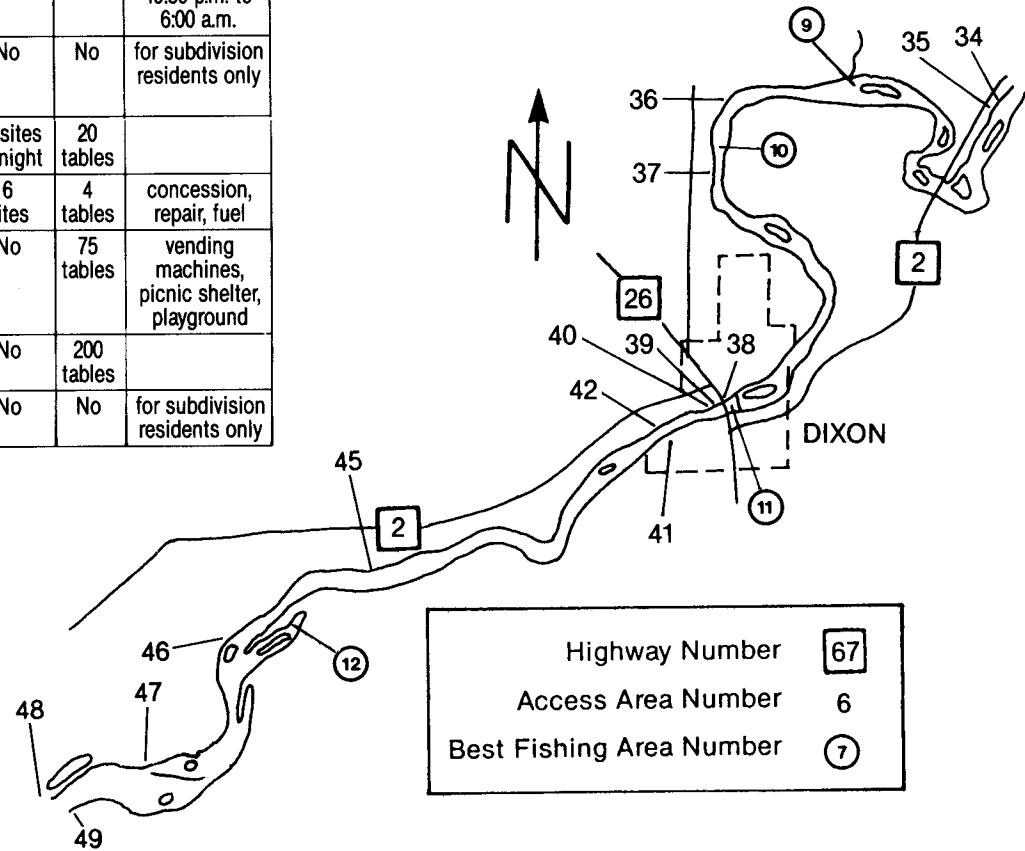
BEST FISHING AREAS		Northern Pike	Catfish	Bluegill	Smallmouth Bass	Walleye
⑥	Leaf River	X	X	X	X	
⑦	2 Mi. N. of Oregon	X	X			
⑧	Oregon Dam		X		X	X

ACCESS Area No.	Name of Area	Managing Agency	Location From Nearest Town	FACILITIES AVAILABLE							Other Services or Remarks
				Boat Ramp	Fee	Boat or Motor Rental	Bait	Camping	Picnic		
34	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	1.0 mi. N. of Grand Detour	No	No	No	No	No	3 tables	historical marker	
35	Rock River Recreation	Private	0.9 mi. N. of Grand Detour	4-rock & dirt	\$5	No	No	200 sites	10 tables	minimum \$5 user fee	
36	Dixon Elks Page Park	Private	4.0 mi. N. of Dixon	No	No	No	No	8 sites with elect.	6 tables	free tent camping donation for electricity R.V. dump station	
37	Lowell Park	Dixon Park District	2.0 mi. N. of Dixon	1-double concrete	No	No	No	No	150 tables	marine fuel, nature center	
38	Howell Park	Dixon Park District	In Dixon	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	bank access to Dixon Dam Area	
39	President's Park	Dixon Park District	In Dixon	No	No	No	No	No	3 tables	bank access to Dixon Dam Area	
40	Page Park	Dixon Park District	In Dixon	2-concrete	No	No	No	No	75 tables		
41	Municipal Ramp	Dixon Park District	In Dixon	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	No	closed from 10:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.	
42	Riverview Subdivision Boat Ramp	Private	0.5 mi. W. of Dixon	1-concrete and gravel	No	No	No	No	No	for subdivision residents only	
45	Moore Park	Private	5.0 mi. SW. of Dixon	1-double concrete	\$2	No	No	30 sites \$8/night	20 tables		
46	Moonlight Bay	Private	3.0 mi. E. of Sterling	1-concrete	\$2	No	No	6 sites	4 tables	concession, repair, fuel	
47	Oppold Marina	Sterling Park District	2.0 mi. E. of Sterling	1-double concrete	No	paddleboats	Yes	No	75 tables	vending machines, picnic shelter, playground	
48	Sinnissippi Park	Sterling Park District	E. edge of Sterling	No	No	No	No	No	200 tables		
49	Holland Creek Ramp	Private	2.0 mi. E. of Rock Falls	1-gravel	No	No	No	No	No	for subdivision residents only	

