



After 30-40 days the fish will be 1-2 inches in length and are large enough to be harvested and released into the wild.

Fishing:

Fishing regulations are in place to protect southern walleye populations. In northeast Mississippi good opportunities still exist to experience recreational walleye fisheries. Chances are excellent during spawning season when fish migrate upstream and congregate below barriers in rivers or in shallow waters.

Effective baits include jigs tipped with minnows or worms and trolling with spinner rigs and artificial lures. Walleye are often caught near the bottom.



Fishing is best at dawn, dusk, or late evening, but may be good during the day in turbid waters. They are a challenge to catch because of their finicky feeding behaviors and prized for their white, flaky meat.

The Mississippi state record is 9.66 lb. It was caught in the Tennessee river near Iuka in 1985.

The Hatchery:

Fish hatcheries are one of many tools used by Fisheries Biologists to effectively manage our valuable fishery resources by annually producing and stocking a variety of fishes into Mississippi's public waters.

The North Mississippi Fish Hatchery is one of two hatcheries operated by the Fisheries Bureau of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

The hatchery raises 1-2 million fish every year!



Southern Walleye



North Mississippi Fish Hatchery And Visitor Education Center

Phone: (662) 563-8068

Web: www.mdwfp.com

Address: P.O. Box 100, 457
CR 36, Enid, MS 38927

Walleye:

Mississippi is at the southern edge of the walleye's native range that stretches from southern Canada to the north, central and eastern United States.

The southern walleye, sometimes called the Gulf Coast walleye, is a genetically unique strain native to the Mobile River basin in Mississippi and Alabama. In Mississippi, southern walleye occur in the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and its tributaries.

Description:

Southern walleye are genetically unique from the northern walleye; however, physically they look the same. They are named walleye because of the fish's large, glossy eyes. Their unique eyes give them excellent vision in low light conditions. Some anglers may call them marble eyes, jack fish, pike or snaggle-toothed bass.

Walleye have a long slender body with a yellow to olive color on the sides and a white belly. The bottom tip of the tail has a distinct white mark and they have needle sharp teeth.



Habitat:

The southern walleye is a river fish. They will survive in lakes and ponds but will not reproduce. In rivers, walleye occur in close proximity to the bottom where the current meets calm water. This may include river bends, eddies or structures where the current breaks. When the fish migrate upstream for spawning, they tend to concentrate below barriers such as dams or grade control structures. During the summer, walleye may congregate near cool water areas provided by springs.

Walleye feed when light levels are low. Fish may feed at dawn, dusk and into late evening or when the water is murky. They capture their prey with their sharp teeth. They feed on small fish such as gizzard and threadfin shad in the open water, and may also feed on crayfish and insects in the rocks.

In the spring walleye migrate up rivers and into smaller tributaries to spawn. Spawning areas are usually shallow with rocky substrate. Spawning occurs in March when water temperatures are 50-55 degrees F.

Biology:

Walleye typically weigh 1-8 pounds and grow to lengths of 14-28 inches, but a few may grow to over 30 inches and weigh over 20 pounds. Southern walleye normally have a life span of 5-8 years.

Southern walleye prefer temperatures between 65-78 degrees F, but can tolerate temperatures from 32-90 degrees F. The warm water and the long growing season in Mississippi help walleye grow faster but because this is a cool water species, they usually have a shorter life span than fish found in northern regions.

Spawning:

Beginning in March, when water temperatures approach 50-55 degrees F, walleye are collected from the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway and transferred to the hatchery for spawning. Inside the hatchery fish are stocked into tanks supplied with chilled water. The male and female fish each receives a hormone injection to induce spawning.

Hatchery staff collect the eggs by manually spawning the fish. Walleye will have about 20,000 – 25,000 eggs per pound of body weight. The eggs are incubated for 10-15 days and then fry (newly hatched fish) hatch out. The fry are stocked into hatchery ponds where they eat live food items.

