

HABITATS OF THE LOWER GRAND RIVER

The warm, muddy water of the Grand River is home to more than 100 species of fish. Some are large river fish that are specially adapted to finding food in low-light environments. Many others use the Grand as a connecting highway between their preferred habitats.



FISH WATCHING

Don't expect to see fish swimming deep below the turbid water of the Grand, but late summer is a good time to see gar gulping air at the surface. Schools of young shad also create disturbances on the surface. When the water is calm in backwaters and at the mouth of the river, you can observe a variety of sucker species, carp, drum and bass feeding over rocks or shallow flats.

COLLECTING FISH

Angling with hook and line is the best way to catch most species. Even minnows and darters will strike a tiny fly or hook baited with a piece of worm. Nets and minnow traps are also legal gear for certain species in some environments (check the *Michigan Fishing Guide* for regulations). Seines are a good choice for snag-free flats and cast nets are effective on open water species in Lake Michigan waters.



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Michigan Sea Grant helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan's coastal, Great Lakes resources through research, education and outreach. MICHU-13-708

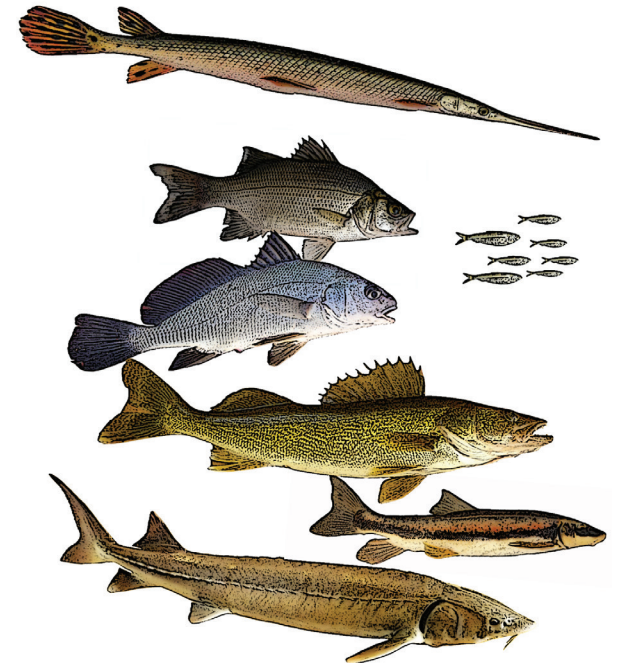
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FISHES

OF THE LOWER GRAND RIVER

A CHECKLIST



Backwaters include a drowned river mouth lake (Spring Lake), numerous bayous and man-made gravel pits. Some are dominated by rich plankton blooms and others offer abundant rooted vegetation.

Many small **creeks** flow to the **Grand River**. Some suffer from excessive sediment and nutrients, which creates poor water quality that can limit fish diversity. However, others like the upper reaches of **Crockery Creek** still support fish that require clean, cold, flowing water — including brook trout.

The cold, clear water of **Lake Michigan** provides a home for many species that occasionally enter the Grand River. River species also move into Lake Michigan in late summer to find cooler temperatures.

Diadromous fish species, such as Lake Sturgeon, spend much of their adult life in Lake Michigan before returning to the Grand River and tributary streams to spawn.



LOWER GRAND RIVER FISHES CHECKLIST

Look for these fish species found in waters of the Grand River and connected waters including Spring Lake, other backwaters, tributaries and Lake Michigan.

See outer panel for explanation of preferred habitats.

Lamprey family (Petromyzontidae)		
chestnut lamprey	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
Am. brook lamprey	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
I sea lamprey	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sturgeon family (Acipenseridae)		
T lake sturgeon	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gar family (Lepisosteidae)		
SC spotted gar	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
longnose gar	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bowfin family (Amiidae)		
bowfin (dogfish)	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eel family (Anguillidae)		
I American eel	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Herring family (Clupeidae)		
I alewife	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
I gizzard shad	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minnow family (Cyprinidae)		
central stoneroller	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
I goldfish	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
spotfin shiner	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
I common carp	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
S brassy minnow	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
S striped shiner	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
common shiner	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
redfin shiner	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
northern pearl dace	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
hornyhead chub	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
S river chub	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
golden shiner	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
emerald shiner	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
S bigmouth shiner	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
blackchin shiner	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
blacknose shiner	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
spottail shiner	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
rosyface shiner	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
sand shiner	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
mimic shiner	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. redbelly dace	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
finescale dace	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
bluntnose minnow	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
fathead minnow	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
w. blacknose dace	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
creek chub	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sucker family (Catostomidae)		
quillback	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
longnose sucker	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
white sucker	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
lake chubsucker	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
northern hog sucker	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
S black buffalo	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
S spotted sucker	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
silver redhorse	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
T river redhorse	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
S golden redhorse	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
shorthead redhorse	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
greater redhorse	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
Catfish family (Ictaluridae)		
black bullhead	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
yellow bullhead	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
S brown bullhead	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
channel catfish	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
S tadpole madtom	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
flathead catfish	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pike family (Esocidae)		
S grass pickerel	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
northern pike	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
muskellunge	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mudminnow family (Umbridae)		
central mudminnow	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smelt family (Osmeridae)		
I rainbow smelt	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salmon family (Salmonidae)		
T, X lake herring	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
lake whitefish	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
bloater	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
I pink salmon	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
I coho salmon	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
I rainbow trout	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
I Chinook salmon	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
round whitefish	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
I Atlantic salmon	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
I brown trout	Crockery Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>
brook trout	Crockery Creek	<input type="checkbox"/>
lake trout	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trout-perch family (Percopsidae)		
trout-perch	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>

Pirate perch family (Aphredoderidae)		
S pirate perch	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cod family (Gadidae)		
burbot	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Killifish family (Fundulidae)		
w. banded killifish	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Silverside family (Atherinopsidae)		
brook silverside	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stickleback family (Gasterosteidae)		
brook stickleback	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
I threespine stickleback	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
ninespine stickleback	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sculpin family (Cottidae)		
mottled sculpin	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
slimy sculpin	Lake Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Temperate bass family (Moronidae)		
I white perch	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
white bass	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sunfish family (Centrarchidae)		
rock bass	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
green sunfish	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
pumpkinseed	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
warmouth	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
bluegill	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
n. longear sunfish	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
smallmouth bass	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
largemouth bass	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
white crappie	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
black crappie	Backwaters	<input type="checkbox"/>
Perch family (Percidae)		
greenside darter	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
rainbow darter	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Iowa darter	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
S barred fantail darter	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
johnny darter	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
yellow perch	All	<input type="checkbox"/>
logperch	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
blackside darter	Creeks	<input type="checkbox"/>
walleye	Diadromous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drum family (Sciaenidae)		
freshwater drum	Grand River	<input type="checkbox"/>
Goby family (Gobiidae)		
I round goby	All	<input type="checkbox"/>

Special status for certain species listed in bold: I = Introduced; S = Species of Greatest Conservation Need; SC = Special Concern; T = Threatened; X = Extirpated
Extirpated means the species have not been found in the lower Grand River in recent years. Weed shiner is also considered extirpated from all Michigan waters.