ACCESS AREAS

BEST FISHING AREAS

		Catfish	Bluegill	Smallmouth Bass	Largemouth Bass	Walleye
⑨	Pine Ck.	X		X		
⑩	Grand Detour	X		X		
⑪	Dixon Dam	X				X
⑫	Fluck's Slough	X	X	X		



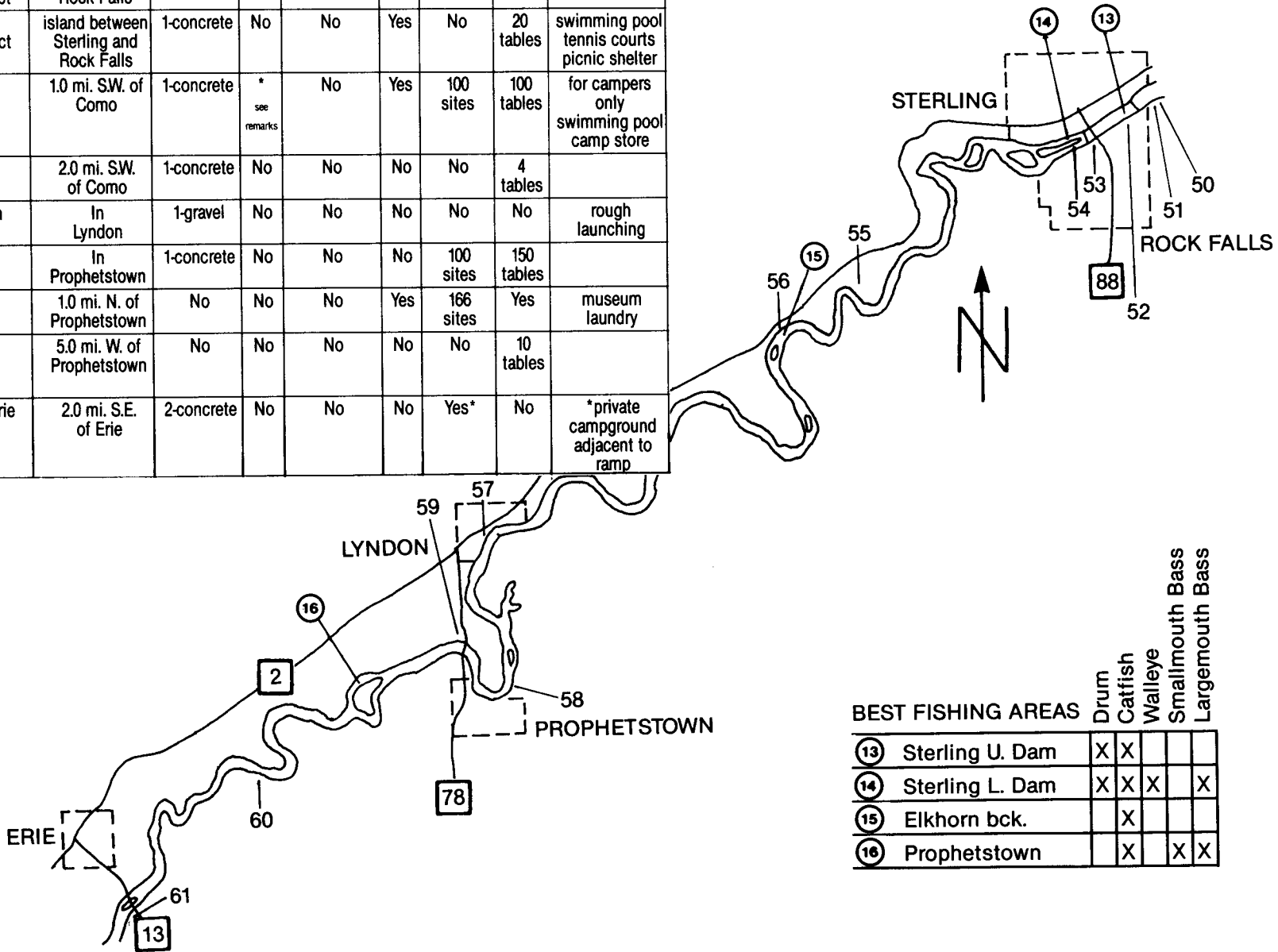
ACCESS Area No.	Name of Area	Managing Agency	Location From Nearest Town	FACILITIES AVAILABLE							Other Services or Remarks
				Boat Ramp	Fee	Boat or Motor Rental	Bait	Camping	Picnic		
50	Inland Marine	Private	0.5 mi. E. of Rock Falls	1-concrete	\$2.50	No	No	No	No	No	boat storage, repair & fuel
51	Martin Road Access	disputed - see remarks	0.5 mi. E. of Rock Falls	2-concrete	No	No	No	No	No	No	short ramp tears up trailers - no one wants to repair
52	Sewards Riverside Park	Coloma Park District	In Rock Falls	1-gravel	No	No	No	No	No	No	
53	Lower Dam Park	Coloma Park District	In Rock Falls	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	No	No	
54	Lawrence Park	Sterling Park District	island between Sterling and Rock Falls	1-concrete	No	No	Yes	No	20 tables		swimming pool tennis courts picnic shelter
55	Crow Valley Campground	Private	1.0 mi. SW. of Como	1-concrete	*	No	Yes	100 sites	100 tables		for campers only swimming pool camp store
56	Roadside Park	State of Illinois	2.0 mi. SW. of Como	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	4 tables		
57	Lyndon Access Area	Unknown	In Lyndon	1-gravel	No	No	No	No	No	No	rough launching
58	Prophetstown State Park	State of Illinois	In Prophetstown	1-concrete	No	No	No	100 sites	150 tables		
59	Land's End Campground	Private	1.0 mi. N. of Prophetstown	No	No	No	Yes	166 sites	Yes		museum laundry
60	Big Bend Conservation Area	State of Illinois	5.0 mi. W. of Prophetstown	No	No	No	No	No	10 tables		
61	Erie Boat Ramp	Town of Erie	2.0 mi. S.E. of Erie	2-concrete	No	No	No	Yes*	No		*private campground adjacent to ramp

ACCESS AREAS

Highway Number 67

Access Area Number 6

Best Fishing Area Number 7



ACCESS AREAS

ACCESS Area No.	Name of Area	Managing Agency	Location From Nearest Town	FACILITIES AVAILABLE							Other Services or Remarks
				Boat Ramp	Fee	Boat or Motor Rental	Bait	Camping	Picnic		
62	Lundeen's Landing	Private	5 mi. E. of Silvis	1-concrete	\$2	No	Yes	50 sites	Yes	grocery store & game room	
63	Lock 29 - Hennepin Canal	State of Illinois	2.0 mi. W. of Green Rock	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	10 tables		
64	Green Valley Park	Moline Park District	S.E. edge of Moline	1-Rock	No	No	No	No	Yes	ball diamonds	
65	G.E. Cook Marine	Private	1.0 mi. N.E. of Quad City Airport	1-gravel	see remarks	No	No	No	No	ramp for customers only - boat repair & storage	
66	North Shore Inn	Private	In Moline	1-concrete	No	No	No	No	No	food	
67	Lock 30 - Hennepin Canal (Steel Dam)	State of Illinois	1.0 mi. N.E. of Milan	No	No	No	No	No	No		
68	Blackhawk State Park	State of Illinois	In Rock Island	No	No	No	No	No	6 tables	Indian Museum	
69	Old Power House Access	City of Rock Island	In Rock Island	No	No	No	No	No	No		
70	Lock 32 - Hennepin Canal (Big Island)	State of Illinois	4.0 mi. W. of Milan	No	No	No	No	No	No		
71	Sunset Park	Rock Island Park District	In Rock Island	5-concrete	No	No	No	No	Yes	provides boat access to Rock River mouth	

Highway Number 67
 Access Area Number 6
 Best Fishing Area Number 7

